



## THE FOUNDATION

"The principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale." --Thomas Jefferson

## PATRIOT PERSPECTIVE

### This Week: The Big Pork Pandemic, 'Teabag Wavers,' Amendments and the NDP...

**Publisher's Note:** Alexander's Essay is now published each Thursday. The latest essay can be found at PatriotPost.US.

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

### News From the Swamp:

#### Budget Cuts Reach the Billions

President Barack Obama heralded his budget-cutting scalpel again this week, announcing that his administration would seek \$17 billion in spending cuts to 121 programs in the federal budget. For those keeping score, that's one-half of 1 percent, but at least this time it's "billion" and not "million."

White House budget chief Peter Orszag defended the administration's bravery, saying, "[U]nder any set of assumptions, finding the \$17 billion a year, I don't think is a side show." One small problem, however, is that \$5.5 billion would supposedly come from entitlement programs, which are virtually untouchable. George W. Bush proposed cutting \$18 billion from 151 programs -- all discretionary spending -- and still was unsuccessful.

Naturally, half of the Obama cuts would come from the defense budget, such as stopping F-22 production, as we have reported previously. Other programs on the chopping block include the early-childhood education program Even Start, a few other Education Department initiatives, and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency's Criminal Alien Program, which identifies jailed criminal foreigners so as to keep them from being released.

The administration knows that their attempts to cut even such minuscule amounts of spending will likely do no better than did similar attempts by the

Bush administration. "There are very few programs that don't have a constituency and someone who is willing to stand up for them in Congress. We understand that," a senior administration official said. "A lot of programs are implemented with the best of intentions. Not all of them are effective." We might add that few of them are constitutional. In a nation that is governed by the rule of law, *that* is the ultimate test, not whether they are well intentioned or even effective.

Meanwhile, Recovery.gov, the Web site that monitors so-called "stimulus" spending and claims, "This is your money. You have a right to know where it's going and how it's being spent" (gee, thanks), will not actually be ready to report such information until next spring, halfway through the program.

### Income Redistribution:

#### Obama Goes After Business Taxes

On Monday, President Obama proposed changes to international tax rules for corporations that would eliminate overseas tax havens and get U.S. companies that earn money internationally to pay their "fair share." Or as economist Larry Kudlow put it, "Obama unleashed yet another attack on international businesses, essentially calling them unpatriotic tax cheats even though they abide by existing laws." Included in the reform proposal is a curb on corporations' ability to park international earnings overseas and avoid U.S. tax, a change of the legal status of international subsidiaries, and the addition of 800 employees to the IRS to target companies and individuals who use tax havens. "Closing these loopholes and investing the money in American jobs will help millions of American families regain some of the economic security they lost in recent years," said Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY). So the government will take money from corporations and create jobs with it? Right. Meanwhile, bailout recipient GM just announced that many of the company's new jobs will be overseas.

Obama figures to raise an additional \$200 billion in revenue from this new structure, and businesses can expect an 8- to 15-percent tax hike. Considering the state of the economy (8.9 percent unemployment, 539,000 lost jobs in April), it's hard to imagine a worse move. Obama says that he wants to keep more jobs in the U.S., but higher business taxes will only send them away. American businesses already pay higher taxes than most of the other industrialized nations (35 percent versus an average of 24 percent), and the tax deferrals are a way of leveling the playing field. If taken away, many U.S. industries will suffer. It's hard to understand why the Democrats don't see that, but when you consider the proposal is backed by the likes of Rangel and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, who are tax cheats themselves, it's almost possible to appreciate their skewed view of the situation.

### **New & Notable Legislation**

Congress is still hammering out details on climate legislation, but one detail came to light this week: the so-called cash-for-clunkers program. Vouchers for as much as \$4,500 could be available to consumers who trade in vehicles with fuel economy of under 18 miles a gallon and buy new cars that achieve 10 mpg better or light trucks that reach five mpg better. Congress's aim is to spur sales for the ailing auto industry, beyond saving us from the looming pollution cloud that threatens to incinerate the planet.

