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'Birthers' not helping conservatives' causes

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Michael Costello commentary

Please, people. Get over it. Barack Obama won the election and he is a natural-born U.S. citizen. So for all of you who are holding out some sort of hope that the Supreme Court will deliver you from evil, overturn the 2008 presidential election and install John McCain to his rightful place as leader of the free world, it isn't going to happen. Besides, if Obama were somehow removed from office, Joe Biden would take his place and Biden would be far worse than Obama if only because of the wide gulf between Biden's opinion of his own intellect and reality.

And by clinging to the belief that Obama is not a natural-born U.S. citizen, "birthers," as Obama doubters are known, actually do harm to the cause of turning the socialists out of power.

A recent poll by an outfit called Research 2000 found that 28 percent of self-identified Republicans do not believe that Obama is a legal, natural-born, U.S. citizen. Another 30 percent aren't sure, meaning that only 42 percent of Republicans are confident of Obama's U.S. citizenship. I don't know anything about Research 2000, but I do know that the poll was paid for by the Daily Kos, a far-left, ultra-partisan blog that frequently originates disinformation. But I also know from my own e-mail that far too many do doubt Obama's citizenship.

My advice to anyone who thinks that Obama can be forced out of office by disproving his eligibility for president is that you should grow up. He is a citizen. His native state, Hawaii, has produced documentation.

And even if he had been born in Kenya, as many prefer to believe, he is still a U.S. citizen. Because regardless of his paternity, his mother most certainly was a U.S. citizen and that alone settles the deal.

And besides, there are at least two problems with pursuing this citizenship fantasy. First, anybody who is creating or forwarding e-mails or creating birther Web sites is wasting energy that could be put to a far more constructive use. In addition, birtherism permits the mainstream media to smear conservatism. Neither the left nor the right holds sway over this country. Elections are won by attracting the middle. And the middle won't want to have anything to do with nut cases.

In this regard, conservatives and Republicans are held to a far higher standard than liberals and Democrats, and birthers permit the news media to portray conservatives as kooks.

A way to take the measure of the mainstream news media is to read the New York Times. The Times has published seven stories about birthers since June 1. For the record, that is seven times as many stories as the Times has published about Obama's illegal firing of Gerald Walpin, the inspector general for AmeriCorps. Walpin was fired after his investigation uncovered the misappropriation of funds by Obama friend and political ally Kevin Johnson. The mainstream news media have their priorities.

In addition, when the Times reports on birthers, the ideological affiliation of birthers is unmistakable.

It's not as though Democrats are free of kooks. One collection of Democrat nut cases is known as "truthers." Truthers believe that the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks were a Bush administration inside job. A far more credible poll firm, Rasmussen Reports, found in 2007 that 35 percent of Democrats believed that George W. Bush at least had advance knowledge of the attacks or perhaps played a role in planning them. And another 26 percent weren't certain. But that didn't make much news. The Times published a few dismissive stories on truthers, but never mentioned any ideological affiliation. It didn't even make much news when the previous chairman of the Democratic National Committee and former frontrunner for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination, Howard Dean, lent his own credibility to trutherism by promising in 2003 that, if elected, he would investigate truther claims.

That reminded me of Jimmy Carter's 1976 promise to blow the lid off the U.S. government's UFO cover-ups.

And very little was made in the mainstream news media of Democratic attempts to de-legitimize John McCain's eligibility for president in 2008. McCain was certainly not born in the United States. He was born in the Panama Canal Zone, and some Democrats argued that this made him ineligible.

Portraying conservatives as kooks fits the agenda. Portraying Democrats as kooks does not serve that agenda.

So let's not help them out, shall we?

Costello is a research technician at Washington State University. His e-mail address is kozmocostello@hotmail.com.