

What a Great Candidate!

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Well, folks, it's election season again and the clichés are already flying. Hmmm. They may not be clichés to you, but, frankly, I've heard them way too often.

"He (she) can win because he (she) can raise the most money."

"He (she) has got the base behind him (her)."

"He (she) has too many skeletons in the closet."

"I really like him (her), but he (she) can't win."

Please forgive the above panoply of parentheses. We're trying to be politically correct, gender sensitive, and inclusive.

Still, my all-time favorite cliché is this one: "He (she) is such a great candidate."

And that brings me to the point of this little essay. The Democrats and the Republicans have been electing great candidates for quite a while now. Of all the stones that might be thrown at someone like Barack Obama or George Bush, the one that no one throws is that they were bad candidates. Now, I don't mean to pick on just presidents either. There are great candidates from the Oval Office to the School Board. And yet, still we seem to be in a bit of a mess, governance wise.

Maybe – just maybe – it's time to look at what a person stands for, what their character is like, whether or not they understand the job that they are running to fill, and whether they have the ethical commitment to put the job above themselves. Should we ask if they are mentally, philosophically, and morally, prepared to cast a vote that could help a veteran, a child, or a business owner and do so without violating the precepts of freedom, self-reliance, and self-determination?

Can they stand up for something that may be unpopular and yet still be the right thing to do? Can they craft laws – which, in one view are really the operations manual for the nation, state, county, or city – that can actually lead to a calmer, safer, freer, society?

If they are a candidate for an administrative seat, such as Mayor, Governor, Property Appraiser, or President, can they accept that these positions are not lawmakers, but are there to implement the laws created by others?

To go back to my favorite cliché – the one about being a good candidate – let me ask this: Isn't it time we started electing good legislators instead of good candidates? Of course the question applies to non-legislative positions as well. We ask because, in our opinion, there is nothing ... not one skill...necessary to be a good candidate that will also make a person a good representative of the people.