The Senate passed by a vote of 91-5 legislation on mortgage lending that would help banks boost lending by increasing the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s credit line with the Treasury. And as *The Wall Street Journal* reports, "The bill would also shield mortgage servicers from investor lawsuits in connection with loans they have modified or refinanced under federal programs. And it would remove a requirement of the Troubled Asset Relief Program, making it easier for some financial institutions to exit the program." However, the financial services industry opposed the bill and Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Countrywide) supported it, which should tell us all we need to know.

Commercial television isn't generally known for having family-friendly moral content, but one Democrat has introduced a bill to clean up the airwaves -- if only from the scourge of erectile dysfunction commercials. Rep. James Moran (D-VA) recently introduced the "Families for ED Advertising Decency Act" (HR 2175) in an effort to elimi-

nate those pesky ads for little blue pills and similar drugs between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. But the prohibition wouldn't stop the display or mention of the medication, making us wonder how those clever writers will get the product placements into the programming itself. Perhaps ED is the crisis Jack Bauer will face on the next season of "24."

One common aspect of life in our society is men going to bars to score, er, other activities. Yet the National Institutes of Health is spending \$400,000 of taxpayer money to send researchers to Argentina to "understand the various factors that contribute to the creation of a high-risk sexual space." The two-year study will focus on six bars known for homosexual activity in an effort to refine future HIV prevention efforts in these bars. Presumably approaches found successful there would be tried here in America. While wintering in Argentina may not be a bad gig if you can get it, we wonder what it would cost to just say no?

### **Jack Kemp, (1935-2009)**

Jack Kemp, professional football player, nine-term Congressman, vice-presidential candidate and cabinet secretary, died on 2 May at the age of 73 after a long bout with cancer. As a self-professed "bleeding-heart conservative," Kemp fought hard for lower taxes and was a strong supporter of supply-side economics. In fact, he was responsible for giving Ronald Reagan the idea of making deep cuts in the corporate tax rate in 1981, which kicked off an economic boom that lasted for 92 months and created 20 million new jobs. Kemp challenged George H.W. Bush for the Republican presidential nomination in 1988, but he could not draw a strong following. Bush appointed him secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Kemp then ran with Bob Dole in 1996, having earned the veep slot because of his strong anti-tax credentials.

After leaving politics, Kemp remained in the policy arena with The Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institution and Empower America, which he co-founded. Over the years, he shared a great deal of his wisdom on creating a strong economy by rewarding taxpayers rather than penalizing them. One of his last public statements on the subject came during the 2008 presidential campaign. "Mr. Obama ... offers tax increases ... a trillion dollar plus spending increase, and new regulatory burdens. That has no prospect of restoring economic growth. It will only do the opposite." Well said.

For more, read "The Jack Kemp I Knew" by Cal Thomas and "Jack Kemp's Big Ideas" by Larry Kudlow at PatriotPost.US.

### **GOP Branding Tour**

Last weekend, Jeb Bush, Mitt Romney and House Minority Whip Eric Cantor met with a small group of average citizens in an Arlington, Virginia, pizza shop to take questions and discuss the future of the Republican Party. It's indeed a question on many minds. The national media has written off the GOP as the "Party of No," and through a lethal mixture of political misfortunes and their own missteps, Republicans find themselves having to prove their relevance. Bush took some heat for saying that the time had come to leave the past behind, which some took to be a shot at Ronald Reagan. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, we think what he meant was that too many Republicans are wrapped up in the warm nostalgia of Reagan instead of looking forward to address the challenges that lie ahead, which is a view that Reagan himself would have held. The event was a kick off for the National Council for a New America, which will hold a number of similar events around the country to address policy issues and try to reconnect with the public at ground level. We have one simple suggestion: Unify around a message of constitutionally limited government.

### **Hope 'n' Change:**

#### **Air Force One Photos to Stay Secret**

If readers were among those in New York City who cowered at the sight of Air Force One being pursued by two fighter jets last week, experiencing a case of 9/11 déjà vu, rest assured that those residents may well be the only ones who witness the photo opportunity. This week the White House announced that the \$328,835 photos would not be released to the general public. Well, except for one. White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said that the Obama administration had reversed course and will release "a photo" of the flyover.

