

## A 'National Divorce' Is An Understandable Desire But A Recipe For Disaster

BY: [NATHANAEL BLAKE](https://thefederalist.com/2023/02/27/a-national-divorce-is-an-understandable-desire-but-a-recipe-for-disaster/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=a-national-divorce-is-an-understandable-desire-but-a-recipe-for-disaster&utm_term=2023-02-27)[https://thefederalist.com/2023/02/27/a-national-divorce-is-an-understandable-desire-but-a-recipe-for-disaster/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=a-national-divorce-is-an-understandable-desire-but-a-recipe-for-disaster&utm\\_term=2023-02-27](https://thefederalist.com/2023/02/27/a-national-divorce-is-an-understandable-desire-but-a-recipe-for-disaster/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=a-national-divorce-is-an-understandable-desire-but-a-recipe-for-disaster&utm_term=2023-02-27)

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6 MIN READ



**National divorce is an understandable impulse, but our knowledge of better ways to live should give us hope we can win without separating.**

A national divorce is impractical, and the prospect of a civil war, which is what happened last time it was tried, is horrible. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Georgia congresswoman, is a terrible messenger for the idea. Thus, it is no surprise that her [tweet](#) about the need for a national divorce brought a cavalcade of criticism upon her, [including](#) from fellow Republicans.

Yet for all the problems with the proposal — to say nothing of the often-[stupid](#) responses — there are good reasons why the idea is alluring to some on the right. Acknowledging these points is not an endorsement of a national breakup, and ignoring them will not make them go away.

The first of these truths is simple: The moral and cultural divisions in our nation are probably as deep as those preceding the Civil War. There is a multitude of polling and punditry on our polarization, but it can perhaps be best summed up by noting that we can't even agree on what a woman is — the Biden administration, along with many blue states, is literally putting male criminals in

women's prisons on the theory that trans women are women, full stop. This level of disagreement, which is mirrored on many other issues, does not lend itself to easy coexistence or political comity.

Of course, this division applies to both sides, which brings us to the second point, which is that the culture war has a persistent aggressor on the left. This is not to say conservatives never counterattack. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the cultural left has successfully remade social and legal norms around the basics of life, such as sex, marriage, and childbearing. And they keep pushing the envelope; we went from "be nice as Bruce becomes Caitlyn" to "trans the preschoolers" almost instantly.

Furthermore, because the left styles these campaigns as the moral equivalents of, and successors to, the civil rights movement, they believe themselves justified in using the expansive government power used to break Jim Crow against, say, Christians who do not want to participate in promoting and celebrating same-sex wedding ceremonies.

Additionally, the left favors bigger government, which is inimical to pluralism, especially when it lacks generous accommodations for dissenters and minorities. The more control the government has over everything from education to health care, the less space there will be for nonconformists. This, in turn, reveals a practical problem with the [federalist solution](#) to our nation's divisions, which is that only one side is amenable to it. If the right shows more interest in national divorce, it is because they are constantly being attacked by the left.

This brings us to a third truth, which is that there is an asymmetry of power in the culture war. The dominance of cultural leftism within institutions and industries, from academia to the entertainment industry to Big Tech, allows leftists to achieve major cultural victories even when they lack political power.

As the left seizes control of cultural and economic hubs of power, the economic interests of much of red and blue America are diverging, leading to a merger of the class war and the culture war. Among the obvious examples of this dual polarization are the many attempts by Big Business (encouraged by the corporate media) to impose economic sanctions on conservative states that defy cultural leftism. The efforts by Big Tech to suppress conservative views and outlets

(sometimes even coordinating these efforts with left-wing government officials) are another.

The attraction national divorce has for some on the right is explained as much by the left's aggression paired with its cultural and economic power as it is by the extent of our divisions. The cultural left impinges much more on even very conservative parts of red states than the right does on the most liberal areas in blue states. For the left, these are righteous victories, and they feel no need to apologize for them, but they are a persistent source of resentment on the right.

Nonetheless, the first point may provide the hardest challenge for those who insist that national divorce is not just undesirable but impossible. Put simply; there are limits beyond which pluralism becomes unstable and unsustainable. There are differences that cannot be bridged, even with a smaller government and more federalism. These are divisions over which there is no political compromise that will avoid one side feeling oppressed by the other.

Transgender ideology has proven particularly potent at creating such conflicts. For instance, is it illegal and harmful discrimination to keep males who declare themselves "trans women" out of female locker rooms and showers, or is letting them in a violation of the rights of women and girls? Likewise, with regard to children who claim to be transgender: Is it abuse to transition them, or abuse not to?

A multitude of such issues is being piled on top of older bitter disputes, such as whether abortion is a human right or an inhumane wrong. And it is impossible to formulate compromises, or live-and-let-live policies, for them all. One side wins, and the other loses. As these issues proliferate, living under the regime of the other side will seem increasingly intolerable.

This does not mean we are headed for national divorce. But it is all too easy to envision a lawless sort of federalism in which the uniform rule of law is replaced by competing jurisdictions engaged in de facto nullification along with a dose of anarcho-tyranny. Nullification is once again being [preached](#) from the floor of the Senate, and there are plenty of recent examples of officials refusing to enforce some laws and applying others only to their opponents. And that, combined with our deep divisions, could functionally break our nation, even if it is nominally united.

But conservatives should not quit the work of preserving and restoring our nation. The empire of wokeness is powerful but fragile. It does not have majority support, and it can be defeated and beaten back. There are reasons for hope, from so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion programs being the first to go when businesses need to cut costs to GOP governors and legislatures, led by the example of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, growing spines and beginning to govern their states in the interests of the voters, not just their campaign donors. These leaders have learned that the key to winning enduring victories is to dismantle the institutional power of cultural leftism and dry up its funding.

Culturally, the time may also be right for a conservative renewal because cultural leftism is ineffective and immiserating. From public safety to racial harmony, cultural leftism is not keeping its promises. Indeed, it can't even [deliver](#) on its signature issue of sexual satisfaction — it turns out the conservative norm of the natural family is [good](#) at distributing sex and companionship across a population.

It is understandable that conservatives want to get away from those who are attacking our way of life, but our knowledge of better ways to live should give us hope that we can win.

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