

Pettiness: the Defining Quality of Politicians?

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Tuesday, May 18, 2010

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I regret to say that in the 21st century so far, I see little gravitas and profound [pettiness](#) among politicians and political operatives. With a dozen or so exceptions, the gang is not up to the challenge of integrity.

Last night I watched the movie *The Contender* [see [here](#) and [here](#)]. Nice film. Full of manipulation, ego, opportunism, a light dose of self-righteous McCarthyism, gender politics and an appeal at the end for people to choose integrity when it's just as easy not to.

It was made in 2000, so it missed the decade of cynicism, lies and despair that we've seen, but even if it were a worse movie it still provided a litmus test we can use to determine if someone in politics [elected or otherwise] is worth your time. Just how petty are they?

Cynicism and self-absorption are one thing, but real pettiness encompasses those and other discouraging traits.

So if pettiness is currently the defining quality of politicians, we are truly in a shitty state. And is it any wonder why so many people of substance are avoiding the traditional political arena, choosing to make a difference elsewhere.

Don't expect voter turnout to start climbing back up any time soon. The people seem to be using the pettiness scale already and I don't expect they'll stop.