On the other hand, it's interesting to note that national security memos regarding waterboarding and other forms of "torture" and prisoner photos (such as those from Abu Ghraib) -- which cost the taxpayers nothing to take -- have been released gleefully by the Obama administration and their hate-America allies. As The Wall Street Journal's James Taranto points out, "Apparently the Obama administration's policy is to release photos only when doing so might pose a danger to national security."

### **From the Left:**

#### **Edwards Under Financial Probe**

Once upon a time, former Senator John Edwards ran for the Democrat nomination for president; Ages ago, it seems. However, his political career was derailed by the confirmation of his affair with campaign videographer Rielle Hunter, who eventually had a child fathered by the senator.

A year removed from the campaign, Edwards confirmed a federal inquiry is underway regarding improper campaign spending, with the allegation that an Edwards-supported political action committee that paid Hunter for her video work also converted funds for Edwards' personal usage -- specifically hush money paid to support Hunter and keep their affair secret. While the former senator denied the use of campaign funds, he was silent on the scrutiny of related non-profits and a poverty center as part of the federal probe.

Needless to say, many think that Edwards' political career is finished. Remember though that he comes from a party where affairs and campaign funding questions seem to be a résumé enhancement (see: Clinton, Bill; et al.). This investigation may simply be a first step to a political rehabilitation for the trial lawyer best known for channeling the unborn.

In other corrupt Democrat news, blogger Michelle Malkin reports, "The former Hillary fund-raiser and Democrat bundler extraordinaire [Norman Hsu] pleads guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, and guilty to 10 counts of wire and mail fraud." "I knew what I was doing was illegal," Hsu told the judge. Hsu raised \$1.2 million for Hillary and other Democrats. Malkin adds, "The number four recipient of Hsu money was Barack Obama."

#### **Feds Seize Land to Commemorate 9/11**

The Associated Press reports, "The government will begin taking land from seven property owners so that the Flight 93 memorial can be built in time for the 10th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, the National Park Service said." The government wants about 500 more acres in order to build a 2,200-acre memorial for the plane that crashed in a Pennsylvania field about 60 miles southeast of Pittsburgh on September 11th. The total cost will be \$58 million. The government says negotiations went nowhere, but the landowners dispute that any negotiations have taken place. According to park service

spokesman Phil Sheridan, "We had a group of people who took some very heroic actions. It's just fitting and right that we get this done in time for the 10th anniversary." In other words, it's "fitting and right" that the government condemn and take the land of some citizens to commemorate the heroic actions of other citizens that saved the government (either the White House or the Capitol) from a terrorist attack.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **Warfront With Jihadistan:**

#### **Gitmo Divides Demos**

As congressional Democrats work on the FY2009 war supplemental, they are butting heads with Barack Obama over his campaign promise to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. In the \$96.7 billion allocated for war funding, Congress found no money to fund Obama's executive order closing the facility and relocating its prisoners. Obama had requested \$80 million to do so. Perhaps the idea that between 50-100 prisoners would be sent to the U.S. -- someone's congressional district -- was not appealing.

Apparently, Democrats' shot across the bow got the administration's attention. "With regard to those who you would describe as terrorists, we would not bring them into this country and release them," Attorney General Eric Holder told Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL) in a Senate hearing Thursday. Yet the administration still insists on releasing some detainees who it believes are not terrorists. There are 241 detainees at Gitmo. Some will be released, others put on trial and some "are going to be detained on a fairly extended basis," Holder said.

In some respects, this problem dates back to President Bush's first term. The idea of bringing the terrorists to "justice" by trying them has distorted the real purpose of Guantanamo, which is to keep enemy combatants in a totally secure location off the battlefield. Intelligence should be as accurate as possible regarding each combatant, but they should be held until hostilities are over.

### **Department of Military Readiness:**

#### **Nuclear Reduction**

Yes, we can ... bend over backwards. This week, the Obama administration provided a refresher course on why the Democrat Party has long been viewed as weak on national security. First, Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller stated that the United

States was "open to the proposal" to relocate the planned European missile defense system's radar from the Czech Republic to Azerbaijan or even to southern Russian. Russia's ability to neutralize a radar site in either location apparently did not concern Gottemoeller. The Democrat Party has opposed missile defense since 1980, so we fully expect that what was left unsaid was the administration's willingness to negotiate away the European missile defense system entirely.

