

ONE TRUTH THE GOP DID TELL: THEY WANT YOU TO WORK FOR YOURSELF

Amid a flood of lies being uttered at the Republican National Convention this week, there is one truth the GOP has told.

They want you to work for yourself.

The Republican obsession with working for yourself stems from a campaign strategy—to recruit a parade of people—many of them whose businesses suck at the government teat—to “refute” an Obama quote they’re taking out of context, “You didn’t build that”

Here’s how Paul Ryan claimed credit to building a business (he didn’t mention it was made possible by Social Security survivor benefits.

My Mom started a small business, and I’ve seen what it takes. Mom was 50 when my Dad died. She got on a bus every weekday for years, and rode 40 miles each morning to Madison. She earned a new degree and learned new skills to start her small business. It wasn’t just a new livelihood. It was a new life. And it transformed my Mom from a widow in grief to a small businesswoman whose happiness wasn’t just in the past. Her work gave her hope. It made our family proud. And to this day, my Mom is my role model.

But the most absurd case came from Senator, former NH Attorney General, prosecutor, and before that private practice lawyer Kelly Ayotte, who instead of talking about her considerable and impressive professional experience, focused on shoveling snow. (This served the other apparent convention strategy to

have all women, save Condi Rice, to define themselves first and foremost as wife and/or mother.)

My husband Joe – who was on track to be a commercial pilot – instead served our great country flying combat missions in Iraq.

When he returned home from the war – he found himself in the same position as so many Americans – he needed a job.

So he started a family business – a landscaping and snowplowing company.

And when I say he – I mean we – because I spent many a sleepless night shoveling snow. And I'm proud of the fact that in addition to being a United States Senator – I'm also pretty good with a snow plow!

Now, Ayotte's husband Joe Daley's story could have served any of several narratives. His military service itself. The declining opportunities for airline pilots, an industry repeatedly bailed out by government. The difficult job market for veterans. But instead it became a story about an Attorney making \$174,000 a year for her day job in public service plowing snow.

But it's not just Ayotte's admirable career in public service that gets short shrift here. While many of the speakers talked about how many employees their small business supported, no one I saw—save Condi Rice, who rightly celebrated her success rising from segregated Birmingham to become Secretary of State—talked about the honor of working **as** an employee, whether as a public servant or in the private sector.

That points to several larger trend that fits well with the real thrust of the policies Mitt and Ryan would implement. First, the Bain-like stripping of real employment relationships in exchange for transient, insecure contracts. The

denial of responsibility anytime a contractor makes a mistake. And perhaps most importantly, a tax system that values wealth creation over work.

The RNC is all about these American Dream stories, and a few of them are actually what they appear to be, stories about entrepreneurs building something of their own with little help from the government. But this is about the value of working hard to own things, not work itself.