

## Circus Tents And Side Shows

Democrats are gleeful over their victory in New York's 23rd congressional district on November 3, because now they have one more leftist Congressman to help push socialism on unsuspecting citizens of the United States. With the help of the media, they are also doing their best to portray the election as an enormous loss for conservatives, repeatedly pointing out that "Republicans have held the seat since the Civil War." (They are incorrect. The borders of the 23rd district have changed many times over the last 150 years, and Democrats have frequently held Congressional seats in the area. For example, Democrat Michael R. McNulty served the area between 1989 and 1993, Democrat Peter A. Peyser served between 1983 and 1989, and Democrat Bruce F. Caputo served between 1977 and 1983.) Although *most* of the area of upstate New York has been represented by Republicans since the late 19th century, it is a falsehood to say the district has been held by them since the Civil War.

As much as Democrats would like to believe it, the election did not signal the end of conservatism. The election only showed that when a Democrat runs as a Republican, the Republican Party loses. Conservative Party candidate Doug Hoffman, an embarrassingly uncharismatic and incapable campaigner who did not even live in the district, came from out of nowhere just weeks before the election and nevertheless ended up with a stunning 45 per cent of the vote with virtually no organized campaign. A last-minute third-party candidate receiving 45 per cent of the vote is *not* without meaning.

If Republicans learn nothing else from their November 3 defeat in New York, they should learn to stop listening to liberals for advice. When the media pushed for the nomination of Senator John McCain in 2008, it knew full well he was the weakest candidate and would be the easiest for Clinton or Obama to defeat. When liberal pundits suggest that the Republican Party "expand its base" by "moderating its views," it is an intentional effort to trick Republicans into selecting "Democrat-lite" candidates—who are far easier for Democrats to defeat than principled conservatives.

In the case of New York's 23rd district, the *New York Times* called Dede Scozzafava's pro-abortion, pro-gay marriage, pro-card check legislation, pro-high tax, pro-ACORN, pro-stimulus positions "refreshing tinges of centrism," and opined that "creative ideas and candidates, not right-wing zeal, are the obvious way [for the Republican Party] to get back in the game of democracy." In response, Brent Bozell, founder and head of the Media Research Center, commented, "Any New Yorker foolish enough to follow the political advice of the *New York Times* deserves what he gets." In the New York race, local Republican Party officials made the mistake of trusting the advice of "higher up" party officials in Washington; had they trusted their own judgment and not selected the incredibly liberal Scozzafava as their candidate, the GOP would have kept that seat in Congress.

Republicans must tell Lindsay Graham, John McCain, and Michael Steele to shut up and

get out of the way. They push the “big tent” theory without understanding the concept. From their perspective, the Republicans will enlarge their tent by targeting certain voting blocks—as though they were simply merchandising a product. The big tent theory no doubt leads to party officials having discussions like this:

“We need to attract more female voters for the upcoming election, How do we do that?”

“Well, we’ve got several women interested in running for the 23rd district seat, like that Scozzafava woman.”

“Okay, that will help attract some women voters. How about abortion? I realize that more people are opposed to abortion than favor it, but it wouldn’t hurt for us to attract some pro-choice voters too. You know, enlarge the tent and all that.”

“Scozzafava is pro-abortion.”

“Great, one more point in her favor. How about gays?”

“I don’t think she’s gay.”

”Maybe not, but Scozzafava supports gay marriage.”

“Excellent! We’re really enlarging that tent now!”

“Hey, we’ve got a union problem too. Those union bosses really hammer their members to vote Democrat.”

“That’s not a problem... Scozzafava supports doing away with secret ballots in union organizing elections. Hell, if we select her, we may even get the SEIU to contribute to the campaign.”

“Not only that, Scozzafava supported the stimulus legislation.”

“But that didn’t create any jobs. In fact, unemployment is close to 10 per cent.”

“Right, but that’s what the Democrat voters support, bigger government and more federal spending. We can’t get them to vote for us unless we give them some of what they want.”

“Are we agreed then? If we pick Scozzafava, we can attract pro-gay marriage, pro-stimulus, pro-abortion, pro-union, pro-big government Democrats to the Republican Party?”

“My concern is that she’s not the most attractive person around. In fact, she’s kind of pudgy and overweight.”

“Yeah, but so is half of New York. They’ll connect with her.”

