

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Truth hard to find in the middle of election season

At least one TV station joined several other broadcast outlets recently in refusing to air what some political spin doctors have called a venomous television spot, paid for by Las Vegas Sands Inc. chairman Sheldon Adelson, which fires incendiary missives at several local elected officials, including some presently involved in races for political seats.

R-J Columnist and political peeping-tom Jon Ralston said on a recent KLAS-TV Channel 8 newscast that the never-released television spot had riled some folks who'd heard about its contents. It's believed, according to some, that the spot targeted Adelson opponents.

While it is refreshing that some news organizations exercised enough forethought to not air what could have been a lightning rod of controversy, it would be nice for politicians to begin to reconsider mudslinging.

Pick a race, any race, and the barbs are flying: If it's not 1st Congressional District candidates Shelley Berkeley harping on the fact that Don Chairez was repeatedly late in paying his taxes as a California lawyer or Chairez lambasting Berkeley for questionable advice given to her former boss — who happens to be Adelson — then it's incumbent Sen. Harry Reid balking at Rep. John Ensign for supposedly voting for interim nuclear waste storage at Yucca Mountain and Ensign firing back, contending Reid has signed bills raising taxes more than \$400 million in his decade-plus in office.

Let's get away from the smoke and mirrors. All the infantile jockeying and record-bashing shrouds what many citizens already consider a muddled political picture.

Candidates parade bill numbers and newspaper quotes around as if they are the magic elixir. And in some instances, they might sway a voter. But many people are growing increasingly weary of the shenanigans: for each point there is a counterpoint, for each negative ad, another one follows, dig up a derogatory quote and the opponent unearths two, locate a never-heard of bill, examine the opponent's vote and tell the public how the vote shuttled us closer to doom and makes them the obvious choice of savior.

Though the Adelson TV spot is only one instance, the media makes judgment calls everyday on whether or not to pursue information, some of which is only meant to denigrate others. While the media makes mistakes, it is our job to uncover the truth. And the truth about politicians seems to be that only their word is gospel. How sad.



THE FINAL INSULT

Fight for colorblind society a fight for exclusion

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Those who favor turning a blind eye to equal opportunity in order to halt the march toward a just and inclusive society are at it again.

In Washington state this Nov. 3, the electorate will vote on Initiative 200, a referendum which, if passes, will force Washington's public agencies, including its public schools and universities, to dismantle their affirmative action programs.

I-200, as the initiative is called in shorthand, offers a stark example of the posture opponents of equal opportunity take nowadays: They fervently profess their allegiance to "color-blindness."

Equal opportunity is a reality, they say. Racism is no longer a significant fact of American life, they say. Therefore, programs that deliberately and openly seek to increase the number of white women, African-Americans, Native-Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanic-Americans discriminate against white people, especially white men.

In fact, however, those who push this view have merely cloaked their anti-Democratic notions in the Democratic, humanistic language the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s compelled America to practice, not merely preach.

To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price
President
National Urban League



That cloaking was the key to the success two years ago of Proposition 209 in California.

Proposition 209, which did not mention affirmative action, got 55 percent of the vote. But, strikingly, the exit polls taken that day found that 28 percent of those who voted for it said they supported affirmative action.

That's the kind of confusion among a significant part of the electorate the practitioners of this kind of "stealth racism" depend upon.

A poll taken in Washington state last month found that similar confusion exists about the language and the intent of I-200 — which also does not mention affirmative action.

When read the ballot language of the initiative, 53 percent of the poll's 812 respondents approved, 34 percent disapproved and 13 percent were undecided.

What do these seemingly contradictory statistics in California and Washington mean?

They mean that the

of information in order to combat the trickery.

Fortunately, a coalition of progressive groups and individuals in Washington state have done just that. The coalition includes the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League's two Washington state affiliates, the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle and the Tacoma Urban League.

Our sister civil rights organization has committed \$50,000 to the campaign against I-200, and our own contribution is rising past the \$20,000 mark thus far. Other groups and individuals are contributing as well.

Last month the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce declared itself opposed to I-200, as have small companies and large ones alike. The latter include such giants as Microsoft, Boeing, Costco, Starbucks (See Colorblind, Page 20)

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