Next, Gottemoeller indicated that the U.S. would be amenable to reducing tactical nuclear warheads under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which is due for renewal. Any reduction in tactical warheads would favor Russia, which has at least 3,000 operational tactical warheads, while the U.S. has just over 1,000.

Finally, President Obama stated that he would seek Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which would ban any nuclear detonations, anywhere, by any country. The Senate rightly rejected this treaty in 1999, but with the current Senate configuration it could well pass this time around. Proponents claim that the CTBT will prevent testing and the development of nukes by signatory nations. Opponents counter that the CTBT will prevent the U.S. from maintaining a viable warhead supply by preventing testing, a critical concern given its aging inventory, and that the CTBT is thus a backdoor route to unilateral disarmament.

And in case readers were wondering, yes, this is the same Rose Gottemoeller who oversaw the disastrous leak of U.S. nuclear know-how in the 1990s from Department of Energy weapons labs, where she was responsible for overseeing security.

### **Army Destroys Afghan Bibles**

"The US Army has reportedly destroyed Bibles in Afghan languages which were sent to a soldier in Afghanistan and then confiscated," reports Christianity Today. The Arab news network Al Jazeera released footage of U.S. soldiers at an on-base Bible class surrounded by Bibles translated into the Afghan languages of Pashto and Dari. The Bibles were sent to a soldier by his church, and he brought them to the class, though none were distributed to the native population. Soldiers are forbidden from proselytizing, a policy with which we will not quibble here. Yet it is striking that there were no riots in the U.S. or elsewhere over the destruction of the Bibles. There were also no Newsweek stories such

as the one about the Koran supposedly being flushed down a toilet -- a false story that *caused* riots in the Muslim world. But who are we to compare Christianity with the Religion of Peace(TM)?

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

### Chrysler Bankruptcy Plus Ethanol

#### Subsidies Equal Failure

Whether car czar, truck tyrant or motor monarch, it all spells out one thing: auto-crazy. In yet another example of abysmal government failure (think education, welfare, Medicare, etc., ad nauseam), Washington's auto intervention has proven predictably disastrous. It seems Beltway-bailed-out GM and Chrysler are not experiencing a bounce after all, with now-bankrupt Chrysler falling to eighth place in U.S. car sales and both GM and Chrysler losing significant market shares to Ford, which, incidentally, once again ranks second in domestic car sales -- sans government help.

Unenlightened by the failure, Auto-crat Obama attacked as "speculators" Chrysler's smaller lenders who are refusing to cower to Washington's, er, request that they accept only a portion of what they are owed in order to help the bailed-out automaker. As it now stands, those evil "speculators" lost a court battle over Chrysler's bankruptcy plan, which would short the lenders on their investment. U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Arthur Gonzalez ruled that the government-orchestrated sale of Chrysler's assets was a "clear and orderly process" that was "fair" to all involved. The truth is anything but.

Dave Cribbin, a blogger and aircraft financier of TailWind Capital Group, wrote, "In the Chrysler deal, the [United Auto Workers] were unsecured creditors and the Chrysler bondholders were secured creditors. The bondholders received 28% of the value of their \$6.9 billion in bonds in cash; the Union will receive stock worth approximately \$4.2 billion, and a note for an additional \$4.58 billion, which represents 82% of the value of their claim. Either the government negotiators have dyslexia and have made a terrible mistake in their paperwork, or this is political payoff writ large. Is this not the equivalent of financial waterboarding? And thus we enter a brazen new era of government, when the White House is openly complicit in the theft of, as a matter of fact is directing, the looting of private property from investors. Welcome to the Rule of Man, or as the President calls it, change we can believe in!"

On the eco-transportation front -- where, again, Chrysler and GM are lagging -- Obama is ignoring recent conclusions that ethanol production actually harms the environment and is looking both to hasten government handouts to biofuel producers and to push for more production of ethanol-blend-fueled cars -- all while demand for ethanol has been slipping.

