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Why I'm Voting for McCain

Austin Baird



Why am I voting for McCain? Every five minutes CNN and FOX remind us how "historic" this election is. I have the chance to support our first black president, our first female president, or our first certifiably insane

president (Ron Paul), and I am choosing to vote for a cantankerous old white male? An explanation is in order. First and foremost, I am NOT voting for McCain because he is Republican. Voting for a party instead of a person is intellectually lazy, insures political polarization and government by ideologues, and is antithetical to the results that democracy is designed to bring about. In the interests of full disclosure, I do have some misgivings about McCain.

1. McCain is old. There are valid concerns about his age and health. He's 71, and if he serves two terms he will be 80 when he leaves office.

2. He's temperamental, stubborn, and has shown he can't always control his tongue. He berates his colleagues, has evinced an affinity for profanity, and has been known to resort to ethnic slurs to convey his feelings. Since our president is the most visible envoy from America to the world, imagine the fallout from him losing his temper and tossing insults at other world leaders.

3. He's pugnacious. After eight years of too-muscular foreign policy and a "you're with us or against us" mentality, the last thing that Americans (or the rest of the world) want is more violence... under any pretext. McCain has vowed to stay in Iraq, joked about bombing Iran, and has been compared to Bush's in-your-face, bring-it-on attitude.

That being said, I think that the following reasons outweigh any potential objections.

The first and most compelling reason to is his pragmatism\bipartisanship\refusal to play the game according to ideological rules. McCain crosses the aisle, works with Democrats, and refuses to support bills just because they follow traditional Republican themes. He has worked with Kennedy (immigration), Feingold (campaign finance reform), and Lieberman (climate change). Currently, the most vociferous opposition to McCain comes from Republicans. McCain won't toe the party line, he'll pass legislation that hardcore conservatives hate but that is good for the country, and he'll be a president for the 80% of the country that is more concerned with improving the country than making it conform to an ideological blueprint.

Along the same lines as the first reason - the people who have come out publicly against McCain offer a strong reason to vote for him. Ann Coulter, who has made a living slinging vitriol against anyone who disagrees with her, has come out against McCain. Rush Limbaugh, who demanded that all drug addicts be imprisoned while he himself spent years forging signatures in order to get prescriptions, has come out against McCain. The evangelical crowd

Continued pg. 2

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Stupor Tuesday

Tim Taylor



I voted for Hillary Clinton: that is how ridiculous this election has become. When given the choice of a war hero, dashing executive, charming governor, or post-partisan life coach, I selected Clinton: the lamprey. And why? To give the

Democrats a little boost toward disappointment in November.

That Senator Clinton is in the race still astounds me, as it must be to most Republicans and all supporters of Barack Obama. On one hand you have this woman: crafty, to be sure, but also slippery, divisive, unpalatable. On the other, you have this man, a veritable reincarnation of Jack Kennedy: sprightly, spiffy, comfortable with Ban-ki Moon and the Black Eyed Peas. He draws independents more powerfully than Ross Perot's most heated fantasies and raises more money than an army of bearded, windshield-breaking Ron Paul acolytes.

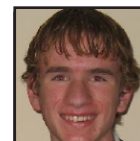
On the Republican side, I am yet more perplexed. The only candidate who did not have his campaign implode at some point, who did not resort to personal attacks, and who was most feared by Democrats (according to the Drudge Report and most insiders), Mitt Romney, is out of the race.

Exit poll results and media coverage point to one culprit for these nonsensical outcomes: identity

Continued pg. 3

So What if Democrats Like McCain?

Robert Liddle



In much of the public eye, John McCain is viewed as the best chance Republicans have of winning the White House in 2008 elections. At first, the logic behind it makes sense. The country is pushing to elect a Democrat as our president, so common wisdom follows that Republicans should elect a more 'moderate' or 'liberal' candidate.

As Karl Rove discovered in 2000 and 2004, the swing vote no longer plays the role it used to in nationwide elections. What matters is party voter mobilization. Not only has the margin of swing voters steadily decreased since the 1970s, but their voting is generally influenced most by (1) the economy, and (2) the current president's approval ratings. Republicans already have these two strikes against them.

