



## **Primer: Pat Buchanan—A Worthy Recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom**

### **Background:**

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the U.S. government's highest civilian honor, awarded by the president.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, it has been given to a diverse group of recipients who have made exceptional contributions to the nation. Recently, Congressman Riley Moore (R-WV) sent a letter to President Donald Trump urging him to award Patrick (Pat) J. Buchanan the medal.<sup>2</sup> Buchanan, a revered conservative author, political commentator, former presidential candidate, and former advisor to presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan, has been a transformative figure in American politics. His decades-long advocacy for tariffs, strong borders, and realist foreign policy has reshaped the Republican Party and influenced the rise of the America First movement led by President Trump. Buchanan was ahead of his time, and his criticisms of mass immigration and globalization have been vindicated, making him a worthy candidate for this honor.

### **Buchanan's Role in Shaping Modern Conservatism**

Buchanan's career spans more than six decades. In 1966, he took a position as an assistant to Nixon.<sup>3</sup> When the latter was elected as president in 1968, Buchanan became a Special Assistant to the President.<sup>4</sup> After Nixon resigned the presidency in August 1974, he went on to serve President Ford.<sup>5</sup> In 1985, he ascended to the position of White House Communications Director for President Reagan.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Leubsdorf (January 23, 2025). "Presidential Medal of Freedom," *Congressional Research Service*. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47639?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22Presidential+Medal+of+Freedom%22%7D&s=1&r=1>

<sup>2</sup> Moore (August 22, 2025). "'Honoring Patrick J. Buchanan with the Presidential Medal of Freedom would recognize his role as one of the truest patriots of the past century.' Read more about my letter urging @POTUS to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom in @ameconmag," *X*. <https://x.com/RepRileyMoore/status/1958869645705740356>

<sup>3</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Pat Buchanan," *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Patrick-J-Buchanan>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

In the 1990s, Buchanan was one of the only public figures warning about unrestricted mass immigration and free-trade agreements that were outsourcing the country's manufacturing base.<sup>7</sup> He spread his ideas by running for president as a Republican in 1992 and 1996 and as the Reform Party candidate in 2000.<sup>8</sup> He challenged the GOP establishment's embrace of globalism, free trade, and interventionist foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> His 1992 campaign against President George H. W. Bush forced the GOP to grapple with issues that many in the party found uncomfortable.<sup>10</sup> Buchanan's platform, which included strict restrictions on immigration, tariffs, and realist foreign policy, was considered radical at the time but has since become mainstream within the Republican Party.<sup>11</sup> His 1992 Republican National Convention speech, often called the "Culture War" speech, galvanized conservatives by framing the post–Cold War political struggle as a defense of traditional American values against radical progressive ideologies.<sup>12</sup>

Through his campaigns and writings, Buchanan laid the intellectual groundwork for the America First movement, which gained prominence under President Trump. His focus on the "forgotten Americans"—working-class citizens affected by globalization and cultural shifts—resonated with voters who felt ignored by the political establishment.

### **Prophetic Warnings on Globalization and Immigration**

Buchanan's most enduring contribution is his foresight regarding the consequences of globalization and mass immigration. In his book *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization* (2002), Buchanan warned that mass immigration combined with declining American birth rates threatened the cultural and economic fabric of the nation. He argued that uncontrolled immigration could lead to a loss of national identity: "Uncontrolled immigration threatens to deconstruct the nation we grew up in and convert America into a conglomeration of peoples with almost nothing in common—not history, heroes, languages, culture, faith, or ancestors."<sup>13</sup> At the time, these views were dismissed, but they have gained traction as people have recognized the destructive results of the policies that Buchanan criticized. Some estimates put the total number of illegal aliens now

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<sup>7</sup> Hendrickson (November 18, 2024). "Honor Patrick J. Buchanan with the Presidential Medal of Freedom," *The American Conservative*.

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/honor-patrick-j-buchanan-with-the-presidential-medal-of-freedom/>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Rosenthal (March 13, 1992). "THE 1992 CAMPAIGN: White House; Bush Ad Says Buchanan's Car Shows He's for America Last," *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/13/us/1992-campaign-white-house-bush-ad-says-buchanan-s-car-shows-he-s-for-america.html>

<sup>11</sup> Hemmer (September 8, 2022). "The Man Who Won the Republican Party Before Trump Did," *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/opinion/pat-buchanan-donald-trump.html>

<sup>12</sup> Moore (August 22, 2025). Letter to President Trump (screenshots), *X*.

<https://x.com/RepRileyMoore/status/1958873887644528981>

<sup>13</sup> Buchanan (2007). *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization*, Thomas Dunne Books

residing in the United States at more than twenty million,<sup>14</sup> and U.S. birth rates have fallen year over year since 2007 and are below replacement levels.<sup>15</sup>

Buchanan was also a vocal critic of free-trade agreements such as NAFTA, which he believed undermined American manufacturing and sovereignty. In his book *Day of Reckoning: How Hubris, Ideology, and Greed are Tearing America Apart* (2007), he criticized the ignorance of history that drove America's embrace of globalization. Since January 2000, the United States has lost over a quarter of all domestic manufacturing jobs, a decline of more than 4.7 million.<sup>16</sup> President Trump is remedying this situation with pro-growth policies and tariffs like those that Buchanan advocated for.

## Conclusion

Buchanan's contributions to American political thought, prophetic warnings about globalization and mass immigration, and defense of American sovereignty make him a deserving candidate for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Buchanan's legacy serves as a reminder of the importance of putting America first.

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<sup>14</sup> Miller and Schuster (November 8, 2024). "Primer: U.S. Deportations—A Longstanding & Normal Process," *Center for Renewing America*.

<https://americarenewing.com/issues/primer-u-s-deportations-a-longstanding-normal-process/>

<sup>15</sup> Hauser (April 11, 2025). "Primer: Family Formation in America's New Golden Age," *Center for Renewing America*. <https://americarenewing.com/issues/primer-family-formation-in-americas-new-golden-age/>

<sup>16</sup> Beyer (February 1, 2022). "Decades of Manufacturing Decline and Outsourcing Left U.S. Supply Chains Vulnerable to Disruption," *Joint Economic Committee Democrats*, [https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/94bf8985-1e87-438b-9a3a-e3334489dd30/background-on-issues-in-us-manufacturing-and-supply-chains-final.pdf](https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/94bf8985-1e87-438b-9a3a-e3334489dd30/background-on-issues-in-us-manufacturing-and-supply-chains-final.pdf)