

You Don't Know Jack or Barack

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Abstract

Last month the Advocate ran an article titled “Gay Is The New Black?: The Last Great Civil Rights Struggle“. Today Joe Solmonese and other gay rights advocates have expressed outrage at the choice of Pastor Rick Warren. But not every GLBT person agrees. I count myself as one of those voices. I defended Barack Obama [...]

Article

Last month the Advocate ran an article titled “Gay Is The New Black?: The Last Great Civil Rights Struggle“. Today Joe Solmonese and other gay rights advocates have expressed outrage at the choice of Pastor Rick Warren. But not every GLBT person agrees. I count myself as one of those voices.

I defended Barack Obama feverishly when the whole Donnie McClurkin thing came down because I understood what he was trying to do. He's never claimed to be a liberal, though many have put that tag on him. He's never been anti-war, though many have put that tag on him. He's never been anti-Christian even though many have put that tag on him. He's said in his speeches that he's not the “president of red America or blue America, but the United States of America” or something like that thousands of times. I can understand the anger at the Gates pick or even Salazar. But Rick Warren isn't going to dictate policy. He isn't going to be a member of Obama's staff. He's giving a prayer.

Obama hasn't went back on any promises to the GLBT community. He wasn't thrown us under the bus. I don't know Barack Obama very well, personally. I don't know if he likes gays and lesbians, I don't know if he'd be embarrassed to be seen with a transgender person. I don't know if he'd talk about me to others behind my back. I don't really care. As Bayard Rustin said:

“Our job is not to get those people who dislike us to love us. Nor was our aim in the civil rights movement to get prejudiced white people to love us. Our aim was to try to create the kind of America, legislatively, morally, and psychologically, such that even though some whites continued to hate us, they could not openly manifest that hate”

I don't care what he thinks in private. What I do care about is his support of GLBT issues. He's never backslid on those issues. Not in his time in state government, nor in his time in the Senate, and he will not as President. He's made promises to the Christian community, and I think he'll keep those too.

But his essential message to all about seeing where we agree, not concentrating on where we disagree. Abortion is a good example. He's pro-choice but he's also wants to work very hard to see them happen less.

I have to wonder why people are making such a big deal about this pick. The only conclusion I can draw is that they are either extremely privileged or extremely arrogant (or both). The Advocate cover shows an utter lack of respect for other movements, and even for civil rights protections for some in their own community (transgender people).

I'll join the dissenters when Obama doesn't sign the Matthew Shepard Act or ENDA, or changes his mind on DADT and DOMA, but not before. Until then, I'm an Obama girl.

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