Contrasts and Similarities In The Two Party Platforms

by Phyllis Schlafly Sept. 15, 2004

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The Republican and Democratic parties could have stirred up more television audience for their national nominating conventions by allowing the delegates to debate their party platforms. But both presidential nominees exercised such tight control that no convention debate was permitted.

Both parties adopted their platforms with a single pound of the gavel. The thousands of delegates who came from all over the country dutifully played their roles as props for a television special.

It was an extraordinary feat of political management to prevent political activists in both parties from airing their deeply held differences on political, social, economic, and foreign policy issues. Strong positions on only two issues essential to their own constituencies were allowed by the party managers, while most of the verbiage in both platforms was written to appeal to the so-called middle.

The Republican Platform supports traditional marriage as the "unique and special union of one man and one woman." It endorses a constitutional amendment to protect marriage as well as the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

DOMA garnered 85 votes when it passed the Senate in 1996, but John Kerry was one of the handful who voted No, and President Bush rubbed this in during his acceptance speech. Bush said, "If you voted against the bipartisan Defense of Marriage Act, which President Clinton signed, you are not the candidate of conservative values."

The Republican Platform quotes President Bush's oft-repeated line: "We will not stand for judges who undermine democracy by legislating from the bench and try to remake America by court order." The Platform followed up by asserting: "The Republican House of Representatives has responded to this challenge by passing H.R. 3313, a bill to withdraw jurisdiction from the federal courts over the Defense of Marriage Act. We urge Congress to use its Article III power to enact this into law, so that activist federal judges cannot force 49 other states to approve and recognize Massachusetts' attempt to redefine marriage."

In contrast, the Democratic Platform endorses "equal responsibilities, benefits, and protections" for "gay and lesbian families," and opposes a federal marriage amendment. It stopped short of endorsing same-sex marriage, hiding behind the excuse that marriage should continue to be defined at the state level.

This pretense of John Kerry and the Democrats to be born-again state's righters is as phony as a $3 bill. The DOMA, which John Kerry voted against, is the perfect state's rights answer to the marriage issue because it assures the right of the other 49 states to refuse to recognize Massachusetts same-sex marriage licenses.

When Kerry and the Democrats oppose both a marriage amendment and DOMA, it means they want leftwing activist judges to define marriage instead of our elected representatives. The Republican Platform accurately describes such impudence as "judicial supremacy."

It implores Congress to limit federal court jurisdiction in instances where judges are threatening to abuse their power by banning the use of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, or prohibiting depictions of the Ten Commandments, or invalidating the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

The two platforms are also starkly different on the abortion issue. The Republican Platform states that "the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed."

The pro-life plank continues in language that is practically identical to the pro-life plank in every Republican National Platform since 1984. It supports a human life amendment to the Constitution, legislation to make clear that the 14th Amendment applies to unborn children, and the appointment of judges who respect the sanctity of innocent human life, and it opposes spending taxpayers' money for abortion or organizations that advocate it.

In obedience to the Democrats' pro-abortion constituency, their Platform advocates "a woman's right to choose, consistent with Roe v. Wade, and regardless of her ability to pay." Their Platform didn't quite have the gall to brag about their opposition to the partial-birth abortion ban (passed by the Republican Congress and signed by President Bush) which has now been voided by two Clinton-appointed activist judges.

On health care, the Republican Platform describes the achievement of conservatives' 10-year goal to establish Health Savings Accounts. This reform allows people "to save, earn interest, and spend tax free on their health care needs."

It's really pretty funny the way John Kerry's operatives designed a Platform to present a mainstream image that omits or muffles many of the Democrats' radical positions. These include the war in Iraq (even though 80 percent of the Democratic delegates oppose the war), socialized health care, the Kyoto global warming treaty, capital punishment, and Alaska oil drilling.

Even funnier is the Democratic Platform's false allegations that the Democratic Party supports tax cuts, more secure borders, and protecting our Second Amendment right to own guns. Such Platform lies are cushioned with soft platitudes such as "the challenges of our times are profound" and "the stakes are immeasurably high."