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# GETTYSBURG AREA DEMOCRACY FOR AMERICA

[www.gettysburgareadfa.org](http://www.gettysburgareadfa.org)

## Special Interest Articles:

Letter from the Chair  
DC Lobbying  
Sajer Exposes Santorum  
Oil Crisis  
Saving the Environment

## They're Crossing the Line

April 21, 2005. John Kerry sent a video message to all his e-mail supporters today saying that the Republican leadership is leading the country in a very dangerous direction, and has crossed the line from simple issue disagreements, to a radical abuse of power. When Tom DeLay is threatening judges, Senator Frist is labeling Democrats as conducting a war against people of faith, and the President is ignoring sky-rocketing gas prices in favor of an energy bill that has tax breaks for Humvees and the oil industry, we are experiencing a fundamental assault on the core principles of democracy and fairness.

Today's top story in the Washington Post addresses our economic woes and begins:

"Inflation and interest rates are rising, stock values have plunged, a tank of gas induces sticker shock, and for nearly a year, wages have failed to keep up with the cost of living. Yet in Washington, the political class has been consumed with the death of a brain-damaged woman in Florida, the ethics of the House majority leader, and the fate of the Senate filibuster."

No one needs to tell us that the dollar and our economy are in trouble. The deficit is rising, and government services are being gutted. At least President Bush's approval rating is dropping, but is that enough satisfaction for us?

We need real victories – not just political gains. And there are hopeful signs:

- The Social Security debate is turning away from private accounts and forcing Washington to look for real solutions to the solvency problem.
- John Bolton's confirmation to the post of UN Ambassador is in trouble, after Democrats on the Foreign Relations Committee relentlessly attacked Bolton's record and won a three-week extension for the investigation.

I am grateful that Gettysburg Area DFA members have joined together to let our representatives in Washington know that we are not going to sit idly by. We are giving voice to our values and making sure Senators Specter and Santorum and Congressman Platts know we are watching and expect them to represent ALL of their constituents.

Fourteen of us went to DC on April 14 to meet with all three of our elected representatives on Social Security (see related article). We got lots of press, and some commitments from Congressman Platts and Senator Specter's office to concentrate on saving the system, rather than just privatizing it. Senator Santorum, on the other hand, brags about his long term effort to establish VRA's (Voluntary Retirement Accounts). Susan Naugle and others in our group made a powerful case for what such accounts would really cost those most vulnerable. After 30 years working in the welfare system in Adams County, Susan shared her firsthand experience trying to help those in need, saying, "This great country is now talking about increasing poverty."

More lobby visits to DC are being suggested. Come to our May 4 Meetup and lobby for your issue!

Elaine L. Jones, chair



## Adams Countians Get Press For DC Lobbying



GADFA members meet with Rep. Todd Platts.



GADFA members gather outside the capitol.

Three local papers wrote stories about the Gettysburg Area DFA's day-long lobbying trip to DC on April 14 to discuss Social Security.

Fourteen residents of Adams County left early in the morning to caravan to DC for meetings with Senator Rick Santorum, Representative Todd Platts and a member of Senator Arlen Specter's staff. Their purpose was to oppose President Bush's plan to establish "personal retirement accounts" and urge their representatives in Washington to preserve Social Security and make it solvent for future generations.

Our organization was represented by Elaine L. Jones, Roger Lund, Don Palesky, Mac Heebner, Patricia Hammann, Carol Brown, David Deardorff, Roberta Sullivan, Patrick and Susan Naugle, Bruce and Jeanne Neylon, and two other people who asked to not be identified.

Discussions with the staff of Sen. Specter and with Rep. Platts

yielded assurances that seeking solutions to making the current system solvent are foremost in their minds. Todd Platts repeated that he is committed to finding a solution that preserves Social Security for everyone, before initiating voluntary personal accounts. He expressed concern about the transition costs and the deficit.

