

OPINIONS & LETTERS

Is The President Always Right

By Larry Carballo
Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

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Judges are appointed for life. Therefore, a nominee in his thirties could spend 50 years on the court. During that time, he or she would be responsible for a great many decisions that could be detrimental to the welfare of the country.

COLUMN LEFT

approved. Yet Bush had chosen over 200 judges who were finally accepted by both Republicans and Democrats, so what was the problem?

Apparently, there are up to ten judges, or five percent of the judges, who have not been accepted because there are senators who feel they are too radical and out of the mainstream of American beliefs.

Not good enough for Bush and his Senate friends. He's the president and, therefore, he has the right to appoint anyone he wants, to any court he wants, and no wiggle room is allowed. "Let's have an up and down hands vote on each nomination - that's the American way," said Bush.

The problem, of course, is that it only takes 51 senators to approve a judge, and there are 55 Republicans in the Senate. So if the Democrats did not stand up to be counted, and if they didn't attempt to convince their colleagues that a relatively small percentage of judges is not acceptable, then what is the job of a legislator? They might as well go back home to their districts and take a nap.

So what could the Democrats do? There is a strategy that has been used for a very long time in the Senate called the filibuster, where members of the Senate continue to talk on the subject of judicial nominations - or on their favorite dessert or alcoholic beverage, or whatever topic they choose - until the opposition no longer is promoting a particular nominee.

On face value, this may seem unethical or childish or just wrong to the average American, until he realizes that the minority party cannot always allow the majority to have its way. We know what has happened in fascist countries when a minority party no longer has any influence to stop governmental decisions that were detrimental to the country and its people.

Now, I'm not saying Bush is a fascist, but one criterion for a fascist leader is ignoring the will of the minority party in government. Bush talked about a "mandate" in the 2004 election when he garnished 51% of the vote - hardly a mandate. And, of course, 40% of the people didn't even vote in that election. So, technically, the Republicans are the minority party, too, since the majority of Democrats and non-voters are in the majority.

The bottom line is this: Both Democrats and Republicans believe that they are right on this issue. So both parties got together to compromise and to negotiate until they came up with a plan that both parties - and the American people - can live with. But shoving your point of view down someone else's throat is not the way to do it, even if you are the president.

The American people did not vote for a bully; they voted for a leader who can bring the country together. As Benjamin Franklin said during the time of the American Revolution, "United we stand; divided we fall."

Mr. President, it's time we show some unity in Washington, and it should begin in the Oval Office.

Text of Article

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Larry Caballero.

Newsletter Editor, Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

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