

## Level Playing Field

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Paula Mullis is Vice President of the Harford County Republican Women. She is also a roundtable regular on the "Word on the Street" radio program heard on WAMD (970AM) in Aberdeen, as am I. When I heard the announcement at "Media Centre West" that Alaska Governor Sarah Palin would be Sen. John McCain's running mate for the Republican ticket, she was the first person to cross my mind.

When the Democrats decided to do some rough justice at the Democratic Party Rules Committee Meeting a few months ago, supporters of Sen. Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign were, let's just say a tad upset. Ever since that time, Mullis during each roundtable has invited disgruntled Democratic women to join the Harford County Republican Women. Let's just say when I called her following the McCain announcement, it would be fair to say that she was a tad happy.

Overall, from the reaction on the blogosphere and the few people I talked to over the course of the day was joy. For one thing, they were breathing a big sigh of relief that it was not Mitt Romney. Palin offers everything that a conservative is looking for and does something very important. It takes away a weapon from the Democrats (while at the same time, putting them in a hypocritical pile of pud, more on that in a sec).

Pointing out the obvious, Palin is a woman. Yeah I know. This is significant in that McCain picked someone who is not another Old White Guy or someone who is a Washington lifer. Palin is someone who stood by her convictions as evidenced four years ago when she resigned from her post as chair of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission over ethical grounds. The incident involved the chairman of the Alaskan Republican Party taking a seat on the commission while keeping his partisan post. The chairman later resigned from the body and paid a \$12,000 fine. She also beat the establishment to win the governor's chair.

Palin is not your typical Republican...OK, she wasn't the Republican the democrats were hoping for. Had McCain picked Romney or Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, this race would probably have been a cakewalk for them, but I now see a leveled playing field.

Sen. Barack Obama for months has been campaigning on hope and change. He was campaigning that his administration would be something different, with no Washington insiders. I should also point out that the Democrats were lambasting McCain for being the typical old white guy. Imagine the irony when Delaware Sen. Joe Biden was announced as Obama's running mate.

Now, I will be the first to tell you that the Republican Party has the image of being an old white guy's party. All money was pointing to someone who personifies that image. The

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pick of Palin is a sign that the Republican Party is looking to diversify while delivering its core message. The McCain/Palin ticket can easily counter argue any attack from the Obama/Biden ticket.

Think about it...

DEM. POINT: Palin is not experienced enough.

REP. COUNTER-POINT: Obama is not experienced enough.

DEM. POINT: McCain is old.

REP. COUNTER-POINT: So is Biden

DEM. POINT: McCain is a Washignton Insider

REP. COUNTER-POINT: And Biden is a change, how?

I would also point out that McCain has stood by his convictions and had no problems saying and following what he believed when people disagreed with him...even in his own party. Obama follows which ever was the wind blows. Also, unlike Obama, McCain has a lot of his fellow Democrats saying how inexperienced he is. For me personally, that made it all the more hilarious in watching Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) wear a poker face while praising Obama.

Based on the profiles of Palin that I had read, she is a maverick in her own style while proud to stand by her convictions. In the days and weeks ahead, everyone will see why Palin was a brilliant pick. This is a step in the right direction if the Republicans want to hold on to their principals while promoting diversity.