

End the GOP Civil War; Sign the Pledge

☒ We're barely into 2015 and the 2016 presidential season has already begun. Lucky us. We get to listen to candidates tell us how wonderful they are for nearly two full years. If waterboarding is illegal, why isn't this?

A gaggle of potential GOP candidates met in Iowa the other day trying to win the hearts and wallets of the party's conservative base.

Sarah Palin was there and she told us she's seriously considering a run for president.

Donald Trump was there too. But then he's always telling us he's running for president and never actually does.

Take this to the bank: Neither will run.

You can breathe easy.

Two of the big name moderates – Jeb Bush and Mitt Romney – were no-shows. But one moderate, Chris Christie, was there.

As reported in the New York Times, he “cautioned against requiring a candidate to pass conservative litmus tests.”

“If that's the standard we hold each other to as a party we will never win another national election,” he told the conservative crowd.

That's just the kind of thing that riles true-blue conservatives. But he's right.

Despite what cogent thinkers like Charles Krauthammer believe, the Republicans are indeed fighting a civil war. The ideologically pure wing of the party behaves like bishops who

believe it's their mission to excommunicate non-believers – in this case, that's anyone to the left of Ted Cruz. I have received emails through this website from people who tell me there's no difference between the GOP moderates and Hillary Clinton. Based on what they tell me, they'll sit out the election next year if the candidate is Jeb Bush, Mitt Romney or Chris Christie.

They say a moderate can't win, and point to the last two presidential elections to "prove" their point. But what they haven't figured out yet is that a big reason John McCain and Mitt Romney lost is because the purists didn't vote. They sat home on Election Day. That's why the purist wing of the party is also known as the suicide wing.

Yes, the Democrats are waging their own internal battles – the Hillary wing vs. the Elizabeth Warren wing. But that fight amounts to nothing. Warren isn't running and her supporters will (if not enthusiastically) turn out for Hillary – unlike GOP purists who say they won't turn out for anyone they call a RINO.

Governor Christie is right because Republicans can't win unless they end the Civil War. Each faction needs to reach out to the other and make peace. Republicans need to take a pledge. They need to promise not only to support whoever wins the nomination but to encourage their loyal followers to do the same.

Senator Jeff Flake, the Republican from Arizona, didn't attend the forum in Iowa but earlier told the Times that, "too many Republicans have for too many years, for too many cycles, tried to appeal to a small group that does not help us in general elections."

He's also right.

If the Civil War continues, if the ideologically pure refuse to accept the candidate the voters choose on grounds that he's

not conservative enough, well, I hope they like President Hillary Clinton. It should matter to them that every Republican who runs will be more conservative than Hillary. Every single one.

Sign the pledge.