



Red Herring Politics: Part II

Some of the longest-serving members of Congress, whose party has overwhelming majorities in both houses, are having far closer election races than they are used to. These include Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, not to mention 18-year veteran Senator Barbara Boxer.



Despite their long records, they seem to want to talk about everything except their records. They could tell us why they voted for ObamaCare and huge stimulus bills, without time enough to read them. Instead, they have come up with enough red herrings to stock an aquarium.

One of the big distracting talking points is that the Republicans in Congress have been “the party of No.” Given the overwhelming majorities of the Democrats in both houses, in addition to their control of the White House, whether the Republicans said “yes,” “no” or “maybe” could not stop the Democrats from doing anything they wanted to do.

It should also be noted that the Democrats were in power in Congress before President Obama got to the White House. So “the mess” that he constantly reminds us he “inherited” includes runaway spending by Congressional Democrats, of whom Senator Barack Obama was one of the more prominent big spenders.

Usually, the incumbents can talk about their “experience.” But experience at what? Deception? Earmarks? Reckless spending?

Senator Harry Reid is playing the race card, saying that he can’t see how any Hispanic can vote for Republicans. But this is the same Harry Reid who in 1993, rejected “those who ask us to wink at illegal immigration” and warned against having “the social and cultural makeup” of the country “radically altered” by these immigrants.

In 1993, Senator Reid introduced a bill — the Immigration Stabilization Act — to cut back on all immigration, both legal and illegal.

Senator Reid said: “Our federal wallet is stretched to the limit by illegal aliens getting welfare, food stamps, medical care and other benefits, often without paying taxes.” He said, “Safeguards like welfare and free medical care are in place to boost Americans in need of short-term assistance,” and added: “These programs were not meant to entice freeloaders and scam artists from around the world.”

Today, of course, Senator Reid is singing an entirely different tune. He has what Thorstein Veblen once called a “versatility of convictions.” So do a lot of “experienced” politicians.

Instead of talking about the track records of people who have been wielding power in Washington for years, much of the mainstream follows the scent of the red herrings that have been dragged across their trail and focuses on the personal lives of the candidates who are challenging the incumbents.



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on October 6, 2010

Whether it is Meg Whitman's housekeeper or remarks that Christine O'Donnell made when she was a teenager, or how much money Carly Fiorina made when she was a corporate CEO, the media are right on it — and right off the serious issues about what the incumbents have been doing to this country.

If everyone who made silly remarks when they were teenagers were prevented from being elected, at least half the elective offices in the country would be vacant. And since when is earning a high income in private industry a disqualification for holding public office?

The Obama administration has fewer people with real world experience in the private sector than any other administration in years. Maybe if they had more people with practical experience in the economy, we wouldn't be in the mess that politicians created.

The big question for the election next month is whether the voters keep their eye on the ball and judge candidates by what policies they advocate or whether they can be thrown off the track by red herrings.

We have already seen in 2008 what can happen when voters fail to pay attention to a presidential candidate's track record, and let themselves be dazzled by rhetoric, symbolism and media hype. We are losing not only our jobs but our country — and this could be our last chance to stop the Obama-Pelosi-Reid juggernaut.

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