

• [About us](#)
[Login Here](#) • [Advertise](#)

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Send Comments/Tips](#)

[NY voters to Bernie Sanders. Stand up for What's Right, or Risk Losing Your Seat](#)

[Who's Enforcing the Medical Loss Ratio? »](#)



[Why I Reached Out to Grover Norquist on Fannie/Freddie](#)

By: [Jane Hamsher](#) Wednesday December 23, 2009 6:00 pm



(photo: Svadilfari)

[Kevin Drum](#) writes:

Apparently Jane Hamsher has decided that a healthcare bill that provides a trillion dollars worth of benefit to low and middle income workers is so odious that mere opposition isn't enough. Nor is opposition that increasingly employs the worst kind of right-wing talking points. No, it's so odious that it deserves a [scorched earth campaign against the Obama White House](#) in partnership

with Grover Norquist. Hard to know what to say about this. What's next? A joint Twitter campaign with Sarah Palin? A letter writing campaign cosponsored by Richard Viguerie? A joint lawsuit with Orly Taitz? Jeebus.

I guess Kevin wasn't around [two weeks ago](#) when Campaign for America's Future put together a letter seeking to stop Ben Bernanke from being confirmed until the Fed had been audited:

Without this audit, Congress lacks the information it needs to evaluate Mr. Bernanke's performance. Therefore the Senate should delay action on Mr. Bernanke's reappointment until an audit of the Fed's books takes place, the results are made available to the Congress and Mr. Bernanke answers a serious inquiry into the actions he took.

Sincerely,

Ryan Alexander, president, Taxpayers for Common Sense
Chris Bowers, founder, OpenLeft
Dean Baker, co-director, Center for Economic and Policy Research
Robert Borosage, co-director, Campaign for America's Future
Danielle Brian, executive director, Project On Government Oversight
Mark Calabria, director of financial regulation studies, Cato Institute
Mark Cohen, executive director, Government Accountability Project
Tom DeWeese, president, American Policy Center
Tyler Durden, founder, Zero Hedge
Sandra Fabry, executive director, Center for Fiscal Accountability
James Kenneth Galbraith, economist
Adam Green, co-founder, Progressive Change Campaign Committee
George Goehl, executive director, National People's Action
Jane Hamsher, founder, FireDogLake
Gary Kalman, Washington director, Public Interest Research Group
Matt Kibbe, president, FreedomWorks
Grover Norquist, president, Americans for Tax Reform
Duane Parde, president, National Taxpayers Union
Aaron Swartz, co-founder, Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Phyllis Schlafly, president, Eagle Forum
John Tate, president, Campaign for Liberty
John Taylor, CEO, National Community Reinvestment Coalition
Stephanie Taylor, co-founder, Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Robert Weissman, president, Public Citizen
John Whitehead, president, The Rutherford Institute

Or nine long days ago, when [CAF circulated another letter](#) opposing Bernanke's confirmation, signed by Dean Baker, Bob Borosage, David Swanson and...Grover Norquist.

You collect signatures on letters like these to get media traction, to build pressure so someone has to take action. Kevin apparently didn't read our letter — it's about a bailout of Fannie/Freddie that they're trying to jam through before the end of the year, nothing to do with health care. He also apparently slept through the past nine years when people on the right like Bob Barr, Grover Norquist and Bruce Fein were cosigning letters with ACLU civil libertarians all the time when it came to FISA, domestic spying and transparency. It was hard for them to do, because Bush sycophants dismissed them as "traitors" to the president.

For those with short memories: Here's Wes Clarke, Mort Halperin, John Dean, John Podesta, Grover Norquist, Bruce Fein and Bob Barr on the [Liberty and Security Protection Committee](#) of the Constitution

Project.

Here's Alec Baldwin and Grover Norquist speaking on a PFAW panel [in opposition to the Patriot Act](#). Grover cosigned [an ACLU letter](#) against the CAPPs airport spying system in 2003, opposed [national ID cards](#) with them in 2004, and [supported Prof. Lyle Craker](#) and marijuana grown for medical research in 2005. (And just for fun, [here's Kevin himself](#) cheering on Bruce Fein for going after Roy Moore. Apparently that's only supposed to cut one way.) For those who are strangers to the civil liberties/transparency world, this stuff has been happening for years [right on this very blog](#).

They all know who Grover Norquist is and what his political history is. So do I. That's not the point.

In this instance, the fact is that most "liberals" who work at institutions can't step out and take a shot at Rahm, because Rahm would take it out on their organizations. That leaves the people on the right — those out of Rahm's reach — who can be called upon to get the media "heft" you need to call attention to an issue. The year-end deadline for doubling the Fannie/Freddie commitment to \$800 billion was fast approaching, and it's hard as hell to get media traction on something over the holidays.

So, it's not an issue of "personalities." It never should be. It's about principles. And principles aren't pliant — you either have them or you don't. You can't just use them as a yardstick to measure the inadequacy of people you don't like, and then throw them away when it comes to your "friends."

Rahm Emanuel is destroying not only the Democratic majority but the Democratic Party. There isn't enough pork in the world to hold his "Blue Dogs" in office with the legacy of bailouts that he has engineered, and that's why his "big tent" is now collapsing in his wake. Parker Griffin, and now (possibly) Chris Carney, may blame Nancy Pelosi for their defections to the GOP, but that's pure demagoguery. The mess they are fleeing — the corrupt back-room deals, the endless bailouts — belong to Rahm.

The ground is shifting. You can feel it. And the Rahm dead-enders have become no different than the Bush dead-enders, completely unaware that the President whose malfeasance they are defending on the basis that one must not "consort with Republicans" is the one who ran on — consorting with Republicans. It is knee-jerk authoritarianism in the extreme. Rick Warren is okay because Obama says so. Principles? Who needs them.

If Obama/Rahm want to triangulate against progressives ([and they do](#)), they're not the only ones who can make cause with people on the other side of the aisle. If that's what it takes to shake up the corporate domination of our political system, we've done it before and we can do it again. Because working within the traditional political order to support "progressives" whose conviction lasts only as long as it doesn't matter just doesn't seem to be working.

Dear Kevin: this is about a \$400 billion bank bailout. It's not about your BFF.

Related posts:

[Treasury Okays Unlimited Slush Fund For Fannie, Freddie](#)
[Jane Hamsher, Grover Norquist Call for Rahm Emanuel's Resignation](#)
[Fannie, Freddie Heads to Get \\$4-\\$6 Million](#)
[So You Want To Defend Rahm on Fannie/Freddie](#)
[Fannie/Freddie Christmas Eve Bailout Draws Rave Reviews](#)



[Spotlight 548 Comments](#)