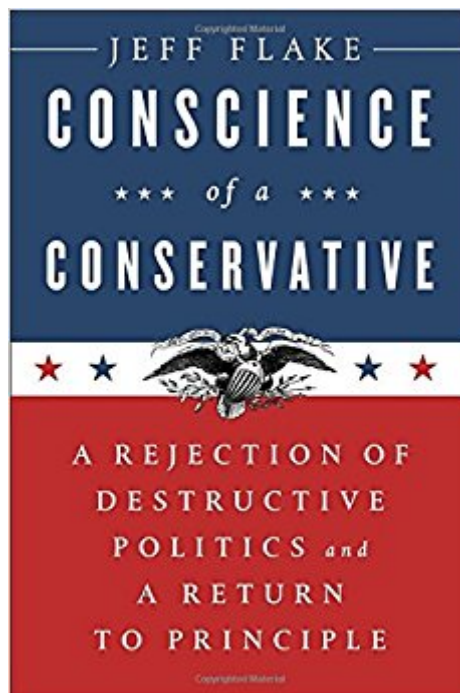




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# Conscience Of A Conservative: A Rejection Of Destructive Politics And A Return To Principle



## Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER “A thoughtful defense of traditional conservatism and a thorough assault on the way Donald Trump is betraying it.” —David Brooks, in his New York Times column

In a bold act of conscience, Republican Senator Jeff Flake takes his party to task for embracing nationalism, populism, xenophobia, and the anomalous Trump presidency. The book is an urgent call for a return to bedrock conservative principle and a cry to once again put country before party.

Dear Reader, I am a conservative. I believe that there are limits to what government can and should do, that there are some problems that government cannot solve, and that human initiative is best when left unfettered, free from government interference or coercion. I believe that these ideas, tested by time, offer the most freedom and best outcomes in the lives of the most people. But today, the American conservative movement has lost its way. Given the state of our politics, it is no exaggeration to say that this is an urgent matter.

The Republican party used to play to a broader audience, one that demanded that we accomplish something. But in this era of dysfunction, our primary accomplishment has been constructing the argument that we are not to blame. We have decided that it is better to build and maintain a majority by using the levers of power rather than the art of persuasion and the battle of ideas. We have decided that putting party over country is okay. There are many on both sides of the aisle who think this a good model on which to build a political career — destroying, not building.

And all the while, our country burns, our institutions are undermined, and our values are compromised. We have become so estranged from our principles that we no longer know what principle is.

America is not just a collection of transactions. America is also a collection of ideas and values. And these are our values. These are our principles. They are not subject to change, owing to political fashion or cult of personality. I believe that we desperately need to get back to the rigorous, fact-based arguments that made us conservatives in the first place. We need to realize that the stakes are simply too high to remain silent and fall in line.

That is why I have written this book and am taking this stand.

—Jeff Flake

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Conscience of a Conservative . . . is a thoughtful defense of traditional conservatism and a thorough assault on the way Donald Trump is betraying it. . . . Flake is in most ways an ideal public servant. He is an ideological purist but a temperamental conciliator. On spending and free trade he takes lonely principled stands; on immigration he’s crafted difficult bipartisan compromises.” •David Brooks, New York Times

“It’s striking how many influential figures in this slim volume he manages to impale with a stick and then lightly spit-roast. . . . He offers a despairing, unsparing indictment of everyone in Congress who went along with Trump’s election.” •Jennifer Senior, The New York Times

“No major elected Republican has provided a comprehensive critique of Trumpism itself. Until now. Sen. Jeff Flake’s new book, Conscience of a Conservative, is a white-hot indictment of Republican cowardice in the face of a hostile ideological takeover. It also represents the single largest act of political bravery of the Trump era.” •Michael Gerson, The Washington Post

“He presses his colleagues to call out Trump’s various attacks on conservatism, democracy, and reason. In this respect, Conscience of a Conservative may be the most clear-eyed and righteous takedown of Donald Trump from a Republican in office. . . . Conscience of a Conservative is a lucid look at what ails the Republican Party.” •New Republic

“Flake is correct that the market for the politics of inclusion and expansion has shrunk, and that Trump represents a singular threat to it. With this book, he has put his political career on the line in an attempt to expand

it. •USA Today “The book attempts to reckon with what conservatism means in the age of Donald Trump, and its power comes from Flake’s probing of his party’s complicity in Trump’s ascendance. . . . It remains true that for all the denunciations of Trump, it isn’t yet clear how rising conservative politicians will map a future in opposition to Trump, and what form a Republican resistance to the drift of the Party might take. Flake’s book is a start. •The New Yorker “Flake, a NeverTrumper from the start, has written by far the toughest anti-Trump critique yet to be delivered by a Republican politician currently holding high office. •New York “Flake is taking a stance only a few conservatives are willing to take publicly. •Forbes “In the most remarkable example of public Trump-bashing, Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona is taking aim at the president. •Time “Flake is channeling his state’s rich tradition as Western outsiders. •Los Angeles Times “Flake’s 136-page manifesto pulls no punches. . . . There are humanizing elements and personal reflections throughout that give a glimpse into how his upbringing and faith have shaped his conservative worldview. •NPR

Jeff Flake is the junior United States senator from Arizona. He is a fifth-generation Arizonan who was raised on a cattle ranch in Snowflake, a town named in part for his great-grandfather. Prior to his election to the U.S. Senate, Flake served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2001 to 2013, representing the East Valley. Jeff Flake and his wife, Cheryl, live in Mesa and have five children.

