

# FORUM

## A Real Standup Person



**Ernie Pitt**

*This & That*



*Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue is trying to become North Carolina's first female governor.*

Last week, I attended a reception for Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, who is running for Governor of the state. The reception was made up of African American business leaders whose main interests consisted of economics and job creation.

First of all, I was quite impressed with the fact that the Lt. Gov. would agree to such a small gathering on such a short notice: but she did. She was very gracious, cordial and entertaining. She was also down-to-earth, as we found out during the hour and a half gathering. She engaged practically every attendee individually, gave a little talk and then fielded questions from the group.

In addition to her extensive experience, her workable proposals for health care, job creation, budgetary constraints, her ideas on free community college education along with other assistance, makes her a credible and attractive candidate.

However, what struck me most of all about the Lt. Gov. was her candor and honesty in responding to a tough and sensitive question from one of the attendees. The question was about minimum wage. This employer had some 500 employees who mostly made

minimum wage. His question was the affordability of paying increased wages to so many people. She supports increasing the minimum wage.

Lt. Gov. Perdue responded by empathizing with the employer while at the same time explaining how tough it is

for a family of four to make a decent living earning the current minimum wage. She went on to say that she was willing to work with businesses to help them in other ways that may create for them the ability to absorb the increase in wages. She even said that it was a bit-

ter pill to swallow but people needed to earn enough money to keep them above the poverty line.

That was a tough stance to take while looking this employer straight in the eye. I thought it took a lot of guts for her to do that. She had empathy for him but stood her ground on helping families earn enough to take care of their families and put bread on the table. I could tell that the employer appreciated her candor and her honesty. She did not hem and haw nor did she duck and dodge. I certainly appreciate politicians who tackle issues head on. She's a tough cookie. I like that about her.

She is also aware of the great influx of people that will enlarge the state's inhabitants in the next decade. We must have enough jobs, access to education and the necessary training opportunities to provide for this increase. I haven't heard anyone else mentioning this nor much of anything else except nasty criticisms of her proposals. She has answers; the other candidates are mostly attacking her plans. I dare say that what she is trying to do is a lot harder than what the others are not doing.

Anyway, I think she impressed some people who are hard to impress. It wasn't easy, but I think she handled herself extremely well.

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## It's Time for Hillary to Quit



**George Curry**

*Guest Columnist*

If Barack Obama were trailing in popular votes, behind in the delegate count, widely viewed as a divisive public figure and didn't have a mathematical chance of becoming his party's presidential nominee, he'd be pressured out of the race quicker than you can say Monica Lewinsky.

Yet, Hillary Clinton continues to march down a road that leads to nowhere and claim that she is acting in the best interest of democracy. She is acting in the best interest of the Republican Party but the Clinton arrogance and sense of privilege (yes, Hillary and Bill) won't let them see beyond their own short-sighted obsession.

Not only are the Clintons sore losers, Hillary asks to be treated the same as the "big boys" that have been in the race yet falls back on the gender card whenever the numbers are not falling her way. According to the New York Times, "Mrs. Clinton told aides that she would not be 'bullied out' of the race...She compared the situation to the 'big boys' trying to bully a woman."

And Bill Clinton, who knows a thing or two about girls, weighed in: "Apparently it's OK to say bad things about a girl. It's OK. The only thing that

matters is what happens to you. That's all that matters. If a politician doesn't want to get beat up, you shouldn't run for office."

He should be saying that to his wife, not Obama. In an interview with the Washington Post, Clinton said she stands a better chance of defeating McCain in November, though most polls give the edge to Obama. Waving the gender card, she said, "You cannot as a Democrat win the White House without a very big women's vote. What I believe is that women will turn out for me."

Some critics argue that the issue is larger than that. Appearing Sunday on "Meet the Press," New York Times columnist David Brooks said, "I think she should slow down the campaign, run what Mike Huckabee ran, a dignified campaign, not attacking her opponents, go through North Carolina and then get out."

Brooks explained, "She really has very little opportunity to win. The Jeremiah Wright thing was big, the big scandal, the biggest thing Barack Obama's faced really in months. It didn't hurt him. We now have the polling results from poll after poll. It's clear that it didn't hurt him. The voters were not shaken off him. Michigan and Florida are not going to revote, the super delegates are never going to overrule the pledged delegates, so her chances are really small."

Her chances of winning are small because voters dislike Hillary Clinton, the person.

This is the way "Meet the Press" moderator Tim Russert

summed it up:

**RUSSERT:** Here's the latest NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll. Head to head, Clinton, Obama, 45-45. It's a pick 'em. In the general election, McCain over Clinton, 46-44. Obama over McCain, 44-42. Both within the margin of error. "Here's the favorable, unfavorable. Hillary Clinton. It is now 37 positive, negative 48. Just two weeks ago, Clinton was at 45-43. She's dropped 8 points with her positive rating in two weeks. And look at the breakdown by party. Republicans, 10 positive, 79 negative; independents, just 24 percent positive, 56 percent negative; Democrats split 66, 17.

"Obama, his positive is 49-32. Two weeks ago, it was 51-28. A modest drop in two weeks during the whole Reverend Wright controversy. Here's the breakdown by party. His positive amongst Republicans is 19. Remember, Clinton's was 10. Independents, it's 49. Clinton's was 24. Democrats, it's 71. Clinton's was 66. Who can unite the country? This is all voters, Democrats, Republicans, independents. Obama, 60 to 34; McCain, 58-35; Clinton, 46 to 50."

**RUSSERT:** Who do the Republicans want to run against?

**BROOKS:** I think they still want to run against Hillary.

Not because she is a "girl," but because she is the weakest of the two remaining Democratic candidates. Democratic National

Committee Howard Dean's proposed solution to this mess is to have super delegates make up their minds by July 1. Why should the party's eventual nominee be forced to slug this out for another three months? If we don't know Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton by now, we won't ever know them. Democrats need to act now.


In even more crushing news for the Clinton camp, weekend caucus voting in Texas gave Obama a clear victory and possibly a win for the entire state. In the second phase of what is called the Texas 2-Step - which is actually a three-step process - representatives of both Obama and Clinton agree that Obama won the balloting on Saturday and Sunday, giving him an overall lead in the state.

Though Clinton won the popular vote on March 4 over Obama with a 65-61 delegate lead, Obama won 38-29 among at-large delegates over the weekend, giving him a 5-point total delegate lead. The third and final step comes June 6 when super delegates vote in Austin.

If Obama escapes with a win in Texas - a state Bill Clinton said Hillary must win in order to continue in the race - no one expects Hillary to suddenly withdraw. Neither she nor Bill has demonstrated that much class.

*George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. He can be reached through his Web site, [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com).*

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