

May 24, 2004

When I read the May 24 "Alaska Votes in Congress Roll Call" report, (News-Miner, page A3), I wondered how many people actually pay any attention to this report card on our delegation and national government. This is a service of the local press to let us know what actually is happening in the chicanery-filled halls of Congress using our tax money. I don't think I've ever read a more appalling Congressional review than this latest one. Let me give some examples, and I think you'll see why I was so put off. I'm limited for space, so I'll only look at the actions in the House of Representatives and Don Young's votes on them.

First and probably most difficult to grasp is the immensity of the debt in the House version of the Republican budget. Not "tax and spenders" these guys. They spend without taxing! And how do they do that? By putting our children in debt, or more likely our grandchildren. The debt ceiling on the national debt was raised by \$690 billion in just this one budget alone. Compassionate conservatives, huh? And Don Young voted for this budget. About all this, Democrat James Moran of Virginia said: "We were told that the last time we increased the national debt limit, to \$6.9 trillion, that we would not have to do it again until 2008 because of the president's tax cuts, (never mind the absurdity of that statement) and here we are right back again increasing the debt limit to \$8.1 trillion." Nice job, Congresspersons: broke your promise three years early.

Next crime listed is the issue of the Bush Administration systematically politicizing scientific research results and assertions, in order to advance the administration's political agenda. But the House refused to establish an independent commission to investigate this charge, voting 201 for, and 226 against. Young voted "no". Not interested in scientific integrity, Don? Perhaps you just don't understand the question. This latest Bush administration travesty means using only the science that serves your political ends. Attack everything else, and destroy all trust in systematic, peer-reviewed scientific research and testing. Fabulous way to ruin the world's finest scientific establishment: our own.

But they didn't stop there. With sheer gall and chutzpah, the House passed a bill making taxpayers foot the bill for small corporations who sue the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and win! Explain that one to me, Don. Why should the voters pay for a legal settlement against a federal agency for ANY corporation? Just change the law if it is unfair. But no matter, Young voted for it. Pay up, toadies.

But wait, it gets worse. There is the bill to raze the infamous Abu Ghraib prison and replace it with a modern new prison. Just why we'd do that escapes me. Aren't there enough prisons in the world? But in this case I have to give Don Young credit. He voted against it, even though it passed by a 3-1 margin. Your tax dollars at work rebuilding Iraqi prisons. What new war crimes might we expect with our own new prison, doubtless built by Halliburton? The last congressional vote reported is probably the most troubling of all. It's titled "Nuclear Bunkerbusters". The concept is to develop small compact nuclear devices to penetrate the ground and "seek out enemies" hiding in underground

fortifications turning them to instant radioactive cinders. This vote is complicated, as it was an amendment to remove support for the development of such a dangerous weapon. But the amendment was defeated and Don Young voted to defeat it. This means that the House (and Young) actually supported the \$27 million to develop this bunkerbuster technology. Why is this a bad idea? I am personally against all nuclear weapons as anti-life. They are the most profound scourge of humanity. But a small nuclear device that can be aimed strategically, hidden easily, and dropped by an aircraft. Doesn't this sound like the perfect terrorist attack weapon? For that reason alone it shouldn't be pursued, because pursuing it will proliferate it, and eventually it could fall into the wrong hands. We'd seal our own fate. Stupid, not? Well, tell Don. He voted for it. Just imagine it in the hands of Israelis for instance, trying to flush out Hamas. Think they won't have it if we do?

There are many more, as I didn't even mention the Senate actions. These actions speak loudly, and crudely enough.

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