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Free Speech or Flee Speech in the U.S. Senate?

By Tony Perkins ·

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Congress may have spent a month back home, but Senate leaders obviously didn't learn anything while they were there. With just 10 days left for legislative business, Harry Reid's chamber will have plenty of voters to answer to about why their leaders didn't deal with the crises at hand – on the border, in the Middle East, and with the economy. Instead, the party desperately trying to prove it can still be trusted to lead the Senate is making the opposite case with dead-end proposals like Sen. Tom Udall's (D-N.M.).

Despite the more urgent things on the Senate's to-do-list, Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) isn't giving up on his party's First Amendment rewrite, S.J. 19, and insists on wasting valuable time on a politically-driven stunt that tries to limit the accountability Congress has to voters. Under Sen. Udall's resolution, liberals are pushing to strip political speech out of the First Amendment and put it under a separate legislative box where Congress – the objects of that speech – can regulate it.

Under the Udall language, Congress would grant itself broad new powers to regulate what's said about what happens in government, both at the federal and state level. Everything Americans use to hold members accountable – from political ads to voter guides – would not-so-coincidentally come under the control of the same leaders the information targets. (Fox, meet henhouse). Apparently, Sen. Reid and company think they understand freedom better than the framers of America's Bill of Rights and aren't letting a little thing like “Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech...” stand in their way.

Of course, this is completely consistent with much of the Left, which claims it wants fair and open debate – only to stifle it when they realize their arguments are so antithetical to what America has historically stood for that they just can't win. To every voter at the polls this November, Udall's push should be a defining act. This sly gag order under the guise of “campaign finance reform” is symbolic of the political mechanism of the Left. The George Soros of the world can't defend what they're promoting, so they try to change the rules so radically that even the ACLU objects. Nothing about the Udall amendment is in keeping with

American ideals, and with yet another attempt to silence political opponents the same can be said about the President's entire party.

A Clean Bill of Stealth...

Get used to hearing the acronym "CR" over the next two weeks. It's short for Continuing Resolution, the stopgap funding measures that have kept the government running in spurts while punting difficult votes until after the November election. Congress, more specifically, the Senate has proven itself incapable of arriving at any long term funding solutions.

Before recess, the House passed its seventh appropriations bill for fiscal year 2015, that's seven more than the Senate which has yet to pass *any* appropriations bills. Instead, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid will use these precious few weeks before the election to pander with votes on: the minimum wage, paycheck fairness, and an amendment to the Constitution that would give incumbent lawmakers the ability to restrict the political speech of their opponents.

Republicans in the House are hoping to keep the CR as "clean" as possible to pass it as quickly and quietly. It's expected the CR will avert a government shutdown by extending fiscal year 2014 spending into December. The urgent nature of the bill makes it a tempting vehicle for lawmakers to force consideration of their own agenda items before the election. Provisions may be offered relating to border security spending, responding to ISIS, reauthorization of the contested Export-Import bank as well as corporate tax inversions.

The bigger fear for Conservatives is in December, when the proposed CR is set to expire in the midst of a Lame Duck Congress, when Congress will return after the election and can stuff the CR with pet policies that conservatives oppose. Republican leaders should take a cue from history and avoid the dangerous horse trading in the Lame Duck session by insisting the CR fund the government into the new Congress.

Rotten to the Common Core!

Parents and children belong to each other, not the government. That assumption has been the basis of our whole society since the beginning of the republic. Yet today, advocates of national curriculum standards are demanding that states require every student to adhere to a set of academic measurements, devised behind closed doors and funded by corporate interests. The Common Core standards are a Trojan Horse in the schools and homes of America - and FRC and others are working to expose it. On Tuesday, September 9th from 8-9pm EST, I'll be hosting a [national webcast](#) to inform parents, teachers, and all concerned citizens about the coming overhaul in testing and curriculum that is part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

In preparation for the coming school year, FRC has assembled guests including Gov. Bobby Jindal (R-La.), Rep. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), Dr. Sandra Stotsky of the University of Arkansas; Jane Robbins, Esq. of the American Principles Project; Dr. Neal McCluskey of the CATO Institute; and Will Estrada, Esq., of the Home School Legal Defense Association to examine the CCSS Initiative in depth, and provide background on its origin and aims. My cohost will be FRC Senior Fellow Sarah Perry, and together we'll discuss the Initiative's implications of federalism,

privacy, and academic performance, and address efforts to reverse the Common Core state-by-state.