

## Feeling Better:

For those of us who have been suffering through the last eight years of an administration whose cornerstones are denial and fear there is finally some hope that change is at hand, that we might even enjoy reading press releases from Washington starting in 2009. I'm not actually counting chickens of course because that sort of thing will come back to haunt you. But I am seeing what I think are encouraging signs from around the country. Encouraging that is, for the folks on my side of the political aisle.

One of the reasons that I'm feeling positive about the November election is that even though the Dems have been beating up on each other Senator McCain has made no appreciable gains in the polls. He's pretty much where he was a month ago. That's amazing to me. His party has the field all to itself, nominee chosen, political machine all lined up, money in the bank but where's the steam roller? Where is the media machine that Rove and Bush would have rolled out by now? Why aren't conservatives making hay while the liberals are still trying to figure out what to do with Michigan and Florida? Senator McCain is spending more time distancing himself from the Bush mistakes than he is chopping up the first term Senator from Illinois. I'm feeling better.

Another item on the positive side of the chart, in an ironic sort of way, is that Obama has gained some valuable experience (thank you Senator Clinton) in fending off personal attacks. He had a couple of really bad weeks there between his pastor going postal and Hamas casting their absentee ballot for him. He's learned some important things that every candidate has to keep in mind. He's learned that politicians are responsible for their pastors' spoutings and that an awkward middle name makes yokels nervous. This is good stuff to know. The more the kid from Illinois knows about stupid attacks from bloated pundits the better he will handle the campaign nonsense that is about to be unleashed. I'm feeling better.

And then there's the matter of all the newly registered voters who have been signing up all over the country. By the time November rolls around there will be a couple of million of them. They are mostly young and formerly uninterested in the process. It is no secret; just check the polls, who they are likely to vote for. For any number of reasons Senator Obama speaks to these folks in a way and via avenues that the opposition is only just discovering. I'm feeling better.

Here's a beauty, something I wouldn't have guessed in a million years. The republican nominee is a foregone conclusion but 15 to 20 percent of the republican voters in recent primaries have been voting for someone else. Someone other than Senator McCain. That has to worry his campaign because he must hold the entire conservative base AND do well with independents and Reagan democrats in order to win in the fall. Are that many conservatives really saying they will stay home in November? I'm feeling better.

But best of all, from this liberal's point of view, is that the country will finally get to focus on McCain's positions on key issues. He actually wants to pursue this insane war in Iraq, a war that makes far more enemies than it kills, a war that has destroyed five percent of the Iraqi population (that would be 14 million people in the United States), a war that drives us billions more into debt every week that it goes on...and on.

And then there's health care. The Senator actually says that competition and the market will keep health care affordable! Keep it affordable? Our country has the most competitive, market driven health care system in the world and it is the world's most expensive. So let's see, if we keep on with competition everything will get magically affordable? Tough sell, especially when the Senator himself, health history and all, couldn't afford health care if his wife weren't rich and he a Senator. He is uninsurable at affordable rates.

So, let's see. What we have here is a not very popular conservative, among conservatives.

We have a liberal candidate who is tougher than when he began and much wiser to the unabashed pandering of his opponents. We will have millions of new voters who will go in the range of 80 percent for Obama. We have a conservative candidate who can't get the entire conservative vote, in fact far less than all of it. And we have a man who has chosen to run on a platform that includes continuing the worst foreign policy mistake of the past hundred years and for a system of health care which will exclude the people who need insurance the most. I think I could run against that.

I'm feeling better.