Continued pg. 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Mitt Can't Blame the Ref</i>	PG. 2
<i>Why You Will Vote for Obama</i>	PG. 3
<i>Why You Should Be Reasonble</i>	PG. 4
<i>A Letter to Banana Republic</i>	PG. 4

McCain

continued from front page

has shown itself reluctant to get behind McCain. In short, McCain represents a threat to Republicans who see the party and the presidency as a means of consolidating power.

Torture – During WWII, German soldiers tried to surrender to Americans whenever possible because we had a reputation for respecting human rights. During our years as superpower, the perception of our having the moral high ground has been as important as our military\economic might. Our forfeiture of the values we've fought so hard to retain is more of a threat to us than any brand of terrorism, no matter how virulent. McCain has proclaimed torture to be ineffective and has called for the closing of Guantanamo Bay, decisions which are morally right and which would allow us to regain at least some of our eroded moral credibility.

Immigration – Contrary to popular belief, McCain is not personally driving a VW van back and forth over the border to bring Mexicans in. He is pragmatic enough to realize the impossibility of forcibly ejecting 12 million immigrants, compassionate enough to consider the human aspect of illegal immigration, and concerned enough with border security to take steps for which he rarely receives credit. He voted on comprehensive immigration reform and on formulating a plan for those already here. For this, he has been demonized as "soft" on immigration. He has also voted to limit welfare to illegal immigrants, supported English immersion instead of bilingual education, and voted for building a wall on the border. I don't agree with that policy, but I mention it as evidence that he is a staunch defender of America's borders – albeit a pragmatic one.

Iraq – McCain believes that, even in hindsight, invasion was justified. To be honest, I don't support John in this view, principally because he doesn't address the spurious information (or outright lies?) that took us to war in the first place. Regardless of my ideological dissimilarities with him on this aspect, however, I agree with his belief that a pullout would be disastrous. As wasteful as this war has been, as big of a drain on our national psyche and resources, and as culpable the Iraqi government\ people are for refusing to put aside differences and past wrongs long enough to build a viable country, pulling out without the country being stabilized would be an invitation to Iran, Al Qaeda, and a host of other ill-intentioned parties to interfere.

There are other issues that are as important to me; his support of campaign finance reform, his voting record on welfare, his preference for deficit reduction over tax cuts, his opposition to subsidies, his support of increased use of nuclear energy, and his stance on global warming. There are stances of his that worry me, such as his support for the Patriot Act and its wiretapping procedures, and his vote denying habeas corpus to detainees at Guantanamo. However, considering his opponents, McCain is my choice. Obama, while inspirational and charismatic, lacks the fortitude or the experience to make the tough decisions that will be necessary to right this country after eight years of mismanagement. Clinton, while politically savvy, is far too polarizing a candidate for our national psyche right now. I think McCain can make the decisions other politicians are too partisan or too scared to make, and I think that McCain can put us back on track enough for a feel-good candidate like Obama to be viable in eight years.

Austin is a political science major from Amarillo, Texas. Over the last 4 years he has been tear-gassed 20 times, grilled the equivalent of eleven cows, and had two guns pulled on him.

Mitt Can't Blame the Ref

Ryan Decker



Some Romney supporters blame his Mormonism, the media, or Mike Huckabee for his loss. Using these reasons as scapegoats prevents us from learning the lessons we need to learn from the failed Romney campaign.

Mormonism hasn't been an issue since Iowa. There, part of the anti-Romney sentiment among evangelicals was due to Romney's record on social issues (being pro-choice and promising to be left of Ted Kennedy on gay rights) and indications that he lacks any religious conviction at all. His inconsistent record also fed voters' perception of Mormonism. His statement on ABC, "I don't recall God speaking to me. I don't know that he has spoken to anyone since Moses and the bush or perhaps some others," turned off many social conservatives who want someone with convictions. Statements like that should have turned off Mormons as well, but didn't—a big statement about many conservative Mormon voters. Romney won 90% of the Utah vote, which makes a disturbing comment on Mormon conservative dogmatism. The Mormon conservatives I know would have rejected someone with Romney's social record (let alone his disparaging remarks about Mormonism) were he not Mormon aristocracy. Clannish voting behavior explains why Americans are wary of Mormon politicians. That said, while Mormonism was an early factor, other things were responsible for much of the evangelical backlash against Romney, and it hasn't been an issue since Iowa.

