

The Glass Ceiling of The White House – For a Woman, It's More Like Solid Stone!

After Hillary's attempt to make it to the Oval Office, who can women look to as their next "Great Female Hope"?

From Condé Naste, to NAFE (National Association of Female Executives), to Pink Magazine, all eyes and journalistic talents are focused on the Catalyst's latest report. The news is not good, not good at all! The numbers are bringing tears to the eyes of those who thought gender bias was a thing of the past. Women have lost ground with corporate positions, actually dropping to 15.4% in 2007 as compared to 16.4% in 2005. This result is based on Fortune 500 companies. We can't even begin to figure the statistics in non-Fortune 500 companies in corporate America. From salary levels to the boardroom, women hold less and less positions of influence while men have filled more CEO vacancies and those numbers are rising.

In December 2007 NAFE held a conference where a group of executive women from the NAFE Top 30 Companies for Executive Women debated the issues. The NAFE Roundtable spent time discussing the how and why and the future pathway to improve this situation. There was one subject that was not yet on the table. In December 2007 "Hillary" still appeared to be the woman on the road to the White House. Now, in June 2008, we see things quite differently.

What most have failed to realize is that our only, best and most recent hope for the first female CEO of the USA was in that position purely based on her male counterpart's rise in Democrat politics. If Bill Clinton was not President, would Hillary Clinton still be a household name? Not likely.

Now you ask "What does this all mean?"

It appears that in corporate America, a woman's rise to the top is more likely, although difficult, than a woman's rise to the top in the political arena. Outside of those NAFE Top 30 Companies, corporate issues on Main Street, in small and mid-size companies are similar to those of the average American today. In that vein, a successful woman politician faces the same pre-conceived gender issues that women face from the board room to the management team and most of all in obtaining CEO approval or positioning.

Women in politics must be more intelligent than a male politician, yet be ready to play "The Good Old Boys Game" better than their male counterpart. Well, you say, we are

making progress on the diversity issue, after all Hillary lost the nomination to a black politician, doesn't that count?

In most worlds a one term female senator would never get the kind of support achieved by this black man. Remember his background. He is still working through "The Good Old Boys" political machine of Daly, Chicago. He is also heavily supported by the oldest, most typical male political arm of the Democrat Party. So some things haven't changed.

What woman comes to the political table after Hillary?

Names are not plentiful these days. If only we had an American Margaret Thatcher or a female mix of Ronald Reagan and John F. Kennedy. If you spot her, let us know. Maybe NAFE and Pink Magazine can devise a national campaign that will make her a household name, put fear in the hearts and minds of terrorists worldwide and give us a pathway to better economic strategies. After all, we all know women are better at balancing the homeland budget than men!