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**Is Palin the G.O.P. Drag Queen?
Inclusion**

**By The Reverend Irene Monroe
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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Since McCain chose the Governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin, as his V.P pick, there has been bantering and bickering from the distaff side of our American electorate.

The cat fight from female electorates of both political parties is whether or not Palin's candidacy is good for women, and whether or not her abilities honorably represent the feminist activism of the Women's Suffrage Movement, a movement winning women full voting rights when the 19th Amendment was ratified on August 26, 1920.

In her Dayton speech accepting McCain's V.P. offer Palin gave honor to the women who came before her:

"It's fitting that this trust has been given to me 88 years almost to the day after the women of America first gained the right to vote. I think as well today of two other women who came before me in national elections. I can't begin this great effort without honoring the achievements of Geraldine Ferraro in 1984...and of course Senator Hillary Clinton, who showed such determination and grace in her presidential campaign. It was rightly noted in Denver this week that Hillary left 18 million cracks in the highest, hardest glass ceiling in America...but it turns out the women of America aren't finished yet and we can shatter that glass ceiling once and for all."

But Palin's brand of feminism - pro-NRA, pro-drilling, anti-choice hockey mom of five - has many women debating the issue. But the debate is primarily viewed as a generational one between Second-wave and Third-wave feminists.

For example, Second-wave feminists of the 60's and 70's like Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, Jane Smiley, depicts Palin as "a woman who reinforces patriarchal power rather than challenges it." And Gloria Steinem, America's feminist icon of the era wrote in a recent *New York Times* op-ed that "Sarah Palin shares nothing but a chromosome with Hillary Clinton. She is Phyllis Schlafly, only younger."

But many Third-wave feminists, across the political spectrum, see Palin as a "feminist hero," trying to break through the 18 million cracks in the highest, hardest glass ceiling in America - politics.

Rebecca Walker, once bisexual but now a married heterosexual, is the daughter of the renowned womanist (black feminist) author Alice Walker and goddaughter of Gloria Steinem, voiced her opinions about Palin on the *Huffington Post*:

"Sarah Palin became mayor of her town, governor of her state, and has now secured the Vice Presidential nomination for the Republican Party of her country. She accomplished this using the basic doctrine of feminism: female empowerment. Many feminists are now trying to distance themselves from the result of their own work by launching scathing critiques of Sarah Palin, conservative women, and anyone else with the audacity to point out the connection between Palin's rise and the last forty years of feminist ideology...To date, feminist think-tanks, powerful feminist icons, and the leadership of major, national women's organizations have done the dirty business of policing feminism...Sarah Palin is being presented as the new and improved, moose-hunting Gloria Steinem."

Cathy Young, a contributing editor for the libertarian monthly magazine *Reason* felt the attacks on Palin by women are unfair and vitriolic:

"Palin is not known for attacking the women's movement; she credits it with breaking down gender barriers and creating the opportunities she has enjoyed. While antiabortion, she belongs to a group called Feminists for Life...I also believe that her candidacy is a great moment for American women...more representation for feminism across the spectrum of political beliefs is a good thing. Women, like men, should be able to disagree on gun ownership, environmental policies, taxes, even abortion while agreeing on gender equity."

Young is right that we need a more varied representation of feminism across the political spectrum. And the group missing, that no one has bothered to poll opinions from, is lesbian, bisexual and transwomen.

But for many of us LBT women Palin lip-synchs Republican rhetoric. It's insult enough that Palin bills sexual-assault victims for the cost of rape kits and forensic exams; she adds insult to injury when it's a sexual assault due to a hate crime act against LBT women. When asked why she would not expand hate crimes laws to include our community, Palin stated, "I believe all heinous crimes are based on hate."

There is no public statement from Palin regarding non-discrimination in employment, housing, credit based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

While it is true that Palin boasts that some of her best friends are gay, she doesn't support gay marriage and spousal benefits for state employees of same-sex couples.

"I am pro-life," Palin told the *Anchorage Daily News*. "I believe that marriage should only be between a man and a woman...I believe spousal benefits are reserved for married citizens on our constitution."

Sarah Palin looks like a feminist due to the Republican spin of her, but she lip-syncs for the misogynist men who dress her. Her actions, if in office, would erode the gains of the women's movement.

Feminism is indeed about empowering women but Palin's feminism is a charade.

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BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member, the Rev. Irene Monroe, is a religion columnist, theologian, and public speaker. A native of Brooklyn, Rev. Monroe is a graduate from Wellesley College and Union Theological Seminary at Columbia University, and served as a pastor at an African-American church before coming to Harvard Divinity School for her doctorate as a Ford Fellow. Reverend Monroe is the author of [Let Your Light Shine Like a Rainbow Always: Meditations on Bible Prayers for Not-So-Everyday Moments](#) . As an African American feminist theologian, she speaks for a sector of society that is frequently invisible. Her website is irenemonroe.com. Click [here](#) to contact the Rev. Monroe.

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