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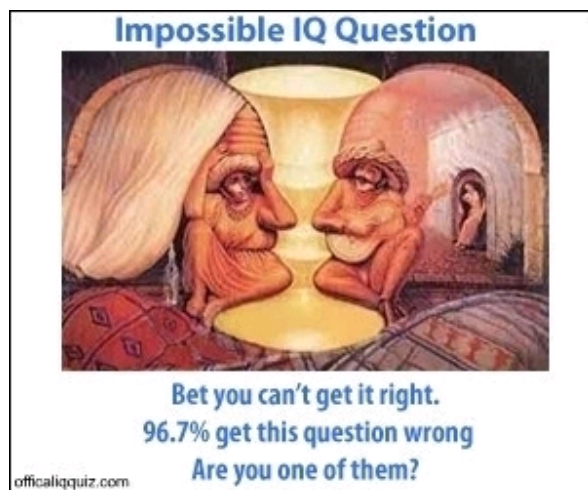
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## Event Horizon



On the Cato Institute's blog, David Boaz asks, "[How Many Senators Are More Liberal than the Socialist One?](#)"

A lot more than you'd think, scarily enough:

In a [profile](#) of the poetry-reading chief of staff to Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), the *Washington Post* calls Sanders not only "the only socialist in the U.S. Congress," but also "surely [the Senate's] most liberal [member]." Surely. I mean, he's a socialist, right? (And by the way, [that isn't a label](#) that

[Sanders rejects.](#))

Well, maybe not. [According to the National Taxpayers Union](#), 42 senators in 2008 voted to spend more tax dollars than socialist Bernie Sanders. They include his neighbor Pat Leahy; Californians Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, who just can't understand why their home state is in fiscal trouble; and the Eastern Seaboard anti-taxpayer Murderers' Row of Kerry, Dodd, Lieberman, Clinton, Schumer, Lautenberg, Menendez, Carper, Biden, Cardin, and [Mikulski](#). Don't carry cash on Amtrak! Not to mention Blanche Lambert Lincoln and Mark Pryor of Arkansas, who apparently think Arkansans don't pay taxes so federal spending is free. Sen. Barack Obama didn't vote often enough to get a rating in 2008, but [in 2007](#) he managed to be one of the 11 senators who voted for more spending than the socialist senator.

Meanwhile, the [American Conservative Union rated](#) 11 senators more liberal than Sanders in 2008, including Biden, Boxer, Feinstein, and again the geographically confused Mark Pryor. The [Republican Liberty Caucus declared](#) 14 senators, including Sanders, to have voted 100 percent anti-economic freedom in 2008, though Sanders voted better than 31 colleagues in support of personal liberties. The liberal Americans for Democratic Action provides more support for the *Post's* claim, rating Sanders [100 percent liberal](#). Most raters, though, don't see it that way. In this [compilation of ratings](#) from left-leaning interest groups, 17 senators get higher scores than Sanders.

It almost seems that an avowed socialist is middle-of-the-road among Senate Democrats.

But then, as Jonah Goldberg noted in early 2006, the gravity well in DC had been shifting [further and further to the left](#) even before another far left, socialist-oriented senator had been seated in 2005, let alone decided to run for the presidency 15 minutes afterwards:

Republicans and conservatives aren't the same thing. This distinction seems lost on lots of people, including cable television bark-show bookers and partisan Democrats and Republicans alike. To a principled conservative, it is bad news when the Democrats lurch to the left, even if it makes the Democrats less likely to win elections. Why? Because when the Democrats move left, so do the Republicans. In American politics, when one party moves left or right, the political center of gravity moves that way too. Bill Clinton, whatever his flaws, moved his party to the right. His triangulation infuriated Republicans because it is always vexing when someone steals your lunch. Democrats despise Bush's compassionate conservatism for similar reasons. A Republican president promising to "leave no child behind" annoys Democrats as much as Clinton's denouncing of Sista Soulja irked Republicans. When the Bush presidency is over, it will be more obvious in hindsight how much he moved the GOP to the left — by making the nanny state bipartisan.

How far to the left have things tilted? In an effort to save an industry that the aforementioned president-to-be threatened to bankrupt in early 2008, [a bipartisan Coal Caucus](#) has formed in Congress, a form of protection that would have been unnecessary as recently as 10 or 15 years ago.

Filed under: [Capitalism, the Unknown Ideal](#), [Liberal Fascism](#), [The Future and its Enemies](#)

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