

MAYBE RUDY GIULIANI NEEDS TO BONE UP ON HIS GEORGIA POLITICS

The longer I hang around politics, the less I know. For example, former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, one of the heroes in the aftermath of the 9/11 disaster, recently came to Atlanta to endorse Ralph Reed for lieutenant governor. That's akin to Sam Nunn going to Dubuque to endorse the local school board chair.

Why is a New York politician getting involved in the lieutenant governor's race in Georgia? Shouldn't he be home worrying about Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer and Al Sharpton? If I lived in New York, I would be. Besides, by his own admission, Giuliani favors gun control, abortion rights and the recognition of "domestic partnerships" for gays and lesbians, not exactly the kind of positions designed to swell the hearts of Reed's Christian Coalition supporters. Ironically, Giuliani's defense of domestic partnerships at the Reed rally came only two days after a Fulton County Superior Court judge had struck down a 2004 statewide referendum banning gay marriage, or civil unions, or whatever you call it when boys link up with boys and girls with girls. The referendum had been approved by 76 percent of Georgia voters. Color me naïve, but I don't think Giuliani's domestic political views would be a big hit anywhere in the state, with the possible exception of Midtown Atlanta and maybe Decatur.

So, what do Reed and Giuliani have in common then? Well, says Rudy, he and Reed agree on foreign policy, the war on terrorism and the economy. Foreign policy? The lieutenant governor of Georgia has a role in foreign policy? How in the world did I miss that? It makes me think all the more of current Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor, who is giving up his critical foreign policy responsibilities to run for something as mundane as governor. Let's give the Big Guy credit: Not once during his tenure as lieutenant governor did Georgia declare war on anybody. Oh, there was some talk at one time about invading Michigan, but we would have to occupy Detroit if we did, and no war is worth that.

Still, our newly enacted immigration law has that great military power, the government of Mexico, upset with the state of Georgia. We could very well have the next lieutenant governor struggling with that complex foreign policy issue. We all know full well what could happen to us if we got into a protracted conflict with Mexico. We would have to cut our own yards and figure out how to work the leaf blower. Not a pretty thought.

And then there is the lieutenant governor's role in the war on terrorism. I will be the first to tell you that I'm not sure what that includes, but I hope it has something to do with rump-kicking smart-aleck kids whose parents forego disciplining the little terrors at home in order not to upset them, and leave that job to overworked and underpaid schoolteachers. If that war on terrorism includes making the urchins pull their britches up, remove all body piercing, stay awake in class and not say the word "dude," then you can sign me up.

Finally, what kind of impact can a lieutenant governor have on Georgia's economy? About as much as I can have on Swiss yodelers. Members of the Georgia House and Senate make all the big budget and financial decisions — along with the governor, when he isn't busy spaying dogs — and I don't think they want the lieutenant governor butting in their business. About as close as the lieutenant governor gets to economic issues is balancing his checkbook during the Senate debates.

I am a big fan of Rudy Giuliani. He was an outstanding mayor before 9/11, and an even greater one afterwards. But he should have spent a little more time boning up on just what the lieutenant governor's job in Georgia entails. Had he done so, he could have mailed in his endorsement on the back of a postcard and saved himself the wear and tear of an airplane trip. Rudy Giuliani endorsing a candidate for lieutenant governor of Georgia? Never has someone done so much for so little.