

"F" Bombs on the Hill

Written by Dr. Julianne Malveaux
Thursday, 10 January 2013 08:20 -



Congressman John Boehner was reelected speaker of the House of Representatives with a narrow vote. Needing 218 votes, he narrowly clinched it with 220. His narrow vote reflects the fact that no Democrat would vote for him and many Republicans are disillusioned of him. Perhaps it also reflects the fact that he has so poorly comported himself that he does not deserve reelection.

Most folks who curse do it behind closed doors. In deference to their position, they attempt to parse their public statements to reflect the dignity of the office they hold. Not Mr. Boehner, who dropped the "f" bomb at Senator Harry Reid not once, but twice, in the middle of fiscal cliff negotiations. To his credit Senator Reid did not respond, but behaved as if he perhaps did not hear the out-of-control Boehner. The Speaker of the House of Representatives comported himself as intemperate, ignorant and out of control.

The fact that Boehner appeared out of control is no surprise to those who have observed him over these past two years. He leads with bombast and bluster then backs down into defensiveness and profanity. Last December he refused to compromise with President Obama on fiscal matters surrounded by a defiant set of Republicans who agreed with him. When he backed down, he was surrounded by not a soul, virtually abandoned by his party.

Déjà vu. He did it again. After pontificating, and offering a nonsensical Plan B for a House vote, his party rebuked him and he had tuck tail and sit down at the negotiating table. No wonder he managed so much ire that he cursed out the Senate Majority leader.

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You can cuss in public and you can cuss in private. The fact that Boehner chose to kick New York to the curb as a big an "F" bomb as the one he offered Senator Reid. After being promised that relief for Hurricane Sandy was forthcoming, Boehner broke his promise and pushed the vote back to the 113th Congress. After Democrats and Republicans, governors and Congressional representatives excoriated him on the House floor, did he agree to vote on \$9 billion on January 5, with another \$53 billion up for vote on January 15. Meanwhile, many New Yorkers are still living in the backs of their cars, lacking electricity and other basic needs, eating in soup kitchens, bathing in shelters, no better off than they were when the hurricane hit. Have we not learned lessons from Hurricane Katrina? Can we not get the necessary relief to people just a bit sooner? Must New Yorkers be treated as pawns in this partisan nonsense? Should Boehner have the right to metaphorically fling the "f" bomb at them?

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (D) and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (R) have expressed their righteous rage at Congressional chicanery. This has not moved a Congress that bootstrapped fiscal cliff legislation with goodies for Puerto Rican rum producers, some Hollywood moguls, and other assorted pork. The day of the earmark has supposedly expired, but those with special interests spent more time promoting them than they did not repairing the damage from Hurricane Sandy.

Congressman Peter King (R-NY) calmed down after a private meeting with Boehner. He had it absolutely right before he calmed down though. Then he raised questions about the way Congressional representative run to New York for fundraisers and support, but have not rushed to support New York and New Jersey in this crisis. While monies may yet be forthcoming, it should have hit New York, Connecticut and New Jersey at least a month ago. And while \$9 billion is seemingly assured, with a new Congress, the affected areas may be lacking much longer.

I'd bet that if one of Mr. Boehner's Ohio's eight district constituents complained about sleeping in a car, he might care more. I am sure he wouldn't bristle and use profanity (or behave profanely) with those who presumably vote for him. But Boehner has abdicated all claims to decency in the past year or so. He has led a nonproductive and incompetent Congress, and tainted fiscal cliff negotiations with earmarks and set-asides. Why not an earmark for hurricane victims? Why not pure decency for his peer, Senator Harry Reid? Why not pretend to have good sense, even if you don't? Can Mr. Boehner stoop any lower? Let's see what other stunts he pulls as House Majority Leader of the 113th Congress.

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