Media bias is another false scapegoat for Romney's loss. The conservative media establishment was vehemently opposed to McCain and supportive of Mitt. Mitt has had some bad media coverage like everyone else, but it can't be blamed for his loss. His ability to outspend everyone has given him ample opportunity to get his message out.

As for the influence of Huckabee, statisticians need to look at Super Tuesday's results and give a clearer picture. Regardless, a team that misses 20 free throws can't blame the referee when they lose by 2 points. Romney could have conducted his campaign differently to prevent some of Huckabee's influence.

So why did Mitt lose? There are three reasons.

1. Mitt is the subject of substantial animosity from the other GOP candidates, and it isn't because of Mormonism. He spent millions attacking other candidates for the non-conservative aspects of their record, while he has a similar record. Attacks on Giuliani for being pro-choice (like Mitt was before), on Huckabee about taxes (despite Mitt's infamous 'fees'), and on McCain were hypocritical. A comparison of McCain and Mitt over the last 20 years shows that Mitt shouldn't talk about liberal records—the only difference being that McCain is consistent and Mitt is a panderer. McCain is a Reagan coalition conservative (social, economic, foreign policy) while Mitt was "an independent during Reagan-Bush." People get offended when attacked by hypocrites for being consistent. This caused the candidates to unite in opposition to Mitt. The enormous surge of animosity against McCain during the past weeks and Mitt's dishonest portrayal of McCain as a liberal weren't good for the party or Mitt's image, either.

2. There was a perception among many voters that Mitt has no principles. His record shows a willingness to change positions and policies to gain votes. His 'Washington is Broken' rhetoric, an obvious reaction to Obama's Iowa victory, was disingenuous considering his defense of the Republicans who

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have been running Washington. Mitt's campaign was designed to be a conservative checklist, and while conservatives agreed with his stances, they had no reason to believe that he would stick to them. "If I vote for Mitt, will he change completely for the general election again?" There's no evidence to indicate that Mitt would be consistent in the future. Despite being a Washington outsider, his willingness to say anything for votes and his extreme partisanship indicate that he's just another politician.

3. Romney's hard swing to the right made it unlikely that he could pick up enough centrist votes to win the general election. This year, Republicans must appeal to centrists. Attempts by Romney and the conservative media to exclude centrists from the party would have meant death for the GOP. Many voters may have liked Romney's platform, but they knew that a far-right Republican couldn't win. Rational conservatives would rather have McCain than Hillary, due to the permanent damage she would cause to entitlements, the Supreme Court, and our strategic position in the Middle East. McCain's ability to make deals with Democrats may be an indication that he'll work with Congress and get things done. Pragmatism includes not only good policy ideas but also policies that can make it through the political process.

Romney supporters who blame Mormonism, media, and Mike for Romney's loss will fail to learn from Romney's campaign. Hypocritical attacks, inconsistency, and his far-right partisan platform made Mitt unattractive and unelectable in the minds of many voters. His attempt to buy the White House failed, but if he learns from his mistakes, he can be a competitive candidate in the future.

Ryan Decker is majoring in Economics and Political Science. He enjoys blogging at pendulumpolitics.blogspot.com and he reads constantly.

Why You Will End Up Voting for Obama

Craig Janis



Political Readers, let's be honest with each other. I am a Democrat. Most of you are probably Republicans, if the Political Review's readership has the same demographics as the campus at large. I want to be clear about this because the point of this article is to convince you that, despite our almost certain differences in opinion, we have one very important thing in common; when Barack Obama wins the Democratic nomination, both you and I will end up supporting him for president.

I would love to speak with each reader about this personally, but I am one and you are many. Instead, I have imagined the following interview with You Readers.

Me: You Readers will end up supporting Barack Obama for president. Go Obamarama!

You Readers (YR): Why would we, conservative, Republican Mormons ever even think about supporting Obama for president?

Me: Let us reason together. Out of the Republican field of candidates, who have you most supported?

YR: Romney.

