



The Democrats Get Desperate

Newt Gingrich, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, is no stranger to political confrontation. He had some doozies (including two shutdowns of the Federal government) back when Bill Clinton was President.

But he says nothing that happened back then can match the Democrats latest power grab. In a column titled "The Death of the Senate," he wrote: "No one should be confused about what happened [November 21]. The Obama Democrats killed the United States Senate as a deliberative body 226 years after the Founding Fathers created it."



What happened eight days ago to lead to this harsh appraisal? After years of threatening to employ the "nuclear option" to limit debate, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid finally pushed the button. The Democrats rammed through a resolution on a straight 52-48 party-line vote that will keep Republicans from using filibusters to prevent confirmation of various Presidential appointees.

They did this in part so they could finally get the additional liberal votes they want on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. I mentioned in [last week's column](#) how vital they think this is to protect many of Barack Obama's unConstitutional usurpations of power. As *The Wall Street Journal* pointed out: "[T]he D.C. Circuit in particular will now have more liberal judges to hear challenges to [the President's] unilateral climate-change power grab or his rewrite by fiat of the Affordable Care Act."

My, how times have changed. Back in 2005, the shoe was on the other foot. Republicans controlled the White House and had a majority in the Senate. So the Democrats used the filibuster, or the threat of doing so, to prevent votes on dozens of George W. Bush's nominees.

When Republicans threatened to use the nuclear option to end their delaying tactics, Democrats were outraged. Back then, Obama was a mostly unknown junior Senator from Illinois. Here's what he said at the time: "Everyone in this chamber knows that if the majority chooses to change the rules and put an end to democratic debate, then the fighting, the bitterness and the gridlock will only get worse."

Back then, it was hard to imagine "the fighting, the bitterness and the gridlock" getting any worse. But that's certainly what's happened, isn't it?

The future President wasn't the only one to protest the Republican threat. At the time, Harry Reid was the Minority Leader in the Senate. Here's what he had to say:



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[The filibuster] encourages moderation and consensus. It gives voice to the minority, so that cooler heads may prevail. It also separates us from the House of Representatives — where the majority rules. And it is very much in keeping with the spirit of the government established by the Framers of our Constitution: Limited Government ... Separation of Powers ... Checks and Balances.... [T]he filibuster is a critical tool in keeping the majority in check.

Of course, the Democrats haven't worried about "moderation" or "consensus" since they won a majority. And Harry Reid has turned out to be one of the most mean-spirited, uncompromising and punitive leaders the Democrats have ever selected.

When Republicans threatened to use the nuclear option eight years ago, no one was more passionate, or more sanctimonious, in protesting the threat than then-Senator Joe Biden. He declared: "We should make no mistake. This nuclear option is ultimately an example of the arrogance of power. It is fundamental power grab by the majority party... We have been through these periods before in American history but never, to the best of my knowledge, has any party been so bold as to fundamentally attempt to change the structure of this body."

Biden said his opposition to the measure was "the single most important vote" he cast during his three decades in the Senate. And listen to this. In a comment that I'll bet he would love to delete from the history books, he then added: "I pray God when the Democrats take back control, we don't make the kind of naked power grab you are doing."

So what's changed, gentlemen? Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) explained what's really going on. "The heart of this action is directed at packing the D.C. Circuit," he said, "because that is the court that will review the lawless behavior of the Obama Administration implementing Obamacare."

And the Tea Party favorite added, "President Obama and the Administration refuse to follow the plain text of the law, and the D.C. Circuit court is the court of appeals that has been holding the Administration accountable."

John Hayward, a staff writer for *Human Events*, was even more eloquent in his description of the Democrats' duplicitous action:

Sure, they're liars and hypocrites who never meant a word they said during the Bush era, shameless political hacks who abandoned all that lofty rhetoric about ripping out the beating heart of democracy in a mad power grab designed to grease the wheels for Obama's lame-duck years. They desperately need to change the subject from Obamacare's failure, while packing the D.C. Circuit Court with loyal Party operatives to thwart legal challenges that could bring the hated Affordable Care Act down.

Of course, the left will proclaim that this is all the Republicans' fault. That it was their "obstructionism" that made the Senate so dysfunctional. And this naked power grab is supposed to make things better?

Three years ago, the Democrats used their super-majority in the Senate to ram through the monstrosity known as Obamacare. They did it on a straight party-line vote. They were willing — nay, eager — to force the most unpopular piece of legislation since Prohibition on us, without getting a single Republican to vote with them.

How much more repugnant legislation will they jam down our throats now? We're about to find out. In less than two months, the temporary deadline that Congress approved earlier this year to suspend the debt ceiling will expire. They'll also be confronted with the need to approve some sort of Federal



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budget.

Meanwhile, the “new and improved” website for Obamacare is supposed to be up and running this Sunday. I’ll take a look next week at how much worse this train wreck is going to be.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

***Chip Wood** was the first news editor of The Review of the News and also wrote for American Opinion, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of Personal Liberty Digest, where his Straight Talk column appears weekly. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.*



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