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Sent: 8/29/2012 4:12:06 PM +00:00

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From: Lanny Davis [mailto:
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2012 11:20 AM
To: H
Subject: Obama's Best Argument for Reelection

Purple Nation

August 29, 2012

Obama's Best Argument for Reelection

By Lanny J. Davis

<http://thehill.com/conventions-2012/dem-convention-charlotte/245775-opinion-obamas-best-argument-for-reelection->

(This column was preceded yesterday by one presenting Mitt Romney's best arguments for winning the presidency in 2012. The author supports Barack Obama for reelection.)

First and foremost, President Obama must return to the themes of his 2008 presidential campaign and his 2004 Democratic National Convention keynote speech that so inspired Americans from all walks of life, and from all across the political spectrum.

In that address, then-Sen. Obama (D-Ill.) referred to the "spin masters" and the "negative ad peddlers" who, he claimed, divided the country. And then he said to those offenders:

"Well, I say to them tonight, there is not a liberal America and a conservative America — there is the United States of America. There is not a black America and a white America and Latino America and Asian America — there's the United States of America. The pundits like to slice-and-dice our country into red states and blue states ... But I've got news for them, too: We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around in our libraries in the red states. We coach Little League in the blue states, and, yes, we've got some gay friends in the red states. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq and there are patriots who supported the war in Iraq."

This is the theme President Obama should repeat during his 2012 acceptance speech. He should commit to hitting the reset button and turning away from the "negative ad peddlers" who engage in personal attacks, and challenge Mitt Romney to do the same. And he should challenge Romney to debate the issues and propose specific solutions that can achieve bipartisan consensus.

He should acknowledge that Romney is a good man, a good father and husband and citizen, and that he is trying to do the right thing for the American people to solve our problems, albeit by a different approach.

Second, on the economy: Obama should admit that his policies have not worked as he had hoped — i.e., that unemployment remains at the same percentage, 8.3, in July 2012 as it was in February 2009. But then he should remind everyone about the Rule of Deep Holes: When you are in one, stop digging.

And that is what he has done: stopped digging.

When he entered office, the nation had lost over 8 million jobs over the previous 15 months, an average of 712,000 jobs per month from October 2008 to March 2009. Over the last four years, 4.3 million new private-sector jobs have been created. The Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan and respected expert, has stated that but for his stimulus program, the economic situation would be worse today.

Obama would enhance his chances to win the crucial undecided independent vote by endorsing the bipartisan recommendations of his own Simpson-Bowles Deficit Reduction Commission — increasing revenues through closing tax loopholes, cutting spending and undertaking entitlement reform. This would be in contrast to Romney and his running mate, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), who oppose Simpson-Bowles. (Indeed, Ryan was a member of the commission and voted against its bipartisan recommendations, despite the fact that his fellow conservative Republicans on the commission, Sens. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma and Mike Crapo of Idaho, supported them.)

Meanwhile, Obama can argue that Romney has not put forth a specific alternative economic policy, other than more tax cuts, including for the super-rich, which would add to the morally unacceptable national debt, and more deregulation, which arguably contributed to the economic meltdown in 2008-09.

Finally, Obama should remind all Americans that Romney's election would almost certainly mean overturning Roe v. Wade, since he would almost certainly be in a position to appoint the fifth, deciding vote to the Supreme Court.

If this were to happen, Obama could accurately state that state legislatures would have the right to prohibit terminations of all pregnancies under all circumstances, including those resulting from rape and incest; and that this absolute prohibition had been the law in many states before Roe was decided in 1973, and is included in the 2012 national Republican platform.

While sincere people differ on abortion — and Obama should acknowledge that — the danger of Roe v. Wade being overturned could make the difference among political independents and moderates, men and women, in both parties.

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Davis, the principal in the Washington law firm of Lanny J. Davis & Associates, which specializes in legal crisis management, served as President Clinton's special counsel (1996-98) and as a member of President George W. Bush's Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (2006-07). He currently serves as special counsel to Dilworth Paxson and is a partner with former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele in Purple Nation Solutions, a public affairs-strategic communications company. He is the author of the forthcoming book "Crisis Tales - Five Rules for Handling Scandal in Business, Politics and Life," to be published by Simon & Schuster. He can be followed on Twitter @LannyDavis.

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To: Oscar Flores [Redacted]

Date: Wed, 29 Aug 2012 12:12:06 -0400

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[Redacted]

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