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## Party stalwarts should consider name change to 'McCarthy Day'

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### Up Front/Commentary

If I occasionally take a sardonic view of life it's because long ago, in the days before the Internet, I made the mistake of looking up my name in the dictionary.

I was 11 or 12 at the time, an innocent age when young boys dream of glory and honor, of epic battles and triumph over evil. I wanted a name that personified such virtues, that spoke of a noble heritage - war leader, maybe, or dragon slayer. Defender of the faith had an especially nice ring. Like poor Charlie Bucket peeling back the wrapper on his last Wonka chocolate bar, I cracked open that enormous school dictionary in hopes of finding a golden appellation.

Imagine my disappointment when I discovered a spence was a kind of medieval butler, the guy in charge of the castle food pantry. Rather than repel invaders or pillage tyrants, my ancestors counted eggs and restocked shelves.

I remember complaining to my father about this appalling injustice. Without skipping a beat he replied, "yeah, but at least we got fed."

I was not amused. Even then I knew words had the power to shape one's destiny. Rather than Romeo and Juliet's "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," I was more of a "you are what you eat" kind of guy: If you have a charismatic name, you'll be a charismatic person. If you're named after a supply closet ... well, c'est moi.

Organizations clearly understand the value of names. Throughout history, for example, military units have earned designations that instill pride and help soldiers rise above themselves in times of need: the Screaming Eagles, Old Ironsides, Hell on Wheels, Crusaders, the Immortals.

The same is true in politics. Local-level Republican committees traditionally call their annual meetings "Lincoln Day" celebrations.

Lincoln ... now there's a name steeped in glory and battle, a heritage every American should take pride in.

In 1860, when Lincoln became the first Republican elected president, the party adopted a platform that reflected its antislavery roots, as well as its concern for America's newest citizens and burgeoning industry. Among the 17 resolutions: a condemnation of the African slave trade as "a crime against humanity and a burning shame to our country and age"; opposition to any state or federal legislation "by which the rights of citizenship hitherto accorded (to immigrants) shall be abridged or impaired"; a statement that people "view with alarm the reckless extravagance which pervades every department of the federal government;" a demand that the government "render immediate and effective aid" for the construction of a transcontinental railroad; and above all, a recognition that "to the Union of the States this nation owes its unprecedented increase in population, its development of natural resources, its rapid augmentation of wealth, its happiness at home and its honor abroad, and we hold in abhorrence all schemes for disunion."

Reading that heritage and comparing it with what occurred at the recent Idaho Republican Party convention in Idaho Falls, I admit to being somewhat confused. There doesn't seem to be a logical continuum.

Although the idea of secession apparently wasn't raised at the convention, states' rights certainly had more support than the concept of union. Hence the resolution encouraging repeal of the 17th Amendment and ending direct election of U.S. senators, as well as the support for an Arizona law targeting illegal immigrants. And while all men may be created equal, it's now only "natural born" men and women who should be allowed to marry.

There's also that new loyalty oath requiring Republican candidates to pledge allegiance to the entire state platform or spell out which resolutions they don't support - no more independent thinkers sneaking in without paying.

Party stalwarts are free to adopt whatever resolutions best reflect their beliefs, of course, but they might want to consider a name change, if only to achieve truth in advertising. Rather than "Lincoln Day" celebrations, perhaps it should now be "McCarthy Day."

With his crippling fears and witch-hunt mentality, old Joe would have felt right at home in Idaho Falls. He could have brought along his list of 205 names, 205 known Communists, known illegals, 205 known Republicans in name only and unnatural spouses. He could have conducted hearings and rooted them out, once again saving us from ourselves.

And if some party members find themselves dismayed by this change, if they feel the party of McCarthy is a bitter, shrivelled reflection of their long heritage, a name that falls short of the virtues to which they aspire ... well, I know just how they feel.

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