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**“Let’s Compare Candidates”**

by

Tom Holbrook

As we enter into the Primary Election season—still 10 months away from the really big one in November—I hear more and more individuals saying they’re in a quandary as to whom they should give their vote. To hear all the candidates tell it, both Democrat and Republican, they all would be the perfect pick for the highest office in the land, however, our common sense will tell us that many of the rationale justifying their opinion of their ability is sorely lacking validity.

Ms. Clinton, Hillary to her friends and many other names to her detractors, states over and over again that she is the most qualified because of her constant shadowing of her husband and previous President Bill Clinton. Someone recently sent me an e-mail about a statement purportedly made by Brett Favre’s wife at a news conference implying she would be a good candidate for the Green Bay Packers because she had been Brett’s wife during 16 years that he was their quarterback. She also allegedly said 65 percent of Packers’ fans polled said they agreed with her. Ridiculous, obviously so, but no more ridiculous than Hillary’s statement claiming adequate presidential experience to make her the best qualified and that 50 percent of Democrats agreed.

Theo Caldwell, a Canadian journalist with the *National Post* has very succinctly pointed out the experience, or lack thereof, of each current Presidential candidate who claims that he or she is a potentially viable choice for the job. Sometimes we get so caught up in personalities and headlines we can’t see the truth about situations or individuals and he gets right to the nitty gritty of the true qualifications of our presidential candidates. He writes:

"An obvious choice can be unnerving. When the apparent perfection of one option or the unspeakable awfulness of another makes a decision seem too easy, it is human nature to become suspicious. This instinct intensifies as the stakes of the given choice are raised. American voters know no greater responsibility to their country and to the world than to select their president wisely. While we do not yet know who the Democrat and Republican nominees will be, any combination of the leading candidates from either party will make for the most obvious choice put to American voters in a generation. To wit, none of the Democrats has any business being president. This pronouncement has less to do with any apparent perfection among the Republican candidates than with the intellectual and experiential paucity evinced by the Democratic field. "Not ready for prime time," goes the vernacular, but this does not suffice to describe how bad things are.

"Alongside Hillary Clinton, add Barack Obama’s kindergarten essays to an already confused conversation about Dennis Kucinich’s UFO sightings, dueling celebrity endorsements and who can be

quickest to retreat from America's global conflict and raise taxes on the American people, and it becomes clear that these are profoundly unserious individuals.

"To be sure, there has been a fair amount of rubbish and rhubarb on the Republican side (Ron Paul, call your office), but even a cursory review of the legislative and professional records of the leading contenders from each party reveals a disparity akin to adults competing with children.

"For the Republicans, Rudy Giuliani served as a two-term mayor of New York City, turning a budget deficit into a surplus and taming what was thought to be an governable metropolis. Prior to that, he held the third-highest rank in the Reagan Justice Department, obtaining over 4,000 convictions. Mitt Romney, before serving as governor of Massachusetts, founded a venture capital firm that created billions of dollars in shareholder value, and he then went on to save the Salt Lake City Olympics.

"While much is made of Mike Huckabee's history as a Baptist minister, he was also a governor for more than a decade and, while Arkansas is hardly a "cradle of presidents," it has launched at least one previous chief executive to national office. John McCain's legislative and military career spans five decades, with half that time having been spent in the Congress. Even Fred Thompson, whose excess of nonchalance has transformed his once-promising campaign into nothing more than a theoretical possibility, has more experience in the U.S. Senate than any of the leading Democratic candidates.

"With just over one term as a Senator to her credit, Hillary Clinton boasts the most extensive record of the potential Democratic nominees. In that time, Senator Clinton cannot claim a single legislative accomplishment of note, and she is best known lately for requesting \$1-million from Congress for a museum to commemorate Woodstock.

"Barack Obama is nearing the halfway point of his first term in the Senate, having previously served as an Illinois state legislator and, as Clinton has correctly pointed out, has done nothing but run for president since he first arrived in Washington. Between calling for the invasion of Pakistan and fumbling a simple question on driver's licenses for illegal aliens, Obama has shown that he is not the fellow to whom the nation ought to hike the nuclear football.

"John Edwards, meanwhile, embodies the adage that the American people will elect anyone to Congress—once. From his \$400 haircuts to his personal war on poverty, proclaimed from the porch of his 28,000-square-foot home, purchased with the proceeds of lawsuits exploiting infant cerebral palsy, and at the same time enjoying a \$500,000 salary for his hedge fund expertise. Edwards is living proof that history can play out as tragedy and farce simultaneously.

"Forget for a moment all that you believe about public policy. Discard your notions about taxes and Iraq, free trade and crime, and consider solely the experience of these two sets of candidates. Is there any serious issue that you would prefer to entrust to a person with the Democrats' experience,

**rather than that of any of the Republicans?"**

**"Does this decision not become unsettlingly simple?"**