

## **Change we can believe in?**

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Published by *The Covington News* on February 29, 2008

It appears that Barack Obama will be the Democratic Party's nominee for president. He is likely the most engaging candidate to seek the White House in years. He represents a renewed sense of optimism and enthusiasm that has been missing from politics. His talk of "hope" and "change" has captivated voters, especially young voters who treat Obama as if he were was a rock star. There have been reports of women fainting during his speeches. Last week, there was a report of Obama receiving applause for the mundane task of blowing his nose. When you think about it, it's kind of eerie. However, once you look past there the rhetoric or the cult of personality, if you will, there isn't anything new there.

Obama is a masterful politician and a very intelligent individual. He has managed to all but secure the nomination of a major political party without offering anything of real substance, nor bringing anything new or innovative to the debate on major political issues. He has relied solely on populist talking points and his communication skills to attract voters. He hasn't gone more than an inch deep in his policy proposals.

One has to ask, what does Barack Obama mean by "change"? What sets Obama apart from other Democrats? He has certainly tried to appeal to Republicans by saying nice things about Ronald Reagan. And, I suppose that a comparison can certainly be made between the two. Obama, like Reagan, is a figure of optimism. Obama can articulate his message well and captivate his audience, much like the Great Communicator.

There is cause for concern for lovers of liberty in some of the stances that Obama has taken, as well as his policy proposals. He has said that the "individual [has the] right to bear arms, but it's subject to commonsense regulation."

He then voiced support for the District of Columbia's complete ban on guns, an issue that will be heard by the Supreme Court next month with a decision on whether or not the Second Amendment is in fact an individual right to come later in the year. He has said that he believes in the free market, but his record on trade is mixed. He has recently used protectionist talking points against free trade agreements. While they are not perfect, they have had an overall positive effect on the economy by keeping tariffs low and introducing American made goods overseas.

His record on taxes is horrible, and he has made it no secret that his administration will let the Bush tax cuts expire, which would be a trillion dollar tax increase and would affect all levels of income earners. He has also proposed lifting the cap on wages for Social Security, another trillion dollar tax increase. He also wants to increase the capital gains tax in an economy that is already struggling. His healthcare proposal, while not a single-payer system, would allow government to interfere even more in the marketplace and take more individuals off private health insurance. These two are among the reasons why healthcare is so expensive.

The non-partisan National Taxpayers Union has estimated that Obama's spending would will add \$287 billion to the federal budget each year, the most of any candidate from either party. However, Obama has offered nothing in the way of reforming entitlements (Social Security and Medicare) that face more than \$40 trillion in unfunded liabilities.

Obama has paid lip-service to self-government and individual liberty; however, his policies are collectivist in nature. Ayn Rand, author of "Atlas Shrugged," once said, "The smallest minority on earth is the individual. Those who deny individual rights cannot claim to be defenders of

minorities." Obama's policies are in the same collectivist mold as politicians who came before him. They have no real respect for personal liberty, individual sovereignty or property rights.

This message of "change" is a cover for the same collectivist driven, big-government agenda that has been pushed by the Democratic Party for years.

Republican pundits, commentators and talk show hosts made it a point early on to derail Hillary Clinton's campaign, for example, Sean Hannity's so-called "Stop Hillary Express." Their efforts to stop Clinton may backfire. Her demise has caused Obama's star to rise. He has more leftist tendencies, despite efforts to portray himself to be a moderate, and would do more to expand the already overreaching arm of government.

The most obvious difference is Clinton has very high negatives, and Obama doesn't. He is treated as if he was a rock star by most within the Democratic Party and is popular with independents.

I look at politics differently than most; I consider myself to be an independent voter, but philosophically libertarian (fiscally conservative but culturally liberal).

Just from reading and observing what people are feeling this year, Republicans will have a tough time convincing moderates and independents that they will be worse off under an Obama administration and after seven years of George W. Bush and the imperial presidency, who can blame them for their skepticism?