

When Hillary Says 'Always,' She Doesn't Always Mean Always

I believe Hillary Clinton is now telling the truth regarding her views on same-sex "marriage." I just don't believe she was telling the truth in the past, especially when she expressed her opposition to it. Can anyone say, "Shades of Barack Obama," whose views on the subject also "evolved"?

When it comes to President Obama, David Axelrod has now confirmed what seemed obvious for years, namely, that he lied about his views on redefining marriage so as not to drive away black (and other morally conservative) voters. As a headline in *TIME* magazine announced, "Axelrod: Obama Misled Nation When He Opposed Gay Marriage In 2008," with the subtitle bluntly stating, "A striking admission of political dishonesty from the keeper of the Obama flame."

Again, this was no surprise to those who were aware of Obama's views before he came into national prominence, not to mention the positions he articulated behind the scenes to LGBT activist groups when he began his presidential campaign.

As for Hillary Clinton, there was no clear evidence of privately held views that contradicted her public statements. Instead, the question was this: Given the circles in which the Clintons travel, given the degree of support they received from LGBT groups, and given their committed liberalism, could we really believe her when she expressed her opposition to redefining marriage in years past?

This week, journalists and newscasters across the political spectrum have pointed out the fairly dramatic nature of her shift over the last 10 months, a shift that would coincide with shifts in the society and the courts.

As noted by Ian Hatchett on , “MSNBC’s Thomas Roberts and Joy Reid noted that Hillary Clinton had undergone a politically convenient evolution on same-sex marriage on Wednesday’s ‘MSNBC Live.’”

Last June, during an NPR interview, she stated “for me, marriage had always been a matter left to the states ... I fully endorse the efforts by activists who work state-by-state,” also noting that after leaving the Secretary of State’s office she was able to “very quickly announce that I was fully in support of gay marriage and that it is now continuing to proceed state-by-state.”

In contrast, she now says that same-sex “marriage” is a Constitutional right and she hopes that the Supreme Court will rule accordingly. As expressed by campaign spokesperson Adrienne Elrod, “Hillary Clinton supports marriage equality and hopes the Supreme Court will come down on the side of same-sex couples being guaranteed that constitutional right.”

Does that sound suspicious, especially from someone who said that she “always” believed that “marriage had ... been a matter left to the states”?

How quickly “always” has changed.

But this change is quite minor compared with the sentiments expressed in her earliest statements, spoken at a time when the idea of redefining marriage was quite foreign to most Americans, and rightly so.

Back in 2011, as noted by Rachel Weiner in the *Washington Post*, “In June of 2011, Clinton hailed the ‘historic vote in New York’ to legalize same-sex marriage. ‘I’ve always believed that we would make progress because we were on the right side of equality and justice,’ she said. But she did not come out in support of gay marriage herself.”

Note again that word “always,” along with the word “we.”

How does this jive with the fact that, when running for president in 2008, she, along with (surprise!) Senator Obama, stated that she opposed redefining marriage but affirmed her support for same-sex domestic partnerships, echoing positions she had begun to espouse in the previous year or two, as Weiner documents.

And how does this jive with her even more strongly worded statement dating back to 2000? "I don't support gay marriages, but I do support extending benefits to couples, domestic partner benefits and the kind of civil union that Vermont adopted seems to be the way to create that opportunity for people."

And what about this statement from 2000? "Marriage has got historic, religious and moral content that goes back to the beginning of time and I think a marriage is as a marriage has always been, between a man and a woman."

And so, in the course of barely 15 years, she moved from "marriage has always been ... between a man and a woman" (2000) to "I've always believed that we would make progress because we were on the right side of equality and justice" (2011) to "marriage [has] always been a matter left to the states" (2014) to "Hillary Clinton supports marriage equality and hopes the Supreme Court will come down on the side of same-sex couples being guaranteed that constitutional right" (2015).

My personally opinion is that her most recent statement reflects her long-held, true beliefs, which are only being fully articulated in today's radically "progressive" climate, while others feel that she has genuinely (albeit not surprisingly) evolved on these issues, as reflected in her all-too politically correct "evolution."

But this much is clear. When Hillary Clinton says "always," she doesn't always mean always.

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