

Minority Wimp by Dan Jacoby

As I write this, there are 47 days left until election day. Democrats are hoping for a major victory, enough to regain control of at least one house of Congress. Poll after poll shows that both George W. Bush and the Republican-controlled Congress are wildly unpopular. The economy is fragile at best. Our troops are bogged down in Iraq, with the situation decaying, casualties mounting, and no end in sight. On “hot-button” issues such as immigration reform and how to torture (excuse me, “question”) prisoners, Republicans are fighting each other.

So why aren't Democrats assured of victory in November?

The answer may lie in the events on the Senate floor on September 9. After the lunch break, the Senate continued debate on amendments to the defense appropriations act. George Allen, the junior Senator from Virginia, who is fighting a tough re-election battle, rushed to the floor to offer an amendment. When he offered his amendment, it turned out to be the exact same amendment that Dick Durbin, Democrat of Illinois and the Senate Minority Whip, was going to offer.

In other words, Allen committed plagiarism.

Ted Stevens, Alaska Republican and third in line to succeed to the Presidency, then rushed in to co-sponsor the “Allen” amendment.

Ted Kennedy then asked what the difference was between “Allen's” amendment and Durbin's. Allen replied, “I think [it] was actually fairly identical. I have not looked at the measure of the Senator from Illinois.” Ted Stevens knew the difference, however; he said that one word had been changed from “will” to “shall.”

In other words, Stevens, and presumably Allen, knew exactly what they were plagiarizing. And they lied about it.

Kennedy backed down, and when Durbin made it to the floor, and asked if “Allen's” amendment was the same as his. Allen repeated his lie that he hadn't read Durbin's amendment. Then Durbin backed down as well.

In other words, the Democrats were spineless wimps, and the Republicans got away with plagiarism and lies.

You can bet the farm that if a Democrat had plagiarized a Republican and then lied about it, the Republican leadership would be holding press conferences and giving speeches on the Senate floor, and the Democrat would eventually have to issue an apology. So where are the press conferences? Where are the speeches?

In other words, where is the Democratic leadership?

Where are Dick Durbin and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid? Where is Chuck Schumer, the Chairman of the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee? Where is James Webb, who is running against George Allen? Where is Howard Dean, the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee? These people are supposed to be working for a Democratic victory this fall, and they are wimping out.

Americans would rather vote for a lying, pigheaded, idiot who creates enormous deficits, slaughters tens of thousands of innocent civilians, and destroys our standing around the world, than support a spineless wimp. Americans want leaders who lead, not weaklings who can't stand up for themselves, much less for our country.

And in 47 days, unless Democratic leaders grow a spine, Americans will vote Republican in overwhelming numbers.

And once again, Democrats and self-appointed pundits will ask why. And once again, they will avoid the direct answer, couching the truth in euphemisms. And once again, nobody who needs to learn the lesson of repeated failure will learn anything.

Shame on you, Dick Durbin! Shame on you, Harry Reid! Shame on you, Chuck Schumer, James Webb, Howard Dean, and the rest of the Democratic leadership! You are allowing America to be ruled by George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, and the rest of the right-wing Republican clan. You have nobody to blame but yourselves, for you had victory in your hands and you are letting it slip through your fingers.

Get a grip. And get a spine, before it is too late.

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