

NYDailyNews.com

DAILY NEWS Opinion

S.E. Cupp

The left's fake rainbow coalition: When it comes to ideas, GOP is far more diverse

S.E. Cupp

Wednesday, May 18th 2011, 4:00 AM



Fox News

The first Republican presidential debate for 2012 took place in Greenville, South Carolina.

The American left has long insisted that **Democrats** have cornered the diversity market, a talking point that, if not exactly true, has proven useful in portraying Republicans as anti-immigrant, anti-minority, anti-woman, anti-black and anti-gay for decades. Nominating and electing the first black President was undoubtedly a particularly proud moment, one that seemed to confirm Democrats' position on the leading edge of diversity.

But maybe the diversity claim serves as nothing more than atonement for all those years Democrats identified as the "white man's party," or for their support of Southern slavery, the **Ku Klux Klan** and **Jim Crow laws**. Or maybe, as the **Rev. Wayne Perryman** wrote in his book "Unfounded Loyalty," "Democrats didn't fall in love with black folks; they fell in love with the black vote."

Whether for reasons psychological or political, the left's decades-in-the-making diversity makeover has been effective. In modern political history, blacks, ethnic minorities and women generally vote Democratic. But despite the cosmetic change that's come about on the left, when it comes to the ever-important diversity of thought, conservatism wins the day. And the now-expanding, now-contracting 2012 **GOP** presidential field is proof.

If you were one of the few political wonks who tuned in for the **South Carolina** debate on May 5, you were introduced to five Republican candidates who couldn't be more intellectually disparate. Two anti-war, pro-drug libertarians, a Christian social conservative, a businessman-turned-radio host and, well, **Tim Pawlenty**, made it impossible at times to tell if we were watching a liberal peace rally or a religious revival.

There's **Gary Johnson**, former governor of **New Mexico**, who, along with **Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.)**, is advocating for less restrictive drug laws, even to the point of legalizing heroin. They've both been outspoken critics of the country's interventionist foreign policy.

Then there's **Herman Cain**, the former CEO of **Godfather's Pizza**, who considers himself a strict constitutionalist but admits he would have a hard time appointing a Muslim to his cabinet.

Rick Santorum, the former **Pennsylvania** senator, is a down-the-line social conservative who has been unapologetic in his defense of traditional marriage and the pro-life position.

And Pawlenty, former governor of **Minnesota**, has had to seriously atone for previously pushing cap and trade legislation, a statewide workplace smoking ban and government-imposed price controls for drugs offered through **Medicare** - all of which led the libertarian **Cato Institute** to suggest that he'd be a "big government running mate for **McCain**" in 2008.

Rounding out the field are **Newt Gingrich**, who once penned an eco-pleasing book called "A Contract with the Earth"; former **Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney**, the universal health care apologist whom **The Wall Street Journal** dubbed "Obama's Running Mate" in a blistering editorial, and **Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels**, who is a well-respected budget balancer with little foreign policy experience. Yes, there's even a gay Republican running for President. His name is **Fred Karger**, and he wants to, among other proposals, lower the voting age.

It's not an impressive field, by any stretch of the imagination. And with **Donald Trump** and **Mike Huckabee** recently announcing they won't run, and **Sarah Palin** and Daniels still in limbo, it's one that's still evolving. But whatever the field looks like in the end, one thing is clear - conservatism truly is a big tent.

Critics and strategists will bemoan the state of conservatism for all its internal squabbling over foreign policy, entitlement programs, raising the debt ceiling, cutting taxes and social issues. And with such a range of opinions, it's legitimate to wonder whether there's any cohesion on the right as the task of unseating **President Obama** next year approaches.

It's also valid to wonder whether some of the candidates with kookier positions stand a chance with voters, and whether the field's intellectual diversity will weaken the chances of more viable mainstream candidates.

But one thing is certain - conservatism isn't cookie-cutter anymore. And unlike racial or ethnic diversity, which amounts to rank quota-mongering, the kind of diversity the Republican Party is offering voters is the kind that matters.

Offering a choice between a white candidate and a black candidate is meaningless beyond its marketing value and unless those two candidates actually provide voters with substantive choices.

But a choice between one candidate who believes we shouldn't have intervened in **Libya**; and one who believes we should end Medicare altogether; and one who believes we should legalize drugs; and one who believes we should close our borders; or one who believes we should raise taxes on the wealthy - these are the decisions that will affect all our lives for decades to come.

So when you hear the Democrats talk about diversity in the months leading up to the 2012 election, ask yourself: What kind?

secupp@redsecupp.com

[S.E. Cupp](#), whose column appears on Wednesdays on [NYDailyNews.com](#) and often in the print edition of the newspaper, is a political commentator and author of the book "Losing Our Religion: The Liberal Media's Attack on Christianity." She is also co-author of "Why You're Wrong About The Right." She hosts a daily show on [GlennBeck.com](#) and is a contributing editor at [Townhall](#) magazine. She lives in [New York City](#).

[Previous Page](#) [12](#) [Next Page](#)

