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The Trademark of Change

September 17, 2014

Word Count: 1,284
Almost six years ago, the infamous advocate for “change” was elected as the 44th president of the United States based off of a campaign filled with a misuse of words that won over a majority percentage of the electorare, as well as the American people. Barack Obama quickly made his way to a second term with the same tactic used to gain presidency- beating around the bush. This is a commonly used phenomenon that has become acceptable because an overarching opinion seems to be that “they all do it,” but when does a misuse of language to gain an upper hand become ‘the thing to do’? Being a straightforward president may have needed to be first on the agenda for a true “Change”.

The world of politics is slowly turning into a game with an underlying theme of who can play better. Often times, the person who can convince enough people that they are the least corrupted choice will come out on top, as President Obama did. His campaign was based solely off the idea of change- seen in campaign posters and heard in speeches almost robotically. This change though, turned out not to be what many American’s were expecting, as Obama’s actions seemed to be a complete opposite of what he built his election campaign on. It’s important to note that many Americans see change positively; people view it as a new start where many thought there was no where to go but up. Obama’s road to election as well as his reelection looked very different than his second term decisions. He, like many politicians, was worried about reelection so he did things that allowed him to gain popularity in the poles for the 2012, like saying one thing to get elected and meaning another.

It’s very apparent that saying one thing and meaning another is the very thing that happened with Barack Obama’s campaign, time in office, reelection, and second term in office. The Gallop Poll’s illustrate just how his popularity has waivered in the last 6 years he’s held office- they show his popularity 2008, upon being named President the first time, from his
support in reelection, to his current popularity in his last term. A poll went out back in January of 2009 that showed a 69% approval rate of the standing President. This had a lot to do with the fact that he vowed to change the United States of America, which the citizens took well. Just two years later, the polls reported the lowest approval rate for Barack Obama at just 38%, with up and coming elections, he vowed once again to give American’s what they wanted: more jobs, more honest government officials, and change. In 2009, Obama made a promise in his inaugural speech that he would do his part in making America’s government more accountable, starting with putting a stop to the Senate rushing bills through office. Days after this speech, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was rushed through from start to finish in just seven days time- so much for that accountable and open government. Once again, voters were entangled in this trademark of change, reelecting him for a second term. The most recent Gallup poll shows just how wrong they were to believe this change was coming in a good way with an approval rate of 40% in September of 2014. Obama has had a rollercoaster of support that is finally coming to an end in two years with the 2016 elections slowly coming underway.

In George Orwell’s essay, “Politics and the English Language,” he summarizes exactly what President Barack Obama was able to do with his misuse of words: “Political language…is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.” Essentially, Obama fooled all his voters into thinking he was going to do the things the citizens have been wanting in a President, but he failed to say what he meant and do what he said. A large aspect of Obama’s presidency was to create a healthcare plan that was affordable and accessible to all Americans- informally named Obamacare. In September of 2013, he stated that the delay of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) would not happen as long as he was President. Unfortunately, that was just another thing to add to the long list of fabrications as it was delayed in the White House at least thirty-
eight times. He bribed his fellow Americans with the words, “if you like your plan, you can keep your plan,” and “if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor,” both of which proved to be untrue. As if to make matters worse, the President went on national television to apologize for his lies, in much more “derp”, of course. Though many people will benefit from the Affordable Health Care Act because all American’s will have health insurance, the pros outweigh the cons, this explains exactly why Obama felt the need to deceive the nation. The Affordable Care Act calls for a fair amount of tax increase, something many American’s are against, but of course this was not a center of attention in the grand scheme of getting his hopeful plan enacted. Now, Barack Obama is not the first President to say things that had a different meaning, and he definitely will not be the last. Perhaps, it seems much more ambiguous because he has become a huge piece of history, some might even call him a hero, and unfortunately, it’s a widespread belief of President’s that they have a mandate to do what they think best for the country even if it has veered off the path originally intended and voted upon.

President Barack Obama showed his true meaning behind “Change” in his second term in office, as many presidents do, because it’s common knowledge he will not be elected again. Misusing completely what he got elected on, he beat around the bush and confused American’s. Contradictions in excess make for skepticisms on all sides, no matter where you lean or stand. It is interesting to reflect on the President’s opinion that has changed, apparently entirely since being elected. On January 15, 2009, just a few days before being sworn in officially as President, he made a statement that made America feel united, “We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America.” This statement was so bold that it drew American’s in and gained more support than he had already had. Not to mention, America was five days away from making history- exciting no matter where the opinion lies. Fast-forwarding five years,
Obama was interviewed on national television and asked why he thought it was necessary to fundamentally transform the nation- his response being, “I don’t think we need to fundamentally transform the nation.” Five years passed and suddenly everything that epitomized Barack Obama’s original campaign for presidency, change, was thrown out the window. This example, among many other contradictions, illustrates the political game of consciously misusing words all as means to achieve a particular goal.

The government is increasingly turning into something American’s are skeptical to put their lives and support into. It is urgent that government officials realize the harmful impact they are imposing on the future of this country all to achieve a particular goal, like becoming the President of this great nation. Values, honesty, and hard work should all come before the degradation of American’s intelligence simply because they may be easily swayed with lies and coercion and bribes. A misuse of language is the first step to a messy situation; it’s not a matter of if the truth will come out, but when.
Works Cited