“Okay, I’ll go along with Scozzafava. We’ll probably pick up some of the Italian vote too.”

“But it’s too bad she isn’t Jewish...”

The Republican Party fell into the Democrat trap in New York’s 23rd district, focusing not on principle but on a feeble attempt to attract certain voting blocks. Did the Republican Party think that Scozzafava would win simply because the socialists at the DailyKos were impressed by her leftist credentials? Impressed or not, they would still pull the lever for the Democrat once they were inside the voting booth. When the *New York Times* writes that “creative ideas and candidates, not right-wing zeal, are the obvious way to get back in the game of democracy,” it is attempting to persuade Republicans to give up their conservative principles and throw in the towel. The “advice” from the liberals is basically, “If you Republicans become more like Democrats, then the Democrats will vote for you!” (Yes, and if you condemn Christianity or Judaism and convert to Islam you won’t get your head sliced off by a radical Islamist—but you will then no longer be a Christian or a Jew.)

Granted, given two principled conservatives running against each other in a primary, the edge would likely go to the one who is more appealing in “non-philosophical” areas—like appearance, persuasiveness of speech, style, etc. If Mitt Romney and Michael Moore had identical positions on the issues, Romney would easily win an election between the two of them. If Jessica Alba and virtually anyone else had identical positions on the issues, Alba would win. One can understand why a television network would not want to hire unattractive cross-eyed people to anchor their evening news programs. But political philosophy should matter *first* when selecting candidates—*everything else is secondary*.

The Republican Party officials who believe conservative values are costing them elections need to learn from the New York race... or resign. Ronald Reagan did not win elections *despite* his conservative philosophy, he won *because* of it. Yes, Reagan was a handsome, telegenic man with exceptional speaking skills and charm. But without his conservative philosophies driving him, he would not have been the success that he was.

John McCain did not lose because he was not as attractive, telegenic or well-spoken as Reagan (although he was not); he lost because he was an unprincipled “Democrat-lite” candidate. It was Sarah Palin whose coattails helped McCain. The voters saw her as a genuine Reagan conservative, so they held their noses and voted for McCain, and hoped he would quit after his first term to make way for President Palin. Palin, like Reagan, is attractive, telegenic, and well-spoken. But those traits only help the candidate; they do

not drive the candidate.

Republicans should pay attention to those who the Democrats detest and ostracize the most. Why do they hate Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann with such a passion? Because they *fear* candidates who can effectively communicate the conservative message. It is that simple. You won't hear MSNBC commentators going crazy over comments by Lindsay Graham because he is not a threat to socialism—in fact, he is often a collaborator. When the 2012 presidential primaries arrive, pay attention to which Republican candidates the leftists in the media praise and favor; that is a sign that they believe they will be the easiest for Obama to beat in November. The candidate they criticize the most is probably the one the Republicans should nominate. The media leftists will advocate the weakest Republican candidate and condemn the strongest. Count on it.

The lesson from 2008 is that there is no way a Democrat-lite candidate can defeat a full-bore, fire-breathing, redistribution-of-wealth Democrat. Half-truths do not defeat lies; only truth can defeat lies. Half-evil cannot defeat evil; only good can defeat evil.

The message for the Republican Party is this: You cannot get more people into the circus tent by expanding the side show attractions outside and laying off the trapeze artists, tightrope walkers, and lion-tamers inside. Ronald Reagan was the lion-tamer people came to see. John McCain, Dede Scozzafava, and Lindsay Graham are part of the side show—we watch their acts only while we are waiting in line for the main event. If the attractions under the big top are worth seeing, the customers will come. But if there is nothing under the big tent, they won't even bother with the side show.

*Don Fredrick*

*November 6, 2009*

*Copyright Don Fredrick 2009*

Note: It is worth mentioning that Bill Owens, the Democrat who won the 23rd district race, told voters during the campaign that he was opposed to health care legislation containing a “public option.” But after being sworn in on November 6, Owens quickly endorsed Pelosi's deceptively-named Affordable Healthcare for America Act. During the campaign Owens also said he was opposed to cutting Medicare benefits, taxing health care benefits, and higher taxes on the middle class. By supporting the health care legislation, Owens is breaking those pledges—in his first 24 hours as a Congressman. (Assuming the New York voters are paying attention, Owens stands a good chance of being booted out of office in November 2010.)