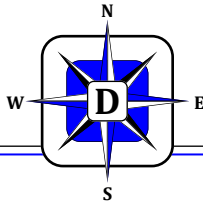


John Davis Political Report [©]

P.O. Box 30714 Raleigh, NC 27622
johndavis@johndavisconsulting.com



Ph: 919-696-3859 FAX: 919-781-7541
www.johndavisconsulting.com

Character Issue: America's Hypocrisy Pandemic

Political Morality Lessons for 2010 from the Clinton-Lewinski Scandal of 1998

John N. Davis, President

John Davis Political Report is an in-depth summary of the key political trends and events impacting North Carolina politics. The report will be copyrighted and available exclusively to subscribers after an introductory period. See web site for subscription details: www.johndavisconsulting.com. John Davis has followed NC politics for 23 years, serving as President of NCFREE, a political research organization, where he was Editor of the Almanac of North Carolina Politics. He is President of John Davis Consulting, specializing in political research and analysis.

On December 19, 1998, after a year of Congressional investigations and testimony riddled with salacious scandal, the U.S. House voted to impeach President Clinton. The next day, December 20, 1998, Clinton's approval rating jumped ten points to 73 percent, according to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll, an all time high for the embattled president, and higher than the highest approval rating ever achieved by President Ronald Reagan. At the same time, the number of Americans with a favorable view of the Republican Party fell ten points.

On Monday of this week, an Associated Press story¹ reported that a new conservative group called *Wake Up America* has been organized here in North Carolina, a group intent on saving our state from corrupt, socialistic Democrats. Their TV ad² states that "Corrupt Democrat leaders have been jailed in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008," and raises the question, "Are NC Democrats the most politically corrupt in America?"

The TV ad features images of North Carolina Democrats who have been convicted of a crime, like former Commissioner of Agriculture Meg Scott Phipps, former state Senator and Congressman Frank Balance, former Speaker of the NC House Jim Black and former state Representative Thomas Wright. There is also a picture of former Governor Easley and his wife Mary, along with a newspaper story about her \$170,000 state job.

In the fall of 1998, Republicans here in North Carolina and around the county ran similar ads, ads reminding voters of the affair between President Clinton and a 21-year-old White House intern Monica Lewinski. No political strategy in U.S. political history was more inept than the

¹ *Wake Up America* story by AP writer Gary D. Robertson, September 21, 2009

² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLefJgozBVg&feature=related>

1998 GOP campaign to seize the moral high ground with a self-righteous army of hypocrites led by U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a Georgia Republican.

GOP political strategists assumed in 1998 that the American people could be duped into believing that Republicans had greater personal character qualities than Democrats. They forgot the time-honored lesson: *Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones*. But stones they threw, \$10 million dollars worth, in the form of Clinton attack ads; a desperate TV crusade to remind American voters that Bill Clinton had cheated on his wife and lied about it and implied that all Democrats were equally depraved and should be exiled.

Dependently wealthy GOP consultants, fearful of losing lucrative political retainers, failed to inform then-U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich that *he*, not President Clinton, was in fact the most unpopular national political figure of the entire decade. The percent of American voters with a favorable impression of Newt Gingrich's brand of leadership never broke the mid-forties during 1998. Clinton's favorable numbers soared to over 70 percent after the articles of impeachment were voted on by the U.S. House in December of 1998.

After the dust settled in November 1998, Democrats had won an upset comeback victory by not losing what they had and by making surprising gains. For the first time since 1934, the party in the White House picked up Congressional seats during a mid-term election year. Here in North Carolina, U.S. Senator Lauch Faircloth, R-Sampson County, lost to political novice John Edwards, D-Moore County, and the GOP lost the majority party advantage in the NC House, giving the Democrats all of the power over the state budget.

Recently, John Edwards hit the all-time low by cheating on his wife while she was recovering from cancer, and then lying to the public about the affair and the paternity of his love child, while privately telling his mistress that he would marry her on a rooftop in New York City after his wife died ... with the Dave Matthews Band performing in the background ... all according to former staffer Andrew Young who is now writing a tell-all book about his role in facilitating the affair and cover-up.

