



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 1, 2015

My Problem With Sarah Palin

With Sarah Palin once again hinting at a presidential run, pundits and politics wonks are all the more aflutter with 2016 talk. The predictable slings and arrows of the surly left are coming her way, while her excited fans are firing up the troops. Then there are those who say that while they like the ex-governor, they don't believe she could win the presidency. My focus, however, is a bit different: I have an objection to Palin — one relating to something of which most are unaware.



Before getting to that, please indulge me as I ask a few questions that establish where we all stand. Are you adamantly pro-life, or might your position change if (as in polling) the question is framed as a woman's "right to choose"? Do you stand foursquare against amnesty, or could you be persuaded to accept a "path to citizenship" for illegals? Do you uphold the proper and only definition of marriage, or have the unrelenting attacks on tradition worn you down to a point where you might conclude, "Well, none of this affects me, anyway"?

If you're unwavering on all those issues, as I am, you're a real Sarah Palin conservative.

Or are you?

You see, I'm pretty sure how Palin would answer those questions — and one answer is a real problem. On October 26, 2008, Palin had an [interview](#) with Jorge Ramos of Spanish-language network Univision. She was asked about amnesty: "So you support a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants?" Her answer: "I do because I understand why people would want to be in America. To seek the safety and prosperity, the opportunities, the health that is here. It is so important that yes, people follow the rules so that people can be treated equally and fairly in this country."

Sarah Palin supported amnesty ... in so many words.

See if you can put enough lipstick on that pig.

Now, since our country is subject to a somewhat planned invasion that's changing its face and involves the importation of leftist voters-to-be, I consider any pro-amnesty position a deal-breaker. I've been front and center on the issue, so much so that Pat Buchanan saw fit to quote me in his book *Death of the West*. I even [stated](#) "Marco Rubio is dead to me" after he supported the Gang of Eight amnesty group in 2013. And, believe me, I once had high hopes for the photogenic, articulate Rubio. But my principles aren't negotiable (especially the one in question here).

Some may now say that Palin had to play ball, as she was running for the White House in 2008 with amnesty poster boy John McCain.

But as they say back home, that dog don't hunt — certainly not grizzly in Alaska.

Remember that Palin has been billed by supporters as a breath of fresh air, the un-politician, a



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principled crusader and transformational figure. Her whole *stated* appeal is based on the notion that she's *not just another politician* who goes along to get along.

But on Oct 26, 2008 she gave a quintessential politician-like answer. And on one of the biggest issues of our time.

Yet there's more than just Palin's words on immigration. There are also her actions — or perhaps inaction. As Examiner.com's Victor Medina [wrote](#) in 2013 citing Lou Dobbs's reportage, "Palin did not appear to act on the fact that Alaska hosted two 'sanctuary cities.'" As Dobbs put it, related Medina, "Alaska and Oregon both have state-wide policies that forbid state agencies from using resources to enforce federal immigration law. Apparently, this is by design *from the highest levels*" (emphasis added).

Now, since I've learned the hard way that criticizing Palin alienates some of my usual readers, I'll state that I bear her no special animus. She's no different from 1000 other politicians who either don't understand the true impact of immigration (and a lot of other things) or have principles whose malleability is proportional to the power at stake. But that's the point.

Palin is no different from 1000 other politicians.

This brings us to her *true* appeal. And if you're a fan of hers, please try to take a step back, if you can, and view the matter from an emotional distance.

Question: can you cite for me one novel or unusually insightful thing Palin has ever said?

Just one.

Anyone?

Politics wonk that I am, I can't think of anything. Don't misunderstand me, there's nothing wrong with most of what she does say; it's conservative boilerplate, and that's where you generally start. But that again is the point.

Palin says nothing 1000 politicians haven't said before her.

So I ask, what's her true appeal, really?

Let's be honest, if we can't point to even one thing that makes a much ballyhooed politician *substantively* different from less touted co-ideologists, the process of elimination tells us where the greater appeal must lie.

Style.

It's not Palin's oratory, either. Oh, it's not bad, but she's no Reagan or Alan Keyes. The difference is *what* she is.

No one would be talking about Palin if she weren't attractive and female.

This is true even if, by chance, John McCain would have been willing to choose a "Scott" Palin to be his running-mate (which he wouldn't have).

It's the phenomenon I expounded upon in "[Cultural Affirmative Action](#)" and "[The New Chivalry](#)": "when people in the market and media privilege others — sometimes unconsciously — based upon the latter's identification with a 'victim group.'"

And most every politically aware person grasps this phenomenon to some degree. The late Geraldine



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Ferraro addressed Barack Obama's meteoric political rise in 2008 and said, "If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position." And Ferraro had noted herself that she wouldn't have been the 1984 vice-presidential candidate were she not a woman. It's the same reason, by the way, why Fox News hires a large number of attractive female hosts and pundits. Do you think it's a coincidence? Is the largely conservative audience so taken with them solely because of their minds?

The fact is that it's impossible to not benefit from fairer-sex status in politics today; it even elevates your brand among conservatives, though it's difficult convincing many conservatives they're thus influenced. With many motivations being unconscious, it's common for people to not be completely aware of what drives them. How many Americans voted for Obama in 2008 without fully grasping the degree to which electing "the first black president" and wanting to *feel* unbigoted and open-minded influenced them?

This isn't to say Palin fans don't have some legitimate reasons to support her, only that the kind of heroine worship and savior-status attribution evident in some quarters — support vastly in excess of what boilerplate conservatism warrants — is due to a purely emotional reaction stoked by image and hope. Many conservatives, knowing that having a female or minority presidential candidate is advantageous today, want to believe in the Great Female Hope. Moreover, there is this politically correct notion, now seamlessly woven into our culture, of female specialness and superiority. So many today are looking for a woman to save us.

Then there's simply the matter of conservative female politicians' relative rarity (even many GOP women officeholders are quite liberal); it's easier to be seen as a standout when you stand out.

So the perhaps unwelcome message here is this: as with the 2008 Barack Obama, Palin is a cult of personality.

If even now you count yourself a Palinista, realize that I'm not emotionally invested in the matter. After all, I know that political remedies won't cure what at bottom are cultural problems, anyway. It's also true that like so many other politicians, Palin demonstrates the ability to evolve. And at least she's evolved in the right direction: two years ago she [called](#) the 2013 Gang-of-Eight Rubio "Judas" in a tweet. I only wonder what she now really thinks, deep down, about the 2008 Palin.

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