Sen. Santorum met briefly with our group and expressed frustration with what he termed as "a lack of cooperation from his Democratic colleagues." The senator accused the Democrats of simply holding on to a potent political issue, and refusing to discuss anything.

Representatives of GADFA challenged Sen. Santorum's assertion that establishing private accounts would increase the dollars going into the Social Security system. The senator asserted his firm belief in privatizing a portion of Social Security, and then had to leave for another commitment.

Anna Mitchell, Santorum's aide completed the meeting. She stated that each individual account would be set up as a "bond" in the name of the taxpayer. When questioned as to how Social Security would be made solvent when the net "benefit" of private accounts would flow back only to the "bond holder," Mitchell cited the 3 trillion dollars that would be borrowed to prop up the system to make the transition. She dismissed the negative impact this would have on the Federal budget deficit as just "paper." She and Santorum echoed the President's position that there is no real money in the treasury bonds that are owed to the taxpayers through the Social Security surplus funds.

At the next Meetup on May 4 at 7 PM, members will discuss issues they believe should be topics for citizen lobby visits. Anyone wanting to speak on a current issue should contact Elaine Jones at 717-677-9442, or [ejones@blazenet.net](mailto:ejones@blazenet.net).

## Sajer Exposes Santorum's True Colors

At our April Meetup General Jerry Sajer explained why he believes Senator Santorum is the "Worst Senator in PA History" and does not stand for the real values of the Catholic church or the working people of Pennsylvania. A Catholic himself, Sajer claimed that while Mr. Santorum spends much time proclaiming his devotion to the "culture of life," he focuses his attention on opposing abortion and does not support legislation that provides health care for pregnant women or for children or the elderly. The President's budget for 2006 calls for a cut of \$15 billion for Medicaid. After stating publicly he would oppose them, Mr. Santorum voted for the Medicaid cuts, directly

affecting 1.7 million Pennsylvanians. According to Sajer, Santorum has become "the poster boy for all radical extremist Republican policies and is a bigger threat to all of us and a greater danger to our country now because the President has also adopted many of those views."

Santorum was also a vocal leader in getting the Congress involved in the Schiavo matter, although Sajer noted that the Senator has grown silent since realizing that more than 80% of those polled believe it is a private matter. But he took the time to go to Florida for a picture with Mrs. Schiavo's parents.

Another example of Mr. Santorum catering to political

expediency has been his duplicity on funding for Amtrak. He said on national TV he was going to fight the President's cuts to Amtrak of \$1.2 billion which would have killed Amtrak. But when Amtrak's future came up for a vote, Santorum voted for the cut.

Sajer described the 2006 PA Senate race of Santorum vs. Bob Casey Jr as "the preeminent race in the country, the one an out-of-touch radical ideologue and the other attuned to the needs of our people and the country, the one a red state senator in a blue state, the other a true blue Pennsylvanian who feels, thinks and breathes like a working blue collar Pennsylvanian."

For more information on Santorum's voting record, visit [http://www.issues2000.org/Senate/Rick\\_Santorum\\_SenateMatch.htm](http://www.issues2000.org/Senate/Rick_Santorum_SenateMatch.htm).

Visit the candidate's websites.

<http://www.BobCaseyForPA.com>

<http://santorum.senate.gov/public/>

## It's Time To Evolve

Our nation's real crisis is not Social Security, but oil. Our national security is at risk as we rely heavily on foreign imports. We consume 25% of the world's oil and own only 3% of the proven reserves. Drilling in our pristine wilderness areas will not, as proponents claim, alleviate rising energy costs. And there is no guarantee the oil will even stay in the country--it will be the property of oil companies who will sell to the highest bidder.

By 2025, projections are America will import 70% of its oil requirements and that means we must protect that supply which will cost billions of dollars and lives. We need only to look at Iraq to see how the addiction works, yet, the Bush Administration is pushing hard to keep us dependent on the black gold instead of earnestly pursuing alternative energy forms.

