

Precinct 20-B: [INSERT CATCHY TITLE HERE]

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If by a 'Liberal' they mean someone who looks ahead and not behind, someone who cares about the welfare of the people – their health, their housing, their jobs, their civil rights, and their civil liberties – someone who believes we can break through the stalemate and suspicions that grip us in our policies abroad, if that is what they mean by a 'Liberal' then I'm proud to say I'm a 'Liberal'. – John F. Kennedy, Democrat

My friend's feud started simply; a bang on the apartment wall here, a loud TV there. But neither of them could let the other have the last word. Six months and over half a dozen calls to the cops have passed. The feud shows no sign of slowing down.

The DLC reminds me of this foolish squabble when they say Democrats need to "recapture ... muscular progressive internationalism... and convince voters that national security is our first priority." Muscular?

There are times when raw brute strength and violence are needed. But there are many more times where a show of force only creates more problems. National security doesn't mean a bigger, badder military. Most of the time, real security isn't through bombs and guns - but through the words of Isaiah: "Learn to live right, see that justice is done. Defend widows and orphans, and help those in need."

Providing security to others provides security to ourselves.

Your Voice: What are taxes?

Taxes are dues to belong to this greatest experiment in history, (of course shrub is driving it into the ground). I like to substitute the word "services" for taxes. Even I understand if I want a decent road to drive on safely, I need to pay for it. If I want a fireman to protect my house, I need to pay a fee for it. If I want a policeman to protect my property and person I need to contribute. If I want safe drinking water, food, I need to pay a maintenance fee. I saw tax "relief" in October when I hit a pothole on I-75 that cost me \$300 for new tires.

I think of taxes as my payment for services that the city, state and nation render to me and my fellow citizens. I'm spending money on all kinds of things I need, use or enjoy. Why not pay my share of the money needed to pay for the men and women who uphold the law, put out fires, build the roads and fill in potholes?

Callous Conservatives

Back in 2000, we heard a lot about compassionate conservatives. Here we are, only five years later, with the new Ohio budget as reported in the DDN "Ohio's new budget, tax cuts, clear major hurdle" (8Apr05). It's lean and trim - but like someone cursed with anorexia, it's far from healthy.

There are lots of examples, but there's one that really bothers me. The whole point of welfare should be to get people to where they don't need it anymore, right? Yet when Democrats asked for a miniscule 0.00073% of the budget to help women leave welfare and find jobs - "Republicans voted the idea down without comment."

Ohio Republicans have once again shown themselves to be on the side of fat cat businessmen - not working folks like you and me.

Trimming the Costs and Rigging the Evidence

"House Republicans estimate that their plan to place nearly all Medicaid consumers in managed care would trim costs of the program for poor children and families by \$360 million annually... The GOP proposal is similar to a recommendation from ... The Ohio Commission to Reform Medicaid." (DDN, 31Mar05)

Whenever you hear about GOP plans, you need to check out the "groups" and "commissions" that support it.

It's not surprising "The Ohio Commission to Reform Medicaid" – which the DDN called a "Volunteer group" gave a similar proposal to GOP con men. There's no real surprise there - every last one of the commission was appointed by a Republican. Isn't that conveeeeeeeeeeeeeenient they'd agree with the people who appointed them? Shame on the GOP for such tricks, and shame on the DDN for falling for it.

All of Ohio's Democratic State Senators recently voted for Senate Bill 9 – also known as the Ohio Patriot Act. Why? Because the Senators felt they were in a NO WIN situation, where opposition to the Ohio Patriot Act would mean they were painted by the R's as "soft on terrorism". One Senator put it bluntly: "It would be my last term, the end."

How is it that the entire Democratic slate of Senators could be so easily tamed? Could it be a lack of political convictions and the willingness to fight for them against overwhelming odds? What is the point of waging a "war against terrorism" if, in the process, we lose the very basic freedoms that we are allegedly fighting for??

In a recent issue of the local City Paper, David Landon, former head of the Montgomery County *Republican* party, weighed in against SB 9. Amazingly, Mr Landon is most concerned about the redundancy of the bill in light of existing law under the federal "Patriot Act" and on the issue of First Amendment rights. As I was reading Landon's words, I thought, *A Republican is writing this* :

"It is not a stretch to argue that what the drug war did to the Fourth Amendment is what the Ohio Patriot Act could do to our First Amendment right to peaceably assemble. This legislation further erodes our right to be free of the state stopping us and demanding to know who we are without any other probable cause to suggest we were up to no good."

Those are the words of a former chairman of the Montgomery County Republican Party. They were not the words of a Senator in the DEMOCRATIC party.

For over thirty years, while faithfully voting as a Democrat, I stood outside this organization, disdaining to participate in the politics of collusion and corruption as practised by the leaders of the Democratic Party. Now, for the first time, I am heartened by what I see around me politically. The residue of the last flawed election is played out by every Kerry sticker still unpeeled from the bumper, by the crowds turning out for Progressive Democrat meetings here in Dayton - and in countless other ways. I welcome the challenge of the Democratic Leadership Council to wage ideological war over the future of the Democratic Party. In the words of our President, "bring it on".

When Democrats organize their real constituency, the working and middle classes in our society, we will be the ones deciding the future of not just of this Party, but of America. We have to stop pretending that appeasement will buy us time to figure out a new strategy. We cannot allow the Neville Chamberlains in today's party leadership to win this struggle. They are wrong.

We have a strategy! Defend the working and middle classes against the oligarchy. Stand up for the right to organize in the workplace against unfair and dangerous conditions both here AND abroad; Defend the right to speak one's mind without fear of state repression. Stand up for justice for all American's with a judiciary that is grounded in a firm understanding that the rights of the individual must always be defended against the power of the state, no matter what the alleged crime. Without that defense of those individual rights we all face the ominous prospect that Mr. Landon, Republican, has so astutely pointed out, that our rights, our most fundamental and basic freedoms, will be eroded into nothingness, bit by bit, both by fiat and by legislative capitulation.

This article is adapted from a post by Gary Staiger on the DaytonDems Yahoo! Group: <http://tinyurl.com/dlrkf>

Democrats are diverse. We stand for every working person, every immigrant, every religion (or lack thereof), every group that the have-mores have discriminated against and persecuted. This also means that we don't always agree with each other. That's good. If you can't recognize your problems, then how can you fix them? Having disagreement works in our favor - but not if it's destructive. We get insulted enough by White House guests like Rush Limbaugh without arguing among ourselves. So what should we do?

We will inevitably disagree with things that other Democrats do or say. Yet we do not have the luxury of infighting. Take your problems, your gripes - and come up with a solution, or a positive way of stating the problem, and creating a solution where we aren't simply saying "me too" to the Republican regime.

This way, we do not tear down the strength we have - and still remain open to honest criticism so that we can keep improving.