Me: Fair enough, Romney certainly was the best of the Republican candidates. I am curious though, why did you pick him?

YR: He did a good job with the Winter Olympics, and he has a lot of management experience. Plus he's good looking.

Me: Hmm... so his religion has nothing to do with it, right?

YR: Well...

Me: Don't worry about it, I'm just kidding. His religion certainly was a plus in my opinion. The point is that you are right; the other two Republican candidates are unimaginably horrible options. Mike Huckabee is a complete joke. I won't even bother to explain why because if you are smart enough to get into BYU you are smart enough to see right through the Huckster.

YR: No kidding, he really is lame.

Me: John McCain, on the other hand, is no joke. He is a nightmare. The only thing that he has going for him is that he has worked with members of my party (the Democrats) in the past. I am scared of him though, because he seems intent on, well... on blowing up the world! He said the other day that he didn't care if America stayed in Iraq for another one hundred or ten thousand years. TEN THOUSAND YEARS! I am only being a little melodramatic when I say that, if he had the power to commit to some kind of apocalyptic, doomsday confrontation with... lets just put it this way. There is a video on You Tube of him singing, "Bomb bomb bomb, bomb bomb Iran..."

YR: You seem to be exaggerating a bit.

Me: I wish.

YR: You aren't?

Me: No. Those are his own words.

YR: Prove it, because I would be loathe to

support a Democrat over the Republican nominee, no matter who it is.

Me: OK, consider this. Here are some of McCain's words of wisdom. On the Iraq war he said this about Romney fans who support Romney's plan of gradual withdrawal, "Only the most deluded of us could doubt the necessity of this war." He also called Romney a pig. Specifically, talking about his campaign with Romney, he said, "Never get into a wrestling match with a pig. You both get dirty, and the pig likes it."

YR: Oh yeah, I heard that he said that.

Me: He doesn't even limit his mean-spiritedness to his political adversaries in the presidential election. Here are some of McCain's comments about his fellow Senate Republicans. When Republican Senator Chuck Grassley asked him, during an argument, if he was calling him stupid, McCain said, "No, I'm calling you a f*cking jerk." To Republican Senator John Cornyn, who disagreed with his amnesty bill, he said on the Senate floor, "F*ck you! This is chickensh*t stuff!" About the budget his fellow Republican Senator Pete Domenici proposed, he said, "Only an a**hole would put together a budget like this... I wouldn't call you an a**hole unless you really were an a**hole."

YR: Wow, I get the point. He's a vulgar hot head.

Me: It's not just that, consider his moral views. He doesn't agree with most Mormons about abortion. Here are his own words, "Certainly in the short term, or even the long term, I would not support repeal of Roe v. Wade, which would then force... [the] women in America to undergo illegal and dangerous operations." He has said that four times on the campaign trail.

YR: Really? That is bad...

Me: Yeah, it's kind of damning evidence. Romney pretty much had it right when he said that McCain is not a real conservative. Just one more quote, for effect. This one, from 2005, is my favorite. "I am sure that Senator Clinton would make a good President... I have no doubt that Senator Clinton would make a good President."

YR: Ouch! That makes me want to cry. There is no way I could ever vote for McCain. I would think that maybe I just shouldn't vote at all, but I remember American Heritage and I know that voting is an important civic duty. I guess maybe... Obama might not be that bad.

Me: So true. Obama may not be the perfect choice for most Republicans, but if you take an honest look at him, you will find that he is, by far, the best option out there.

YR: I agree, now, and I am excited because if we can agree on this, perhaps Obama really will be able to usher in an era of decreased partisan bickering. Say no to McCain and angry vitriol, say yes to Obama and hope!

YR and Me: Go Obama!

Craig Janis is a Democrat, but has overcome this handicap and learned to function normally in society.

Stupor Tuesday
continued from front page

politics, that ugly practice where people's religions, races, and faces are valued at face value. It is the politics of "he is one of us" and "they are not our people," Shias and Sunnis, religious tests and whisper campaigns. The media love it. Candidates exploit it.

