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## *Hillary in a Sweater Vest?*

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To the casual observer no two politicians could be more different than Hillary Clinton and Rick Santorum -- the career woman who calls herself a "government junkie" and the "true conservative" whose wife home-schools their seven children. But look a little closer, and you'll find some surprising similarities.

- They're the only two national politicians who actually criticize the fundamental American idea of "the pursuit of happiness." Running for president in 2007, Clinton scoffed, "We can talk all we want about freedom and opportunity, about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but what does all that mean to a mother or father who can't take a sick child to the doctor?" Santorum denounces "this idea that people should be left alone, be able to do whatever they want to do," and laments that "we have a whole culture that is focused on immediate gratification and the pursuit of happiness . . . and it is harming America."
- Hillary wrote a book called *It Takes a Village*, Santorum wrote *It Takes a Family*. What they agree on is that individuals can't manage their own lives, and that what "it" really takes is an expansive, nurturing government telling individuals what's best for them. Clinton envisioned a federal government constantly advising, nagging, hectoring parents: "Videos with scenes of commonsense baby care -- how to burp an infant, what to do when soap gets in his eyes, how to make a baby with an earache comfortable -- could be running continuously in doctors' offices, clinics, hospitals, motor vehicle offices, or any other place where people gather and have to wait," she wrote. Santorum [proposed](#) such federal programs as national service, promotion of prison ministries, publicly financed trust funds for children, community-investment incentives, strengthened obscenity enforcement, covenant marriage, assorted tax breaks, and economic literacy programs in "every school in America."
- Both oppose gay marriage. As first lady, Clinton supported the Defense of Marriage Act to override state marriage laws and refuse any federal recognition of same-sex marriages (though she has softened her position). Santorum has made

- opposition to gay marriage a signature issue. And he supports a constitutional amendment to overrule state marriage laws, which Clinton opposes.
- As senators, both tried to raise prices for American consumers by supporting protectionist legislation for industries in their states. Santorum had a better [overall record](#) on free trade, but he often [supported](#) direct subsidies, trade tariffs and import quotas for American steel companies. Clinton [opposed](#) many trade agreements as senator and presidential candidate, and in life-imitates-parody echo of the free-trade economist Frederic Bastiat, she even supported 100 percent tariffs to protect New York candle makers.
  - Both think America would be a "cultural vacuum" in the absence of government arts funding. Bucking fellow conservatives in Congress, Santorum regularly [supported](#) full funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, saying in 1997, "The arts foster a strong sense of community and bring new ideas and cultures to many individuals and families all over the nation. Elimination of such programs would create a cultural vacuum that could not be easily filled." A year earlier, Clinton said, "This is an ominous time for those of us who care for the arts in America. A misguided, misinformed effort to eliminate public support for the arts not only threatens irrevocable damage to our cultural institutions but also to our sense of ourselves and what we stand for as a people." As I pointed out at the time, no one was proposing to "abandon" the arts. Some Republicans were proposing that of the \$37 billion then spent on the arts in the United States (according to the American Arts Alliance), the \$167 million that is coercively extracted from taxpayers should be eliminated. Who could view such a cut as "threatening irrevocable damage" or a "cultural vacuum"--except someone who looks at the bounty of civil society and sees a barren wasteland enlightened only by the activities of the federal government?

Clinton and Santorum disagree on a great deal. But in their view of adult Americans as helpless without the all-embracing support of the federal government, their disdain for the founding idea of America, and their curious notion the most dynamic culture in the world would be a "vacuum" without modest taxpayer funding, they are siblings under the skin.

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