

The Carolina Review

BIGGEST SIN...The Democrats won big in last week's elections, both statewide and nationally. Analysts are suggesting high unemployment rates, plus a repugnancy of the Congressional Club negativism in North Carolina, as the primary reasons for the Republican's thrashing.

But a bigger sin may be in large part responsible. The Democrats were able to convince multitudes of voters that Social Security benefits were in danger at the hands of Republicans.

Look here. A while back, a North Carolina attorney was planning a serious effort to gain a seat in the U.S. Congress. A lifelong Democrat and previous officeholder, he was a good politician.

Like all good politicians in this computer age, he realized the need for a public opinion poll to find out how the people of his district (a district with a good rural - urban mix) felt about the issues. The pollster he selected, one with a good reputation, suggested he needed to know something else.

"Sure you need to know how the people of your district feel," the pollster said, "but more important, you need to know how the 'people most likely to vote' feel."

Meanwhile, the potential candidate had some ideas of his own. For one thing, just from news reports and his own knowledge of the actuarial realities of public finance, he knew the Social Security program was in big trouble. Although he knew he didn't have all of the answers to revive and make survive the program, he at least wanted to offer the voters some legitimate thoughts and options to consider on such a vital issue.

Over several weeks time, the now - definite candidate put together an enviable list of no - nonsense proposals on Social Security. He planned to offer the proposals as a starting point for Congressional consideration to rescue the program from the periodic brink of disaster that, for the past several years, has kept older Americans always slightly uncomfortable.

Funny thing, though. When the candidate began talking about these proposals, the people would get itchy. Looking at their watches, patting their pockets for a cigarette, feet shuffling, they would soon excuse themselves.

Then the pollster came back with his report. "Twenty - two per cent of the people most likely to vote in the Democratic primary (in your district) are currently receiving some form of benefit from the Social Security fund," the expert said.

The politician, no expert, still had no trouble realizing that a lot more of the voters were also counting on soon collecting similar benefits. Human nature being what it apparently is, the people "most likely to vote" didn't want any changes or suggestion of change in something which they had such a direct interest.

Most only would the "enviable list" of proposals not win any votes, but it could conceivably lose the election. This particular candidate lost in the primaries, not necessarily and probably not because of his Social Security ideas. But the lesson on Social Security was never more clear.

The Republicans learned their lesson last week. The Democrats apparently already knew it. Those people "most likely to vote" get worried when you talk about changing Social Security. Everybody in Washington has been reminded.

So. As negative and sneaky as the Congressional Club can be, and as high as unemployment truly is, the biggest sin of this past election might turn out to be the Democrat's politicizing of the genuine need for drastic renovation in our Social Security program.



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lb. **Turkey Franks** **59¢**
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Grocery Specials
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