

Harry Reid is not a racist

Written by Joseph C. Phillips
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Harry Reid is not racist and Republican calls for his resignation are misguided. There I said it. The senate majority leader has recently come under fire for remarks attributed to him in the new book "Game Change." Authors Mark Halperin and John Heilemann say that in 2008 Reid described then candidate Obama as a " 'light-skinned' African American 'with no Negro dialect unless he wanted to have one.'" The comments have been seen by some as being racially insensitive.

Reid's defenders argue that he was merely making the point that Americans were ready to elect a black president (or at least a light- skinned black president. Baby steps.) DNC chair Tim Kaine insisted that Reid's remarks were offered in the context of saying something positive about the Obama candidacy and why his candidacy would be strong.

What remains unclear is why we weren't treated to an equal amount of gushing about Obama's vast executive experience and his readiness to lead. Instead, these titans of liberalism were most impressed that Obama was Black but not too black and well spoken enough not to offend the racial sensibilities of voters. It was also a plus that he was able to turn on a "negro dialect" when speaking to Black audiences. (Actually the same could have been said of Hillary Clinton. She is also light skinned with a habit of turning on a "Black dialect" when speaking before black audiences. Recall her chicken necking as she quoted lyrics from an old "negro" spiritual: "I ain't no ways tired." Really Hillary? But I digress.)

I would be remiss if I failed to point out that the racial sensibilities Reid and company were concerned with offending were those of liberals. Reid was not mentally tallying the votes of Republicans, but Democrats!

Certainly Senator Reid is behind the times. Who uses the word "negro" anymore? The accepted term is "people of color," which, for what it's worth, sounds way to close too colored people for my tastes. But do Reid's comments really rise to occasion GOP outrage, which, let's be honest is a bit contrived?

Is there a double standard? Absolutely! There is also a growing sensitivity to public speech that has corrupted our sense of proportion. If one must resign for speaking the truth – Obama is light skinned, well spoken and does have a habit of turning on the "flava" when he speaks before Black audiences – what is the penalty for saying something truly outrageous? Calling for the head of Harry Reid only succeeds in making legitimate liberal outrage over the similarly innocuous uttering's by others. If we continue down this path I fear we will end up a nation unable to govern itself because we will be unable to speak lest we offend someone...somewhere.

Moreover, these displays of outrage miss the real substance of Reid's intimations.

What is now clear for all to see is the new left's political calculation vis a vi race. For the left there can be no post racial America because for the new left race is a chief weapon in their arsenal. Their use of race and racism is premeditated; it is a commodity to be traded in the political market. THAT should be the focus of GOP outrage; that should be what the media is talking about; that should be the cause of our national indignation.

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There was another interesting bit of “dish” found in “Game Change.” In an effort to gain the endorsement of Massachusetts senator Edward Kennedy for his wife, former President Bill Clinton reportedly said to the liberal icon about Obama, “A few years ago, this guy would have been getting us coffee.” According to the book, Kennedy was offended by the remarks and ultimately gave his support to Obama. In a subsequent conversation Clinton griped, “The only reason you are endorsing him is because he is black. Let’s just be clear.”

According to Harry Reid and Tim Kaine Clinton was quite correct; were it not for his light skin and his ability to speak like a “negro” when he has to he would still be a junior senator from Illinois and not the President of the United States.

2+2=4

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