

From: Wilks, Avery <awilks@thestate.com>
To: Adams, ChaneyChaneyAdams@gov.sc.gov
Date: 6/8/2016 5:00:32 PM
Subject: Response to SCDP chair Jaime Harrison's press conference today

Hey Chaney,

I'm writing a short story this afternoon on SCDP chairman Jaime Harrison's presser today calling for S.C.'s Republican leaders, Gov. Haley included, to withdraw their support for Donald Trump's presidential bid.

I'm reaching out for Gov. Haley or the Governor's Office's response to Harrison's presser. I've included it below.

Best,
-Avery

South Carolina Democratic Party Chair Jaime Harrison held a press conference today calling on Republican elected officials to withdraw their support for Donald Trump's candidacy. Below are his opening remarks, as prepared for delivery:

Thank you all for coming today. A little more than a month from now, the Republican Party will officially nominate Donald Trump as their candidate for President of the United States.

It has been obvious since very early in this presidential campaign that Donald Trump is a racist, bigot, xenophobe, and misogynist who plays footsy with the world's worst regimes and advocates committing war crimes. Here is a small sample of his Trump's greatest hits right here—it was hard to narrow it down to a list of six.

I don't care if you are a Democrat, Republican or whatever—to say these types of remarks and then constantly defend them is disqualifying for a presidential candidate. Period. If Donald Trump were to become President, our country as we know it would be in peril, and global stability would be at risk.

Many South Carolina Republicans agree with me, and several have voiced their concerns publicly. Yet with the exception of Senator Lindsey Graham, they are supporting this hate-mongering huckster to be the leader of the free world.

Last week, Governor Nikki Haley correctly warned that Donald Trump's rhetoric could lead to violent tragedy, which we sadly know too well in South Carolina. But yet somehow she still thinks Trump should be President of the United States.

Senator Tim Scott—a historic figure, being the first African American U.S. Senator from the South since Reconstruction—correctly called Trump's recent bigoted comments on federal Judge Gonzalo Curiel's integrity "racially toxic." But apparently, you can say racially toxic things and still have Tim Scott's support for President, because Trump still does.

Congressman Mark Sanford correctly said this week that Donald Trump has "said some crazy stuff" and that his bigoted comments on Judge Curiel are "contrary to 200 years of tradition in the United States" and "the opposite of what the American experiment is all about." But Congressman Sanford apparently thinks un-American rhetoric is acceptable for an American President, because he is still supporting Trump.

Congressman Joe Wilson is supporting Trump, and just last month he said that Trump's faction would

help the Republicans grow as a party.

Congressman Mick Mulvaney doesn't seem to be bothered by Trump's recent bigoted attack on our federal judiciary. He dismissively told a reporter that he hadn't gotten any calls about it.

Congressman Trey Gowdy defended his support for Trump by comparing the Republican primary electorate to a jury whose verdict he was bound by. But nothing could be further from the truth: Congressman Gowdy is an American voter who has a responsibility to his country, not his party. He cannot shirk this responsibility by hiding behind his party.

The comments in support of Trump by Congressman Jeff Duncan, I think, were the most illuminating. He said, "I don't want to serve in Congress under another Democratic president."

Look, I get where Congressman Duncan is coming from: I have honest, deeply-held policy disagreements with my Republican friends. And normally I would support a Democrat, even an imperfect Democrat, over a Republican for President because a Democrat in office would be more likely to advance the policies I favor.

But this election isn't about Republican policies versus Democratic policies. The danger of Donald Trump goes way beyond policy. He is a threat to what America stands for to our own citizens and to our allies throughout the world. We are one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Trump is a threat to that. And that is more important and more fundamental than any disagreements we have as Democrats and Republicans. It is even more important than winning or losing one presidential election.

I welcome our state's Republican leaders in engaging Democrats in a vigorous, issues-based debate on all of the down-ballot races. But for the health of our republic and the future of all our children, Republican leaders must withdraw their support for Donald Trump for President. We must send a message, in blue states and red states alike, that Donald Trump is not what America is about and that he will not get anywhere near the White House.

I close with this poem, a famous one written by a German pastor Martin Niemöller during World War II. The recent attacks on the diverse populations in this nation forced this powerful poem back to my mind.

"First they came for the Socialists, I did not speak out—
Because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

The questions I have for all of our leaders, Democrats and Republicans, are: What do we stand for? Who will we stand with? What will we fight for? But most importantly, when will we speak out?

Our greatest strength as a nation is our diversity. We have seen the evil of racism and bigotry here in South Carolina, and we have the scars to prove it. Democrats and Republicans in this state have an obligation to shed the party labels and do what is in the best interest of this nation.

I am happy to take whatever questions you may have.

--

Avery Wilks

Reporter, The State Newspaper

803-374-3115

Twitter: @AveryGWilks

Facebook: facebook.com/averygwilks/