



Will Quinn inspire – or frustrate – the ‘Stop Brady’ movement?

July 16, 2010 – To a graduate student class of school administrators, aspiring superintendents, I wondered about the female gender advantage Sen. Bill Brady enjoys in the polls over his election opponent, Gov. Pat Quinn. Women were giving Brady an edge of about 12 to 14 points. How is that?

In 17 years as a legislator, I doubt if Brady can point to a single vote of support on issues generally considered to be on the “women’s agenda.” Not just on reproductive “choice,” but all the “nurturing” policies like education, insurance and healthcare, support for the old, the sick, the disabled.

So why do women favor a guy who opposes everything the research says they care about? Is it the hair? I mused to myself, as I addressed the class, does this call into question our wisdom in having given women the vote? Then I realized I had actually said that “out loud.”

“Jim!” exclaimed Dr. Bill Phillips, who had invited me to be a guest lecturer. But the women in the room laughed heartily, apparently thinking my musing was intended as a joke. Well, good for them!

Still, Brady is likely to become governor despite his: lukewarm support in his own party; a legislative record all, especially women, should find offensive; habit of pandering too obviously; participation in the greed-driven, economy-ruining home mortgage bubble; benefiting from his own votes; vacillating on releasing his tax records; paying no taxes while becoming wealthy enough to buy a radio stations just for the fun of it.

Can’t Quinn stop Brady? Quinn’s heart is in the right place, but you have to wonder where he keeps his brains. The early release of prisoners by his mid-20s prisons director; losing track of those prisoners; the huge pay hikes for his staff, many also in their mid-20s – all this, and more, will hurt Quinn.

Quinn is further disadvantaged by the likelihood that the lesser-party candidates – Green Party nominee Rich Whitney, Scott Lee Cohen, Dock Walls etc. – will peel more votes from him than from Brady. The Blagojevich trial and legislative dysfunction on the Democrat side won’t help.

Last week’s [endorsement by the Illinois Education Association](#) will not rescue Quinn. If he gets to keep his job, it will be because someone else has “stopped Brady.”

That someone might be the Democrat Governors Association, which has also noticed Brady’s poll edge among women, realized it is irrational and is taking action to whittle it down. In “defining” Brady, who is still largely unknown, the DGA [focuses on his anti-women persona](#).

Confession time: Motivated by Brady, I took a Republican ballot (Gasp!) in the primaries and voted for Sen. Kirk Dillard. If just a couple hundred of you had done the same, we would not be wondering now about who will be the next governor of Illinois. (Let this commentary serve as a bias filter.)

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