

Confederate Battle Flag is a great Democratic diversion

Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune

Political scientist Wallace Stanley Sayre famously observed, "Academic politics is the most vicious and bitter form of politics, because the stakes are so low."

The colloquial interpretation of Sayre's law reads: "In any dispute, the intensity of feeling is inversely proportional to the value of the issues at stake." This came to be known as Sayre's Law.

Sayre died too soon. Had he seen the news media and Democrat-concocted controversy over the Confederate Battle Flag, he would have conceded that there are politics more bitter and vicious than academia, over even lower stakes.

The Democratic Party is so bereft of ideas and has assembled such a record of failure that they've had to start recycling their old distractions. When the Democrats had nothing to persuade Americans to vote for them in 2012, they invented the war on women meme. It didn't matter that the narrative was patently absurd. The press and the Democrats used it to continually bludgeon Republicans, who naively believed that they could debate grown-up issues, such as national security and economics.

And now the Democrats have resurrected their old Confederate Battle Flag controversy, although they may have expended that ammunition too soon. Republican governors and legislatures have accomplished what Democrats could not or would not. The Confederate flags are coming down.

Beginning with the 2000 presidential campaign, Republican candidates were called upon to take a stand on the Confederate flag, which often flies over Southern states. It mattered to no one in the news media that a flag that flies over state capitols is not a matter for the federal government. And it didn't matter that prominent Democrats both raised the flags in the first place and did nothing to bring them down when they had the power to do so. Somehow, that albatross was draped around Republican necks.

The Confederate Battle Flag flew over the South Carolina state Capitol dome because Democrats put it there. The flag went up in 1961 at the direction of then Gov. Earnest (Fritz) Hollings, a Democrat. The flag-raising was part of the opening ceremonies for the Civil War centennial. It was supposed to fly for just one year, but was never taken down. Hollings left it up as a sign of rebellion against federal civil rights legislation.

After his one term as governor, Hollings moved on to the United States Senate, where he fossilized in place until 2005. While Republican presidential candidates were repeatedly challenged in 2000 over an issue that was not within the bailiwick of a president, Hollings was never called to account.

In 1998, a Republican governor had the flag removed from the dome and moved it to a less prominent location.

While Bill Clinton was governor of Arkansas, he annually recognized Confederate Flag Day. General Robert E. Lee's birthday is an Arkansas state holiday. Confederate President Jefferson Davis's birthday is also celebrated. Clinton never tried to change any of that while he served as governor.

In 1987, he signed a declaration that the Arkansas state flag celebrated Arkansas' Confederate heritage. The key sentence reads, "The blue star above the word "ARKANSAS" is to commemorate the Confederate States of America."

When has the mainstream news media ever demanded that Clinton account for his record?

I read the other day that in Barack Hussein Obama's old Chicago congressional district, the unemployment rate for teenaged black males was 92 percent. The murder rate there rivals casualty figures during the Iraq War. Obama himself said recently in a speech that a black male who grows up in a fatherless home is 20 times more likely to end up in prison than a black child who grow up in a two-parent home.

The condition of people whose lives have deteriorated under Democrat governance should be a greater concern than where a flag flies.

But what issue has the Democrats made front and center? The Confederate Battle Flag? The latest catalyst was a photo of the man arrested for the racist mass murder in Charleston, S.C. The man allegedly hoped to start a race war.

Do you know who else once tried to start a race war? That would be William Ayers, in his role as a leader of the Weather Underground. Obama kicked off his political career in Ayers' backyard. And Obama worked with Ayers to impose political indoctrination on Chicago public school curricula.

No wonder Democrats want to talk about flags.

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