Hmm, subsidize a failing industry, fund a corporate bankruptcy and demonize lenders who (perish the thought) expect repayment. And they call this good policy?

### The Next Housing Crisis

A maxim: If an idea has disastrous consequences for the economy, the federal government will utilize multiple programs to assure maximum distribution and penetration. After six months of ongoing enlightenment on the flawed objectives and failed procedures of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the third face of the home loan hydra was revealed this week by The Wall Street Journal. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), an agency created during the New Deal to promote middle-class home ownership, has determined that when Fannie and Freddie were relaxing their lending criteria over the last 10 years, FHA lost market share. Amazing, we know.

FHA responded just as we have come to expect any public agency to respond in the face of a crisis: They are embracing the "failed policies of the past," to borrow a phrase. FHA has doubled its maximum loan amount and lowered its required down payments and is increasing its guarantees to originating lenders. These actions have achieved FHA's desired objective of increased market share as it now guarantees one-third of new mortgages compared to merely 2 percent in 2006. To be fair, 2006 was the last of the go-go years when, as the total market declines, a company need only hold on to its existing customer base to increase market share. And still, FHA is seeking \$800 million to cover losses.

Lending involves the mitigation of risk. The risk of default is lessened by the requirement of a substantial down payment. Defaults not only damage the borrower who loses his home, but also the lender who is forced to liquidate the home to secure repayment. Beyond that, defaults devalue neighboring homes as foreclosures are sold at a discount.

Fear not, though -- there will not be an outbreak of sanity or critical thinking in the halls of Congress.

Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) and Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) have largely avoided scrutiny for their involvement in the Fannie and Freddie meltdown. They continue to enjoy the financial support of mortgage originators and realtors seeking to stimulate the housing market, and they will continue championing the failed policies of the past. They are absolutely certain it will work this time, if they just provide a little more funding. A trillion here, a trillion there...

### Medicare Warnings

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently warned that Medicare is now operating on its reserve funding, which will be exhausted in under 10 years. Congressional Democrats are too busy proposing a dramatic expansion of the program to listen. While some of the potential new Medicare enrollees would pay a nominal fee to participate, Medicare is an estimated \$38 trillion in unfunded debt and no new funding is available to keep the social program from going bankrupt.

In case anyone was confused about whether Medicare is "insurance," as the liberals like to refer to it, or is actually a hopelessly inept and bankrupt government program, the government announced additional reimbursement cuts of 25 percent to hospitals. For years, medical providers, who already lose money on each Medicare patient they treat, have been shifting costs to private insurers in an effort to remain solvent, but these latest cuts are too much to shift. In response to the latest round of cuts, physicians and hospitals have begun turning away Medicare patients.

As Rome burns, liberals fiddle with boasts of a government-run health care nirvana, even as the current government programs are deep in the red. While it has obviously never occurred to the leftists in Congress and the White House, perhaps the founders were prescient when they declined to enumerate such powers for the federal government.

### Around the Nation: States' Biggest Revenue Source

"In a historic first, Uncle Sam has supplanted sales, property and income taxes as the biggest source of revenue for state and local governments," reports USA Today. Municipalities, counties and states traditionally have funded their operations primarily through sales, income and property taxes; this is no longer the case. As of this year, the federal govern-

ment is now paying approximately 23 percent of state and local expenses, thanks to the federal stimulus "less" package. Indeed, in the first quarter of 2009, Washington flooded states and localities to the tune of a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of \$437 billion in aid and stimulus money, and another \$300 billion is slated to stream from Capitol Hill over the next two years.

While some claim the "help" from the feds is temporary, others point out that federal funds mean federal control. Wise King Solomon once wrote, "The borrower is servant to the lender." Local governments receiving their finances primarily from the people are beholden to the people. But with Washington now holding the biggest purse strings, state and local officials have more to lose by ignoring Big Brother than by disregarding the voters they were elected to serve.

