

Earned Income by Dan Jacoby

I just received a fundraising letter, signed by former President Bill Clinton, asking me to contribute to the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee (DSCC).

The problem is, they haven't earned my support. Perhaps if they had stood up to George W. Bush on linking funding our continued occupation of Iraq to getting out, or if they had come up with a good alternative to Bush's immigration plan, or if they had ... well, if they had actually done anything to turn things around, I would gladly have sent money.

But the Democratic leadership in both houses of Congress continues to act like they won the election last November, when the truth is the Republicans lost it. And until they start showing a winning strategy, they don't deserve support.

Following is the text of my letter to the DSCC:

Dear President Clinton:

Last November was the first election night on which I was able to cheer the results in 14 years. After spending the day in GOTV work, I had the pleasure of partying into the night with a large group of progressive political activists. The standard line that night was, "our long national nightmare is over." Even though we understood that there was still much work to be done, and some things would get worse before they got better, we were (I felt) turning a very sharp corner.

Since then, the folly of the Senate in failing to stop the appointment of Justice Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court has begun to reap long-lasting, horrible results. Recently, in one day, that Court denied free speech to students but upheld them for big-money special interests.

But while that damage continues, the newly Democratic-controlled Congress has failed to stand up to this administration in several important ways. They caved in on Iraq, failed to offer a legitimate alternative to President Bush's immigration plan, and have taken no steps on major issues such as healthcare coverage and education. The Democratic leadership in both houses seems to be waiting for something to bail them out, rather than being proactive.

We must understand, as a political party, that we did not win last November. The Republicans, through a combination of continued disaster in Iraq and the exposure of a variety of corruption schemes at home, lost the election.

On top of everything else, they tried again to steal as many votes as possible – not just the 18,000 "undervotes" in Sarasota County, Florida, but millions of votes nationwide. Yet the Democrats are not only not investigating this destruction of the basis of our freedom, but also completely waffling on election reform for the future.

So I would be happy to contribute to the DSCC. But you won't be getting any money out of me, or my allies in the progressive, activist movement, until party leaders start showing a backbone, a willingness to go to the mat for freedom and democracy, and some measure of creativity on the most important issues of our day.