

## Denounce or Reject?

Here I go again, shaking things up for the politically aware, provocative thinkers, and social butterflies—those who perhaps need a topic to spark conversation at the next social mixer. Here goes:

In their final Democratic debate (February 26, 2008) at Cleveland State University, just one week before what appeared to be critical primaries in Ohio and Texas, Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama faced-off. As the showdown on *who's the most suitable candidate for the White House* began, fingers pointed to who initially supported a useless war in Iraq; who supported the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that needs renegotiation; who failed to be strong enough to *denounce* (or is it *reject*?) support from controversial leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan; and more.

Clinton believes that Obama's choice of the word "denounce" to express his refusal of Farrakhan's candidacy endorsement is just not emphatic enough. Obama described Farrakhan's numerous anti-Semitic remarks as "reprehensible," and said, "I obviously cannot censor him," and that he has been very clear in his denunciation. Clinton fired back, "There is a difference between denouncing and rejecting."<sup>1</sup>

Is there really a difference? Okay, let's examine both words.

From *Webster's II, New Riverside University Dictionary*, The Riverside Publishing Company:

- **Denounce:** 1. To condemn openly. 2. To accuse formally. 3. To announce formally the ending of.
- **Reject:** 1. To refuse to accept, recognize, or make use of. 2. To refuse to consider or grant. 3. To refuse affection or recognition to (a person).

Did Senator Clinton make a valid point that Senator Obama's "denouncing" claim is not strong enough to prove that he has completely "rejected" any association with Farrakhan? As far as I'm

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<sup>1</sup> Senators Obama and Clinton's quote taken from NPR.org: <http://mediamatters.org/items/200802270002>.

concerned—semantics. Plus, perhaps Clinton needs to consider that one needs to pick one's words very carefully when making public statements against a controversial leader like Farrakhan.

Nonetheless, regardless of what Clinton believes, what Obama claims, or what the pundits predict as the outcome of the final debate between the two Democratic rivals, the question is, Can somebody, anybody, denounce, reject, or simply put an end to the war in Iraq, the rising cost of oil and gas, the mortgage crisis, and the economic recession?

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