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## McCaskill: Obama's 'Wonder Woman'?

By: [Terry Michael](#)

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Why is no one in the punditocracy talking about Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill as a possible running mate for Barack Obama?

A self-made, 54-year-old Catholic female professional (hmm — sounds like Hillary Rodham Clinton voters), she has won statewide office three times in the fiercely independent Show Me State, without the benefit of a spouse's coattails.

A former state legislator and state auditor, she is one of only a handful of United States senators who refuse to pander to their constituents by padding the federal budget with those tax-wasting, bridge-to-nowhere earmarks. A tough but reasonable former county prosecutor, she had the guts to take on a sitting Democratic governor for her party's nomination for that office — and she defeated him, only very narrowly losing the general election in 2004. She then bounced back from that one loss in her career to win her Senate seat in 2006 against Republican incumbent Jim Talent.

A former cheerleader and homecoming queen, a divorced and remarried mother of three, and a stepmother of three more children, McCaskill comes off almost as an Everywoman. And as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, perhaps a Wonder Woman.

Sure, the idea of her as Obama's running mate is counterintuitive. She's another senator with little federal experience, and she's from the Illinois senator's neighboring Midwestern state.

Oh, but wait. Wasn't Al Gore a fellow baby-boom-generation Southerner from a neighboring state when Bill Clinton tapped him for the No. 2 spot in 1992? Clinton got synergy, not balance, and it worked.

But I have saved the best argument for last. As someone who for several decades has both practiced and taught the skills needed for effective political communication, I am struck by McCaskill's huge talent as a thoroughly authentic communicator. She has been showcasing that ability for several months now — ever since, prodded by her 18-year-old daughter, she exhibited the political courage to step out front for Obama when other Democratic women in the Senate took the safe route and endorsed Hillary Clinton.

View some YouTube clips of this woman speaking on Obama's behalf. Start with her Bill Maher interview, perhaps. Though I realize it's not good for my emotional or intellectual health, I have watched countless hours of cable babble this past winter and spring, and McCaskill has been one of the rare voices of sanity and reason among the talking-points-scripted verbal food fighters.

She is unflappable, genuine, likable, feminine, strong, warm, articulate, tough. The list of pleasing human attributes could go on and on.

If I were Obama, I'd think seriously about having this former cheerleader boost me in the big campaign pep rally that's about to begin. She sounds like real change to me.

And she has the depth and breadth of experience to provide the most important quality we should always seek in someone a heartbeat away from the presidency: good judgment. (Would you prefer as a Supreme Court justice a brilliant law professor or an intelligent lawyer who served a term as county sheriff or state's attorney? The first Cold War president, McCaskill's fellow Missourian Harry Truman, was served well by a high school diploma and autodidactic knowledge of world and American history.)

Two candidates on the same ticket with good judgment. If I can take a little license with Nirvana's lyrics, smells like team spirit to me.

Go, Claire, go!

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