Obama Strikes Out in First Debate

by Phyllis Schlafly October 3, 2008

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Obama Agrees with

McCain at First Debate

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The liberals have been marketing Barack Obama as the greatest orator of our times, but the public saw a different picture in the first presidential debate. Angry, perplexed, and devoid of substance was the real Obama whom the media could no longer hide.

By contrast, John McCain provided refreshing sincerity to Obama's incoherent subterfuges. McCain explained in simple language that only Republicans will limit the increase in government spending, defend national security, and ensure that families rather than the federal government will control health care.

McCain reminded voters that Obama is the most liberal member of the U.S. Senate. In one of several witty comments, McCain said, "It's hard to reach across the aisle from that far left."

The debate was held under very disadvantageous circumstances for McCain, and the left had every reason to expect a home run for its candidate. The markets were melting with a Republican in the White House, and McCain was being bullied by the media.

While there was nothing particularly brilliant about McCain's responses to Jim Lehrer, McCain came across as genuinely sincere and straightforward. That was more than Obama could do.

When asked how each candidate would specifically make up for money lost in the proposed bailout, McCain proposed a spending freeze with a few specific exceptions. "How about a spending freeze on everything but defense, veterans affairs and entitlement programs?" McCain offered.

Obama refused to accept this obvious solution to out-of-control federal spending. His response illustrated why Democratic presidential candidates have been criticized as tax-and-spend politicians.

"There are some programs that are very important that are under-funded. I want to increase early childhood education, and the notion that we should freeze that when there may be, for example, this Medicare subsidy doesn't make sense."

The only thing clear about Obama's incoherent statement is that he will continue to tax-and-spend exactly as the Democratic leadership has being doing for decades. McCain's position against more fiscal recklessness scored many points with the voters, who are tired and broke because of politicians wasting their money.

Given the weak state of the economy, all Obama had to do was to offer some reasonable plan and he would have come out ahead. But he couldn't muster even that.

Obama declared, "The only point I want to make is this, that in order to make the tough decisions we have to know what our values are and who we're fighting for and our priorities and if ... we are leaving out health care which is crushing on people all across the country, then I think we have made a bad decision and I want to make sure we're not shortchanging our long-term priorities."

"Leaving out health care"? It sounds like Obama wants to make another try for federal control over all family health care decisions. McCain made it clear that he opposes any such government interference.

"I want to make sure we're not handing the health care system over to the federal government, which is basically what would ultimately happen with Senator Obama's health care plan. I want the families to make decisions between themselves and their doctors; not the federal government," McCain explained.

More government control is not the kind of "change" that Americans want, particularly after politicians have so badly mishandled our financial condition. Can you imagine the hardship if hospitals were about to collapse like financial institutions?

The last time the Democrats tried to give the federal government greater control over families' medical decisions was in 1993 and 1994, and then Americans surprised them by voting many of them out of office. McCain showed that he knows that Americans still want to assure a system that families, not government, will make medical decisions.

American voters are not as easily fooled as Obama and his supporters seem to think. The more that voters hear what Obama has in mind for them, the more they will likely say "no thanks" to his repackaged proposals for more government control.

Only McCain was honest enough to remind the American people that we "owe China $500 billion." Only McCain said that he has "plans to reduce and eliminate unnecessary and wasteful spending and, if there's anybody here who thinks there aren't agencies of government where spending can be cut and their budgets slashed, they have not spent a lot of time in Washington."

Obama's evasion of specifics and his use of repetitious platitudes made it painfully clear that he does not intend to reduce government control or cut government spending at all. "We have to fix our health care system," he declared, but his "fix" is just more government control and spending.

Obama's performance confirmed that he is full of bitter gripes about something. American voters are left scratching their heads and wondering about Obama's own candidacy: "Where's the beef?"