Republicans Want Answers From

Presidential Candidates

November 23, 1995 by Phyllis Schlafly

We can debate whether or not the media really tell us what to think, but they surely tell us what to think about. The 1996 presidential election is still almost a year away, but the media have been forcing us to think about it since the beginning of 1995. By the time it is over, it will have been nearly a two-year stretch, and we are already tired of it.

Despite the persistent pressures from the perennial pollsters, Republican voters are a stubborn lot and a big percentage simply refuses to make a choice. Most presidential hopefuls are still clustered in single digits.

The fact that Ronald Reagan was in single digits at this point before his first election doesn't dissuade the media from their demands. The abrupt departure from the race of Pete Wilson and then Colin Powell, both supposedly ten-ton gorillas, didn't pry Republican voters loose from the category of "undecided."

Bob Dole's substantial lead is probably the result of, as Morton Kondracke has pointed out, the Republican Party's preference for primogeniture. As the senior pol, Dole's in line; he's been in office so long he deserves it, or so the thinking goes.

But political parties aren't hereditary. Voters usually select their candidates on the basis of their likability, their articulation of a mix of views on issues that voters care about, and the vision and leadership they manifest.

Most of the presidential political discussion seems to be along the following lines. Who wins straw polls among other politicians? Who raises the most money? Who has held more important government jobs?

Maybe the voters just donþt care about those factors, and thatþs why they are holding back. So what issues do the voters care about?

What are called the sovereignty questions are the preeminent issues that presidential candidates should talk about because they concern national integrity and survival. Voters want the answers to a whole cluster of questions like these.

Do you support barring President Clinton from sending American troops to Bosnia by cutting off all taxpayers' money? Where do you stand on the prospective Army court-martial of a U.S. soldier for refusing to wear the United Nations uniform?

Will you stop sending American money to the UN to involve us in foreign wars, a practice dishonestly described as "peacekeeping"? Will you oppose all efforts to allow the UN to grab any kind of taxing power, and will you cut off all money to the World Bank if it diverts any of its funds to the UN?

Will you oppose the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (as Ronald Reagan did) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (promoted by Hillary Rodham Clinton)?

Will you candidly admit that NAFTA has cost tens of thousands of American jobs and take steps to remedy the manifold injuries to American workers and taxpayers? Will you get us out of the World Trade Organization?

What are you going to do about the Mexican bailout? Do you pledge that you will never again allow U.S. taxpayers' money to be used to shore up foreign currency?

What is your plan to stop illegal immigration and to cut off all taxpayer benefits to the illegal aliens who are already in this country? Will you support a moratorium on legal immigration until we deal with the illegal immigration problem?

Do you support making English our official language? Will you cut off all taxpayer support of foreign language ballots and the language apartheid enforced on public schoolchildren in the name of "bilingual education"?

What is your stand on term limits, secret pay raises for Congressmen, and Congressional pensions? Will ou cut off taxpayers' handout to wealthy organizations such as Planned Parenthood and AARP?

Are you going to cancel all federal regulations that impose affirmative action quotas or set-asides?

Education and crime are certainly two hot-button concerns, but they are not primarily federal issues. Most of what the Federal Government is doing in those areas does not address the real problems, and some of what the Federal Government is doing is downright detrimental.

It's not the job of the President to reform public schools or see that the children are taught how to read and write, but it would be helpful if presidential candidates would promise to eliminate federal control by abolishing the Department of Education and Goals 2000.

Likewise, crime control is and should be primarily a state and local matter. But it would be helpful if the Federal Government would get moving with prosecutions for the killings carried out by federal agents at Ruby Ridge and Waco.

Voters want their candidates to address the fact that so many Americans feel that government is their enemy, not their protector. They want candidates to address specifics such as the government's taking of private lands at the behest of the environmental extremists and proposals to allow Janet Reno to wiretap the phones of every American.

Many voters are likely to remain undecided as long as the candidates dodge the issues they really care about.