



Huckabee Tells the Truth: Politicians Lie

Huckabee amplified his response to *Fox News* host Bill Hemmer on Friday that Ronald Reagan would have a tough time getting nominated by the Republican Party for 2012. When Hemmer asked why, Huckabee responded:



“Because [Reagan] raised taxes as governor [of California], he made deals with democrats, he compromised on things in order to move the ball down the field. As president, he gave amnesty to 7 million illegal immigrants.... People speak of Reagan as if he was absolutely steadfast. He was in his convictions, but *you have to govern in a way that is different than the way you campaign.*” [Emphasis added.]

Dr. Kenneth McFarland, America’s number one public speaker, said that politicians “change sides as often as a windshield wiper.” A recent example is Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) when he delivered a speech to the Senate on March 16, 2006, railing against raising the debt ceiling:

The three largest deficits in our nation’s history have all occurred under this [Republican] administration’s watch. The deterioration of the federal government’s finances is the direct result of the misguided priorities of this administration and this rubber stamping Republican Congress. These deficits have resulted in an unprecedented and dangerous borrowing spree.

Reid then quoted Thomas Jefferson: “I place economy among the first and most important government virtues and public debt as the greatest of the dangers to be feared.”

And then Reid voted against raising the debt ceiling. At that time, the deficit in 2006 was a paltry \$248 billion. Despite Reid’s “no” vote, the Congress raised the debt ceiling to \$9 trillion.

Fast forward five years: Reid is now “embarrassed” by his vote in 2006 and is working hard to extend the debt ceiling beyond the current \$14.2 trillion limit by at least another \$2 trillion.

In his commentary at SocialSense.com, blogger Leslie King noted:

In a general way, I think all politicians lack credibility among most “normal” Americans. There is a good reason for this: whether Democrat or Republican, politicians pursue the expedient course of action. If this means lying, or distorting the truth in order to gain election, that’s what they’ll do.

He then recounted an “aha” moment when he heard Democratic strategist Liz Chadderdon say: “You are confusing the actions of a president with the promises of a candidate.”

There are those who consider Democrats more honest in their words than Republicans because Democrats, at least, are clear in their general agenda: more government, more intervention, higher



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taxes, and greater regulation of the citizen. As attorney James Ostrowski put it:

Democrats tell us that government is a positive force for good ... and they intend to make it an even bigger force for good. When they get into office, they always do as they had promised. Every Democratic president since Woodrow Wilson has increased the size and power of the federal government.

On the other hand, Republicans say they are always fighting for less government, lower taxes, less regulation, and greater individual freedom. But, says Ostrowski,

What do [Republicans] do in office? They increase the size, scope, and power of the government. Every Republican president since Herbert Hoover has increased the size and power of the federal government.

Yes, even that great anarchocapitalist Ronald Reagan did so. He revved up the “war on drugs.” He revved up military spending. And he couldn’t even get rid of one lousy, stinking, useless agency — the Department of Education [which was one of his campaign promises].

Often, when lying, politicians would provide the citizenry with obvious visual “tells.” Micah Sifry listed some of the more obvious ones: “In most cases, their body language gives them away. Richard Nixon would blink quickly. Jimmy Carter smiled. (In his own mind, Ronald Reagan never lied — hence no cues.) Clinton [would bite] is lower lip. ”

The problem with political body language is it can’t be read in print. You have to be watching to catch them fibbing. That’s why Newt Gingrich’s verbal tic is so handy. Every time he says “frankly” you know some kind of lie is coming.

Why does the citizenry put up with politicians who lie? James Michael Curley served four terms as Mayor of Boston. Prior to running for his fourth term in 1946, Curley was indicted for influence peddling. Before the election he was indicted again, this time for mail fraud. Nevertheless, he won the election and spent five months of his fourth term serving a prison sentence at the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut.

How is that possible? A noted ethicist, Michael Josephson, has an explanation, but no answer: Citizens in general “don’t have a high expectation that [politicians will] tell the truth. When they lie, we are generally less offended in principle. That doesn’t make their lying acceptable; it just explains why there is a high tolerance level for it.”

Lying politicians even provide fodder for comics and comedians. Evening talk-show host Johnny Carson produced a skit in 1982 making fun of politicians who lie. It is here. It has received 1,300,000 views. So the citizens do know. They have no excuse.

As Ostrowski said, “Politicians lie and voters delude themselves with those lies. Politicians lie because they are greedy for power; voters are seduced by those lies because they are greedy for other people’s money.”

Founding Father and second President of the United States John Adams knew the nature of man, and the requirement that a high moral standard among the citizens would be the only ultimate guarantee of a limited government: “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Thomas Jefferson expressed the same concern as Adams:



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Yes, we did produce a near perfect Republic, but will they keep it? Or will they in their enjoyment of plenty, lose the memory of their freedoms? Material abundance without character is the surest way to destruction. I tremble for my country when I realize that God is just.

Photo of Mike Huckabee: AP Images



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