The book starts with the author’s statement that he HAD to write it and he regrets that he was forced to write it. He was forced by his conservative principles and by his worries about his own party, the GOP, which has abandoned these principles eventually paving the way for a populist president who defies conservative values in favour of narcissistic ambitions. However, Flake analyzes that the GOP’s alienation from its former core values has begun earlier, when the party’s primary goal was not pursuing a conservative political agenda anymore but simply obstructing president Obama’s policies. So, Trump was not an accident, but rose from an ideological vacuum that was created by the Republicans themselves. Flake writes in a decent, soft-spoken tone which is not bragging but often self-critical and thoughtful. And he is a constitutionalist. He strongly believes in the US Constitution which had stood the test of time for two centuries. The constitutional institutions of

government, the checks and balances, even the often-despised filibuster (Flake himself voted to go "nuclear") are of higher value than short-sighted political goals, tactical manoevers, personal interests and key figures. As I have said, it is a soft-toned book and leaves it to the reader to draw the final conclusion. And with respect to the sitting president, this conclusion is unambiguous. Maybe, future historians will say sometimes, it was this book that started the landslide. Addendum: It appears that this review was the very first one which was published here on .com. In the meanwhile, several critical reviews have been posted as well as critical comments to this review. The main argument of the critics is that they say that Jeff Flake is not conservative enough (or even a RINO). Firstly, when reading such reviews, I get the impression that the critical reviewers have not read the book and are therefore not getting how Flake defines conservatism. Secondly, it is an argument ad hominem and not against the book. One reviewer said that Flake DID vote for Trump several times. Yes, he did it out of loyalty to the GOP, but his doubts are rising and he is not the only Republican with rising doubts. Therefore, he is extremely fair to the GOP by publishing his thoughts. GOP should take the book as an alarm bell. And thirdly, paradoxically, these critical reviews prove the point that Flake makes in his book: that Trump supporters are moving away from conservatism by radicalizing it. The "Flake is not conservative enough"-argument reminds me of the typical reasoning of radical groups: the more radical, the better. And Flake says in his book, if the Republicans radicalize conservatism and if they focus on single persons (like Trump) and symbolic positions they will (1) divide the nation, (2) divide the conservative movement, (3) divide the GOP (think of the senators voting against Trump's bills), and (4) finally will drive the GOP into a minority position. Trump's public approval scores are disastrous. And every Republican congressman facing midterm elections will think twice about publicly siding with Trump. Still, many Republicans, including Flake himself, are supporting Trump and even voting for bills which they do not accept completely. Still, they are convinced that the conservative agenda is more important than single issues. But this book is the writing on the wall that this may change. My strong recommendation is to read the book BEFORE saying Flake is not conservative enough. IMO, Flake writes about good, old, traditional conservatism that does not mean nationalism, mercantilism and xenophobia. Conservatives have always been fighting FOR free trade, for the sake of prosperity. Have so many conservatives forgotten about David Ricardo's comparative advantages?

My curiosity was sparked about this book from an NPR article. As a moderate democrat I am surprised at how much I loved this book. Finally we find a true statesman in Congress.--someone who recognizes that our politics is broken and is humble enough to take on his party's role in the

dysfunction. And we all know there is blame on both sides and with all of us. I learned a great deal in the book. He is articulate and knowledgeable. It took great courage for him to buck the partisanship. It could cost him his seat. But I hope not. This should be required reading for every member of congress and for all the partisan pundits. We can fix this mess we're in and this book gives me hope.

I am confident this is a seminal book on the evolution of conservative thought and philosophy. It is extremely well-written and insightful, I just hope all Republicans (and Democrats for that matter) read this important book.

Senator Flake writes of renewing the spirit of the Republican Party that I joined 45 years ago, which has recently lost its way. Enlightening for all of those who claim to be conservative. Thank you, Senator.

This book is timely and Spot-On. Finally a Republican with the Guts to stand up to Boy-Child Trump and call a Spade a Spade !!

Flake tells it like it is. And although he may pay the political price for it, I only wish he and more like-minded people would have come out and said this much sooner.

Refreshingly honest and straight forward. Addresses issues that we urgently need to come together as Americans to solve.

Informative

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