

## Say This, Not That: Sarah Huckabee Sanders

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### Huckabee Sanders Shows How Not To Win Friends & Influence People

After last week's State of the Union address, the Republican party selected Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders to deliver their party's response. Matching her style during her time as former President Trump's Press Secretary, her remarks were divisive, dull, and demonstrated the exact opposite of how to deliver an effective message.

Progress Iowa follows a research-based formula for message development. We lead with a shared value, define the opposition, and end with a call to action.

Starting with a shared value is critical. It states what you believe, instead of allowing the opposition to define the discussion. And it opens the door to connect with those who may disagree, but could be persuaded. By comparison, **Huckabee Sanders tried to distill all of our country's political arguments to a simple choice: between "normal and crazy."**

Casting your opposition as crazy (or any other similarly insulting characterization) is not the best way to win friends and influence people. It will likely force anyone who disagrees with you to put up their guard and be even more suspicious of everything else you're saying.

Huckabee Sanders' message is a prime example of what's wrong with conservative political discourse today. Instead of leading with values and what Americans deserve, she continued her embrace of divisive language championed by Trump to further MAGA goals that disregard most working families.

Any political message ought to inspire the base of current supporters and persuade those who can be persuaded. President Biden did a masterful job of this last week. Governor Huckabee Sanders fell flat in her response.

Polling backs it up: [her speech was seen as more divisive](#) than Biden's, according to a survey conducted by Politico.

**The bottom line: to deliver a winning message, start by connecting with a shared value. And steer clear of insulting your audience by name-calling your opponents.**

### Additional Background: Sarah Huckabee Sanders

#### *A Trump Loyalist, Sanders Was Paid To Lie*

As White House Press Secretary from 2017 to 2019, Sarah Huckabee Sanders defended her boss with fierce loyalty. From 2016 to 2020, the [Washington Post counted 30,573 lies](#) from former President Donald Trump. With his ["false claims"](#) peaking toward the end of Sander's tenure, it's safe to say she obscured the media and the public on approximately 8,000 of his misleading or false statements, while making [plenty](#) of [her own](#).

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[Huckabee Sanders killed the daily briefing](#), one of the most powerful tools for the White House to signal to the world its message and beliefs. Instead, Trump [briefed reporters in the White House driveway](#). Throughout her White House tenure, Huckabee Sanders displayed an extreme willingness to make baseless accusations, for instance, her comments regarding [FBI to rationalize Trump's firing of then-Director James Comey](#) and [Huckabee Sanders admitted to lying](#) to have White House press credentials revoked from Jim Acosta after he upset Trump. Sanders and other Trump allies leaned into disinformation campaigns and a Soviet propaganda technique called the [firehose of falsehoods](#) - leaving in their path an unprecedented scale of disinformation, an abuse of the platform and blight in American history.

### *Huckabee Sanders Elevates The MAGA Right*

The soviet-style MAGA disinformation strategies promoted by Trump and Huckabee Sanders still plague American politics today. Huckabee Sanders' speech responded to nothing the President said and provided little insight into conservative policy goals. Mentions of the border, crime, and taxes were made, but were joined by no substance on how those conservative calling cards become reality. Her response held no tangible deliverables, just platitudes, buzz words, and personal stories of a Nepo Baby attempting to relate to everyday Americans.

Her storyline ignored [MAGA extremists in her own party](#) in an attempt to legitimize the hate and division Trump followers are committed to. Her backwards language is no accident. By leaning into [ableist word choices](#) Huckabee Sanders furthered her effort to divide Americans and tell certain citizens they are unwelcome in her version of America.

Instead of labeling the values she and her party stand for, Huckabee Sanders skirted policy issues that would serve such values, and invoked the firehose [disinformation campaigns](#) regarding children, honest education and inclusivity. By holding onto fear and clutching children as a wedge issue, she confirmed for the Trump base that MAGA Republicans are willing to hold our country hostage so they can grab power and hoard wealth for billionaires and corporate backers.

It's no surprise her speech would avoid actual policy goals and criticism of specific actions by President Biden. Biden has fought for the greatest investment in America [since the New Deal](#). To remind Americans that Republicans seek to cut Medicare and Social Security would be political suicide, resoundingly acknowledged during the President's speech.

By hiding behind the faux curtain of the nuclear family, conservatives protect the richest Americans and wealthy corporations. Huckabee Sanders sunk to a fluff retort to ensure those who paid for and promoted Trump's criminal conspiracy will continue to hoard power and money. Ensuring tax cuts and windfall profits for the richest among us continue, while the middle class picks up the tab.