

Winning by Default

We've heard over and over again - particularly from the *Whig* - how Republicans were on the verge of overtaking us in voter registration for the first time in history.

But it *didn't happen* (nor do we ever intend to allow it to). In fact the 2006 election season saw a surge in new Democrats as we ended the election year with a 42 to 39% advantage (22,202 to 20,599) in the county, and voters nationwide put Democrats in charge of the House and Senate as well as a majority of state houses and legislatures.

Of course we'd rather earn it on our merits, as voters apparently had their fill of what all-Republican rule is really about. Unfortunately our country has had to suffer immeasurably in the interim, from mismanagement and incompetence (Katrina, Iraq), misjudgment & arrogance (Iraq), lies (take your pick: how about Bush's State of the Union speech re: uranium from Africa?), corruption (Tom Delay, Jack Abramoff, Denny Hastert page scandal coverup), and hypocrisy (passing a prescription drug benefit while crying how we couldn't afford Social Security). Incredibly, Cheney, Rove & Co. may even have resorted to treason (leaking an undercover CIA agent's name to discredit her husband) for petty political gain. And we can't forget the shocking, flagrant violations of human rights and international law in the treatment of prisoners still awaiting their due process (those who haven't given up and killed themselves), along with a complete loss of credibility, respect, admiration for and cooperation with our country worldwide.

Sadly, this is only a sample of the Bush administration's abuses of the presidency and defilement of our Constitution. All this from the president who promised to be a "uniter not a divider." That one's right up there with "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job," "We'll be greeted as liberators," "weeks rather than months," (Cheney's estimate of Iraq war length), and the Bush administration epitaph, "*Mission Accomplished.*"

Every Republican administration of our generation has had scandal: Nixon, Watergate; Reagan & Bush, Iran-Contra and the S&L collapse (among others). But the collective sins of this administration, *and particularly their consequences*, dwarf those affairs.

Yet the public is understandably weary of another impeachment distraction, and yearns for government to return to doing its business. Upon taking all three houses of government (the White one and both houses of Congress), Republicans made rewarding their fatcat donors their first priority and, instead of governing, went on the same as when they were in the minority, spending all their time disparaging us.

Of course we'll be held to a higher standard, but we must *never* let Republicans take over the "people's house" again. Likewise, we must not allow unscrupulous demagogues like Rove, Limbaugh, O'Reilly and their ilk to define us, but rather define ourselves through our acts, our examples, our abilities, and our pride in ourselves as Democrats and in the country we're consistently asked to clean up after Republican messes, excesses, profligate spending, corrupt acts, failed policies, and leaders who preach democratic ideals but sure don't practice them.