

VOICE OF THE LEFT

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Searching for Common Ground: The Democratic Congress and the First 100 Hours

Committed to governing honestly and from the center, the Democrats have introduced a number of wide-sweeping reforms in both the House and Senate as part of their First 100 Hours agenda. The proposed legislation boldly represents an entirely new set of priorities than from what we have seen from the previously Republican-controlled Congress over the last six years. It is also clear that the Democrats are making a sincere attempt to reach out to moderates on the other side of the aisle. Courageously, they have dared to address even the most divisive issues in American politics.

In the Senate, Democratic leaders reintroduced the Prevention First Act, which seeks to reduce the number of abortions by providing greater access to birth control, family planning and sex education. Senate Democrats are also in the process of overhauling the upper chamber's ethics and lobbying rules that have been so badly abused by their political counterparts.

Under the leadership of the charismatic Nancy Pelosi, House Dems have been even more aggressive. They secured passage of a bill calling for the enactment of the bipartisan 911 Commission's recommendations to enhance homeland security – something to which the current Bush Administration brazenly continues to thumb its nose. Democrats were also successful in passing a bill calling for a raise in the minimum wage to \$7.25 from the shameful \$5.15 where it currently stands.

Against strong Republican opposition and defying a veto threat from President Bush, the Democratic-controlled House passed a bill requiring the government to negotiate with drug companies for lower Medicare prices. And in their continuing attempt to bring about a more fair and equitable health care system, House Dems carried the day for a bill designed to increase funding for what may be the best hope for millions suffering from a number of hideously and insidiously debilitating diseases – stem cell research.

There's more... The Democrats have made it clear that they intend to slice interest rates in half on student loans and to end the outrageous subsidies for Big Oil. But the Democrats most courageous stand of all has focused upon the untold tragedy which has unfolded in Iraq.

President Bush take notice: the days of the rubber stamp Congress are over.

America's military is not intended to be a police force in a Muslim civil war. Our brave troops have fought heroically and deposed a ruthless dictator. For nearly four years they have been forced into a role to which they were neither trained nor intended to fulfill. They mean far too much to be placed as sitting ducks in the midst of a sectarian struggle. Indeed it is obvious that their very presence has only served to help radicalize the entire region. Yes, the Democrats have better ways to spend the \$250 million dollars we are wasting every day, like securing our ports, railway installations, chemical factories and nuclear power plants. Let's stop the madness.

Bring our troops home.

In closing, Nancy Pelosi recently shared some staggering facts that I'd like to share with you.

- In 100 hours, the top five oil companies will take in \$4.3 billion in profits.
- In 100 hours, \$1.1 billion will be spent in the war in Iraq.
- In 100 hours, the public debt will grow by \$4.9 billion.
- In 100 hours, the top 10 pharmaceutical companies will gain \$2.6 billion in profits.
- In 100 hours, the top CEOs will earn an average of \$2 million each.

Maybe, just maybe, in 100 hours our nation will have turned away from extremism, thus insuring a brighter tomorrow for generations to come.