Bush's energy packet H.R. 6 clearly reflects his support of the aging extraction industries. The bill calls for

over \$8 billion dollars in tax breaks, mostly for the soaring profit making energy industry. In the President's energy bill 95% of the tax break is going to the polluting, dangerous, unsustainable energy resources of oil, gas, coal and nuclear, while only 5% is allocated to renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency. Unfortunately, H.R. 6 passed the house on Thursday, April 21 by a vote of 249-183, our Representative, Congressman Todd Platts, voted in favor of H.R.6.

The resource section of the bill adds to the give away by allowing drilling in public lands and exempting energy industries from environmental review. Rep. Ed Markey offered an amendment which removed the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge drilling provision from the bill, BUT it was defeated by a vote of 200-231. Representative Todd Platts voted against the amendment. Platts did vote for an amendment to improve the café

standards, an attempt to require automakers to build vehicles that would average 33mpg in gasoline usage. This measure, which would conserve 2 million barrels of oil a day, was also defeated 254-177.

It's time to evolve. A sound energy policy is needed that protects our environment, reduces oil dependence and creates sustainable jobs; not one that keeps Americans stuck in the past and relying on unsustainable fossil fuels.

Sue Bumbaugh, Co-Chair Task force on Environment

For More Information, visit [2020vision.org](http://2020vision.org), [nrdc.org](http://nrdc.org), or Alaska Wilderness League.



## What You Can Do to Save the Environment

Unless we change our way of living with all deliberate speed, we will not be ready for environmental problems in the near future. We need concerted political action to make large-scale changes. In the meanwhile, small changes will make a difference in reshaping our attitudes and those around us.

1. In general, buy less, buy locally and do not buy anything that is poisonous.
2. Recycle, but be sure your delivery of recyclables does not use excessive energy.
3. Use "ballast long lasting low energy bulbs" and cut off household electricity when not in use.
4. Do not burn plastics of any kind. Such combustion puts dioxins into the air.

5. Aluminum foil or other throwaways use huge amounts of energy to manufacture.
6. Hanging laundry indoors or outdoors can replace clothes dryers. The sun is the best source of heat energy.
7. Carry cloth bags for shopping or at least a supply of used paper or plastic bags.
8. Many farmers and craftspersons in third world countries need to cut out "middle men" in order to survive. Buy fair trade items whenever possible.
9. Grow more trees and less yard grass.
10. Choose wind-generated electricity.
11. Use your imagination.

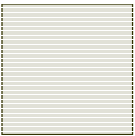
Changing habits is not easy. Admit that it cannot be done overnight. That is

why we must get started **ASAP**. There are many more things to be aware of: The problems of concentrates in juices that use much energy to produce and require doubling containers; the problem of bromide use in California strawberries; genetically modified foods; packaging materials; exporting junk computers and other harmful waste; and much more. But let's get started. Despite appearances and despite all the hype to the contrary, "Small is beautiful!"

**Patricia Hammann**

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[www.earth-policy.org](http://www.earth-policy.org)



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If You Believe In...

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL  
A TAX SYSTEM THAT IS FAIR  
SEPARATION OF CHURCH & STATE

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY  
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY  
A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL  
SECURE CIVIL LIBERTIES  
AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

## JOIN WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS IN BUILDING A MORE DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

Democracy for America (DFA) is a nation-wide political action committee dedicated to supporting socially progressive, fiscally responsible candidates at all levels of government – from school board to the presidency.

DFA fights against the influence of the far right-wing and their radical, divisive policies and the selfish special interests that for too long have dominated our politics.

Once a month, Gettysburg Area DFA has public 'meet-ups' to gather, socialize, and think about ways that we can organize to create a better community...and a better future for our country, from the grassroots on up.

**OUR NEXT MEETUP IS:**

**May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at 7:00pm**

**Gettysburg College**

**Wright Fieldhouse, Room 100**

**Lincoln Avenue - Gettysburg, PA**

**<http://www.gettysburgareadfa.org/>**