This is why we have been subjected to such ridiculous headlines as Newsweek's "New American Holy War" during their coverage of the Iowa caucuses. How there could be a holy war between the state's 350,000 evangelicals and 20,000 Mormons, most of which I met at church while I visited the state over winter break, is beyond me. Likewise, the news has doggedly interrogated Obama about his "blackness," asking whether he would be truly black enough to be called America's first black president. The litany could go on, from Clinton's gender to Bill Richardson's Latino roots to Dennis Kucinich's being the first president from another planet.

However, perhaps the media's most audacious attempt at stupefying the election came in its exit polls after Super Tuesday. The questionnaire asked voters, "In deciding your vote for president today, was the race (and, for another question, gender) of the candidate the single most important factor?" I suspect the media wanted to make a big story out of this particular statistic. How disappointing to them, then, when only 1 to 3 percent of voters, depending on the state, responded "yes" to the question; just 10 to 15 percent responded that race or gender was "one of several important factors."

Despite this particular stonewalling, though, the election has turned into a morass. Part of the blame, as just mentioned, falls to the media. But just as much falls to the candidates. ABC News' Jake Tapper called out the Clintons for race-baiting Obama in South Carolina and since. The two candidates, once almost equally appealing to African Americans, have now split on lines of color as we might expect, though not hope. On the GOP side, Mike Huckabee's early commercials heralded the governor as a "Christian Leader," a knife in Romney's LDS ribs. But it worked, despite the endorsements of many admirable Christians, such as Michael Novak, John Mark Reynolds, and Robert Taylor.

So are Mormons, who voted 90 percent for Romney here in Utah, guilty of identity politics as well? Yes, a bit, but we do have this redeeming caveat: we as Mormons, as well as Romney, have been markedly and almost exclusively singled out for shabby treatment throughout this campaign. Gathering around the standard-bearer is an understandable response. And as for Utah's Republican primary, given the choice between a politician-preacher who spouts anti-Mormon lines, a centrist senator who came in behind Alan Keyes in Utah's last primary, and a coreligionist with roots and past accomplishments here, what option did we have?

In similar fashion, the candidates and media have backed much of the electorate into one corner or another. Like the Corcyraeans of ancient Greece, too many of us have felt, whether justifiably or not, that we must band with our fellow fill-in-the-blanks, lest we lose. Hopefully a future President McCain will help us move past that.

Tim is from Alberta, Canada and is heading to Law School in the fall.

Why You Should Be Reasonable Like Me

Bob Weatherford



Leftist talk of “tolerance” seems to be ubiquitous nowadays. With minority groups gaining louder voices and international issues becoming the norm, the call for acceptance of others is louder than ever. However, it wasn’t until the publication of a recent article, “Why You Should Be Tolerant Like Me,” that I realized that this talk of tolerance comes much to the chagrin—and apparently the agitation—of some of our conservative friends.

I am in absolute agreement with the author of this article; we should employ reason as one of our highest virtues when making political and social decisions. For is it not reason that tells us that homosexuality occurs between consenting partners but that pedophilia is a form of abuse,

and as such they should never be equated? Is it not reason that tells us that immigrants should be allowed to chase the American dream, to become citizens so that we may tax them, and to seek employment to stimulate our receding economy? Is it not reason that tells us that an Iraqi born into a mind-washing regime can never be judged against the standards of an upper class American who has most likely been served a life of opportunity and liberty on a silver plate? Reason is at the heart of being a liberal.

I also agree with the author that tolerance isn’t all that it claims to be. Open-mindedness is not, in fact, the purest virtue. We need to go beyond tolerance and strive for understanding; we need to get beyond open-mindedness and open our hearts. Jesus defied social norms when he interacted with sinners, women, foreigners, and the sick. He told us to judge not so that we will not be judged.

Because the author of this article enjoys semantics, I would like to play with words as well. Discernment is a vital human capacity that should be constantly employed. Judgment, however, should always remain with the only One capable of perfectly executing it—God.

Bob Weatherford is from Laramie, Wyoming. He is interested in Philosophy, Politics & Theology.