But, remember 1998 and Newt Gingrich, whose low-life antics make Edwards look like a choir boy (Ok, maybe a choir boy in the Not So Reverend Jesse Jackson's church. Jesse Jackson was fathering a child with his mistress while providing spiritual counseling to Clinton over his affair with Lewinski!). All the while Gingrich was decrying President Clinton's moral failings with Lewinski, he was cheating on his second wife with a twenty-something Congressional staffer.

As to Gingrich's first wife, he cheated on her too. When their marriage was falling apart, he went to visit her in the hospital while she was recovering from her third cancer surgery ... to press her to sign divorce papers. Gingrich, who admitted his affairs in 2007 on James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* radio talk show,³ was the first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in its 208-year history to be disciplined for ethical wrongdoing.

With political devastation all about, Newt Gingrich resigned as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Bob Livingston, a Republican from Louisiana, was on the brink

³ <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=2937633&page=1>

of succeeding Gingrich as speaker when ... oops ... he was forced to confess to adultery and abruptly resigned from Congress. Congressman Henry Hyde, the Republican Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee responsible for passing judgment whether President Clinton should face impeachment, admitted in the fall of 1998, that as a married father of four he had a four-year affair that, according to those who knew them, wrecked a family with three children.⁴

Republicans in Congress made the same mistake in 2006 and 2008. The party of family values and fiscal integrity lost the majority in the U.S. House, U.S. Senate, the majority of governors and the majority of state legislatures in great part due to a scandal plagued Republican congress that broke all records for pork barrel spending. They lost because they said one thing and did another; they lost because they were a bunch of hypocrites.

- *In 2005-2006 combined, the GOP-led Congress approved 23,960 earmarks costing \$56.3 billion, and ran up a \$371 billion budget deficit.*
- *Republicans brought down by fraud or inappropriate sexual behavior during this time include Rep. Tom Delay, Rep. Tom Foley, Sen. Larry Craig, Sen. David Vitter, Rep. "Duke" Cunningham, Sen. Ted Stevens, "Scooter" Libby and Jack Abramoff.*

Next year is shaping up to be a year of great political potential for Republicans. Democrats have all of the power ... which means they get all of the blame for the ills of the state and nation.

However, in order for Republicans to seize the opportunities of 2010, they must remember that those people turning out by the tens of thousands at town hall meetings this summer and the mid-September "Taxpayers March on Washington" are not angry because of an adulterous or corrupt Congress, they are angry because of a Congress that's hypocritical on matters like accountability for their spending decisions, and a Congress that's hypocritical when it comes to respect for the voices of voters who fear a bankrupt America.

TV news film footage of angry voters at town hall meetings erupting in the face of their Member of Congress shows voters furious at elected officials who are hypocritical on matters of results, hypocritical on matters of boldness of legislative action, and hypocritical on matters of oversight with the money doled out through the economic stimulus package.

There is a hypocrisy pandemic in America today. Hypocrisy is the character flaw fueling voter ire and threatening ALL incumbents ... both parties. *Wake Up America* needs to wake up and pull their TV ads that raise questions like, "Are NC Democrats the most politically corrupt in America?" They are forgetting names like Michael Decker, former Republican house member serving time for taking a \$50,000 bribe in a bathroom at the IHOP in Salisbury; former Republican house member Coy Privette, President of the Christian Action League, who fancied prostitutes; and Sam Currin, judge, federal prosecutor and head of the North Carolina Republican Party, convicted of lying to a Grand Jury, obstructing justice and cheating the IRS.

Saving our state and nation from socialism is a fair and potentially effective argument for change in 2010. Republicans calling Democrats corrupt is laughable ... and politically suicidal, just as it was in 1998.

⁴ http://www.salon.com/news/1998/09/cov_16newsb.html