## CULTURE & POLICY

### Faith and Family: Maine and DC Approve Same-Sex 'Marriage'

Maine became the fifth state in the union to legalize same-sex "marriage" this week, but only the second to do so via elected representatives. The legislature passed and the governor signed the bill, which defines marriage as between two people, rather than between one man and one woman, as has been the case throughout human history. But, as Reuters reports, "if the bill's opponents gather 55,000 signatures for a 'people's veto,' they can delay the law pending a statewide referendum, which would likely be held during elections in November." Similar legislation is on the governor's desk in New Hampshire, which, if signed, would leave Rhode Island as the lone New England state without legal same-sex marriage.

In the nation's capital, the DC Council approved a bill to recognize such marriages performed elsewhere. Under the Home Rule Charter, Congress has 30 days to review District legislation, but with Democrats' vast majorities in both houses, resistance will be easily defeated. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said, "I don't think Congress should intervene." Yet Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) has promised to try to block the bill. "Some things are worth fighting for, and this is one of them. It's not something I can let go softly into the night," he said. "I recognize the Democrats are in the majority, but I represent the majority of Americans on this issue."

### **Village Academic Curriculum: School Changes Name to Obama**

Last week, Webster Elementary School in St. Paul, Minnesota voted to change its name to the "Barack and Michelle Obama Service Learning Elementary School" to reflect its "shifting purpose" to public service, a program that has been in place only one year. Aside from the elusive definition of "public service," it's rather shocking that the school would decide to change its name from one in service for 100 years to one of a president in office less than four months. Yet it is not the first school to do so. Several schools around the country have already changed their names to Obama.

The site council, comprising parents and community members, put the name to a vote, asking students (elementary children!), staff members and other St. Paul residents to cast their ballots. Out of the 854 votes, 60 percent favored the name change. When the votes were broken down, however, it was revealed that while parents and students want "change," most staff and community members voted to keep Webster's name. The one Republican member of the board pointed out the folly of naming an institution after a president at the beginning of his first term (one never knows what may happen that may serve to embarrass later on), and promised to fight the name change.

### **Climate Change This Week: NASA's Hansen on 'Cap and Trade'**

Several global warming hysterics, most notably NASA scientist/propagandist James Hansen, are protesting efforts to deal with the issue, in particular the man-made "cap and trade" bill before Congress. Hansen has gone so far as to say it is as "ineffectual as the Kyoto Protocol" and that he hopes that "cap and trade doesn't pass because we need a much more effective approach." Instead, Hansen wants a "simple carbon tax." (Meanwhile, Republicans introduced a competing proposal Thursday.)

Even liberal Democrats in the Senate are having a hard time supporting the bill. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) recently announced that it is his "biggest headache." Well, they say every cloud has a silver lining.

There's more good news. Other scientists are openly declaring global warming a non-issue, the political viability of which is on the decline. One such man is Philip Scott, Professor Emeritus of Biogeography at the University of London. "With a world likely to cool during the next decade," Scott said, "with a world economy set in austere mode, and with the new politics of China, India, Brazil and the rest, Big Global Warming's boom days are surely coming to an end. 'Global warming' is sub-prime science, sub-prime economics and sub-prime politics, and it could well go down with the sub-prime mortgage."

### **Happy Mother's Day**

Sunday is Mother's Day. Among the 10 Commandments is the only command with a promise: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). President Woodrow Wilson signed legislation in 1914 proclaiming Mother's Day a national holiday. Then again, we don't need a holiday to express our appreciation to moms everywhere. May God bless each and every mother among our readers. We wouldn't *be* without them.

### **And Last...**

On the "it couldn't happen to a more deserving fellow" front, Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter, who recently outed himself as a Democrat, will lose his seniority on all the committees on which he serves. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) had promised Specter that he would retain seniority after switching parties, but as it turns out, most sitting Democrat Senators are unwilling to relinquish their chairs to the turncoat. Specter, who has previously touted his "clout" as reason for re-election and would have been senior to all but eight Democrats, will be the junior Democrat on three of his five committees -- except for the Crime and Drugs Subcommittee and the Special Committee on Aging, on which the 79-year-old, 28-year veteran will be next to last. He can look on the bright side, though. Should Al Franken finally prevail in Minnesota, at least Arlen will outrank the comedian.