McCain
continued from front page

Nominating McCain to be the Republican candidate presents a difficult problem as much of his base comes from ‘independent voters’. If the GOP want to win this election, they have to mobilize as many Republicans as possible (most of whom belong to the ‘conservative’ branch in the party), and John McCain is not the man for this. He’s an even worse choice than Mike Huckabee would be. At least Huckabee has fooled many voters into thinking he’s a conservative

While it’s nice that Democrats like John McCain, they still won’t be voting for him. It doesn’t matter how much Democrats like him, because they like their candidate better.

Remind me why McCain is supposed to have the best shot at a general election.

In 2004, George W. Bush had the largest amount of people vote for him in American history, but John Kerry had the second most. At a time when voter mobilization is everything, Republicans should be looking to someone to attract their own base to vote come November. Especially if Barack Hussein Obama, noted for successfully mobilizing young voters, is to be the DNC’s nomination.

Robert Liddle is from Orem, Utah and is majoring in Political Science.

An Open Letter to the President of Banana Republic

Tristan Call



To Jack Calhoun, President;

I received a pair of Banana Republic corduroy pants for Christmas. I used to wear Banana Republic clothing, but I stopped buying all Gap subsidiaries’ products when I started caring about human rights, labor standards, environmental degradation, and corporate governance. I had to decide whether I could accept the corduroys, so I spent an evening reading up on Gap’s attempts to allay consumer concern. I was at times appalled, at times impressed. I have decided on a compromise: I will continue to not purchase Banana Republic clothing until I see serious attempts to take responsibility on these issues, but I will accept my mother’s gift. If I don’t see improvement during the next year, I will refuse to accept any Gap-subsidary products as gifts in the future, and will actively approach my friends and family to convince them to take the same stance.

I will briefly outline my concerns:

- 1) In your Code of Vendor Conduct, I was please to see that you require your factories to allow all workers, especially school-aged, to attend night classes and government-run education programs. I expect that few of their workers participate in these programs, and I hope that the factories are indeed following your Code’s requirements in “encouraging” them to do so. Also, I am pleased that your Code prohibits both physical and psychological (though not economic) coercion,

and that your Free Association policy allows workers to join associations of their choosing without penalty. That said, I’m concerned that since you only allow them to organize “lawfully,” your policy could further punish labor union participation in countries where labor administrators identify labor unions, strikes, and organized protests as borderline- or entirely illegal.

- 2) While reading your Social Responsibility report, I was pleased to see that your labor inspectors had revoked approval for a significant number of factories, surely at significant cost to production. Still, I read too many reports on Gap-subsidary labor violations from the Middle East, India, and southeast Asia that suggest workplace standards are still a low priority of the Gap franchise.

- 3) I am unconvinced by your rationale for not publishing a list of the factories that Gap contracts with. The reasoning, from your online FAQ, was that: “We invest a lot of time, effort and money in identifying factories that meet our product-quality and vendor-compliance standards...We believe it would be unwise to provide a complete list of approved factories for our competitors to use.” Without question, I believe that protection and accountability for labor standards is worth the cost and the competition. I do not accept that obscuring specific and detailed information on particular contracts and factories is necessary for Gap’s financial survival.

- 4) I am pleased to hear that Gap has begun exploring the use of “sustainable design,” but I see no signs that the company has made shifting

to organic and non-GMO cotton a priority other than public appeasement, something the environmental community refers to as “greenwashing.” I look forward to watching how this initiative progresses and hope that Gap will see the urgency of pursuing designs and materials that do not involve extensive dumping of chemical pesticides into living ecosystems.

- 5) I was most outraged to discover the sums of money offered to top corporate executives. A quick scan of Gap’s Definitive Proxy Statement, provided by the SEC, reveals dozens of directors and executive officers compensated in sums in the millions of dollars. Top executives received even more. I am aware that such incentive packages are widely accepted in the industry, but I cannot accept a distribution of resources that does not reflect the contributions that low-level workers make. I want to be clear: no executive officer should receive \$25 million in stock options when Gap has only 90 factory inspectors in charge of 2,000 factories, when its workers regularly complain of poor treatment, and when efforts have not yet been made to reduce environmental impact.

I recognize that none of these problems are unique to Gap, Inc., but I assure you that I will hold your competitors to the same standard.

I look forward to your response and will share it with my friends and family.

Thank you,

Tristan Call



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