



Gettysburg Area DFA

Progressive Values/Fiscal Responsibility
Democracy for America

Energizing democracy
at the grass roots

September 2007

Bob Edgar to Speak on September 5

—Elaine Jones—

Bob Edgar, the general secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and a former congressman from Pennsylvania from 1974 until 1987, will visit Gettysburg on September 5 as a guest of both Gettysburg College and the Gettysburg Area Democracy for America. Edgar's visit is being sponsored by the departments of religion, political science, and the Eisenhower Institute, reflecting Edgar's diverse experience as a pastor, 6-term Member of Congress, and President of Claremont School of Theology. Edgar will speak on the topic "Holding Powers Accountable in an Unstable World" on Wednesday, September 5th in Mara Auditorium of Masters Hall at Gettysburg College at 7:00 pm. The public is invited to attend.

In his recent book, *Middle Church: Reclaiming the Moral Values of the Faithful Majority from the Religious Right*, Edgar advocates a return to the values of peace, protection of planet earth, and care for the poor. On the back cover, President Jimmy Carter describes the book as "a stirring call to American believers who resent their spiritual beliefs being co-opted for a political agenda...."

On September 1st the former congressman will assume a new full time position as President and CEO of Common Cause, a national advocacy organizations founded by John Gardner in 1970 to demand that government act in the public interest. "With devastating consequences, powerful special interests distort and disrupt the democratic process in ways that shift political power away from the American people," Edgar said. "I look forward to carrying on John Gardner's vision of Common Cause as the people's lobby both in Washington, DC and in the states."

The Case for Impeachment

—Bruce Neylon—

The Administration of George W. Bush and Richard Cheney has:

- Lied to the American Public and Congress in a conspiracy to begin and maintain an illegal war in Iraq and through that war to award multi-billion dollar no-bid contracts to their corporate friends.
- Ordered the NSA to electronically spy on American civilians without obtaining warrants for said surveillance.
- Approved and conspired to allow torture of prisoners.
- Ordered the illegal detention of American Citizens without counsel, charge or due process.
- Illegally released classified information for domestic political reasons, thus endangering covert intelligence assets.
- Used unconstitutional "signing statements" (continued on page two)

Inside this issue:

the conversation on
impeachment continues
on pages 2-3

September 15: Rally in D.C.

The Gettysburg Area DFA and the Iraq Task Force are putting together a carpool to go to the Peace and Impeachment March in DC on Sept 15. We need drivers as well as riders, so if you are willing to be a driver, we need to know how many people you can take in your vehicle. If you are interested in going, please contact Jeanne Neylon at jeanneneylon@embarqmail.com

Motorcycle Noise in Gettysburg

Clodius Willis has been researching the problem of motorcycle noise in Gettysburg, particularly Harleys with non-factory mufflers. He plans to address town council in September and would welcome any collaborators, support, input or ideas. The main thrust at this time is that there needs to be new town code addressing this issue and that this is something that other municipalities have already done. If you are interested contact Clodius Willis, 334-4005.

(continued from page 1) ...to take over the powers of Congress and make the legislative branch ineffective and irrelevant.

There is more, much more. The question is, should they be impeached? If the United States is still a nation of laws, is there really a question? According to some, "Impeachment would take up all of Congress' time." But Congress can't act as long as the President has assumed the power to ignore laws that Congress passes. According to some, "Bush and Cheney will be out of office soon." They sure will, but who's next? Usurping powers has an unfortunate effect called precedent. If we don't do something, precedent is set, and the next president will inherit those powers. Also, they have broken the law. Does that not mean anything? Others worry that "There will be a backlash against Democrats." If the process is carried out openly, how could there be? The evidence will be shifted and shown to the American people. Do Americans condone breaking the law? Currently the majority of Americans believe Bush and Cheney should be impeached. There is currently a backlash against Democrats in the Congress. Ever since the 2006 election they have caved in to everything the President has demanded of them. And, not coincidentally, ever since the 2006 election the approval rating of Congress has fallen. That is backlash. Americans admire people that fight for their principles, not those who cower to avoid a fight.

Do you still think that impeachment is not the way to go? If you are interested in discussing and learning more, please join us at the Ragged Edge the second Wednesday of the Month at 6:30.

Why We Dither

—Bob Knight—

Progressives believe the administration of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney has lied to us repeatedly on issues ranging from the Iraq war to energy resources, the environment, emergency management, prisoner abuse and domestic spying. And we know from the proceedings against Bill Clinton that lying is an impeachable offense. Many of us believe these issues themselves represent grounds for impeachment. But are we willing to call for the impeachment of Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney, if by doing so we risk losing the next national election?

One source of our dilemma is that the definition of impeachment has changed in the public mind. We know that impeachment is nothing more than the indictment of a public official for "high crimes and misdemeanors," not a conviction. But Richard Nixon was so intimidated by the certainty that he would be impeached that he instead chose to resign. The impeachment of Bill Clinton, not to mention the time and resources a partisan congressional leadership expended to impeach him, left the public with a bitter aftertaste. And that aftertaste might be just enough to sink efforts to elect a progressive president and Congress in 2008.

So once again, the Bush-Cheney administration has tied progressive voters in a political knot. Just as we have for years wrestled with the dilemma of damning the war but supporting the troops, so now we wrestle with the dilemma of supporting impeachment but risking losing the election. We progressives chafe, knowing that the "high crime" Mr. Clinton committed, of lying about his sexual misconduct, did not result in the loss of a single life. From that point of view, the conduct of the war all by itself looks impeachable.

Gettysburg Area Democracy for America is now presented with the opportunity to make a statement, but at what cost? Do we make a substantive statement, knowing that substance does not make us immune to political consequences? That is the question we must answer before we decide if we will support impeachment. On the other hand, can we let an administration that has made such a mockery of the democratic process off the hook? The chances are very good that progressives will win the election anyway. We need to make a statement, and wouldn't it be great if that statement came from little old conservative Adams County?

Why do we dither? Because it seems that all the substantive arguments favor impeachment but most of the political arguments don't.



Letter from the Chair: Why We Should NOT Impeach

On September 15 there is another rally in Washington to call an end to the war in Iraq. Though I am passionately against this war and am sickened by the daily reports of increased killings and mindless destruction, I have decided I will not be going to DC. Why?

The organizers of the rally have joined forces with the "Impeach Bush" forces, and this rally has become as much about impeaching Bush and Cheney as it has ending the war. While I believe absolutely that Bush and Cheney have perpetrated impeachable crimes, I have come to believe that joining the movement to impeach Bush and Cheney could actually PROLONG the war because it would provoke a backlash and also divide the Democrats. Up to now the Democrats have been fairly unified in their attempts (albeit unsuccessful) to enact a timetable to get out of Iraq.

Nancy Pelosi has been unflinching in her dedication to bring the House Democrats together to end this war, and has even passed legislation that just could not get through the Senate. If Nancy Pelosi changed her focus to the impossible task of impeaching both President Bush and Vice President Cheney (the only alternative that makes sense) she would be accused of trying to become an unelected President. If Bush and Cheney were convicted, she *would become an unelected president of the opposition party*, and would then have control of every department of government. While this may be a Democratic dream come true, can you imagine any scenario in which this could happen? Every analyst of this debate agrees that we would HAVE to have Republican votes to impeach and convict given the numbers and the rules of Congress on impeachment. There is just no way that the Republicans would allow such a thing to happen.

We had a terrific discussion on this issue at our last DFA Meetup. I was convinced that both Bush and Cheney overwhelmingly deserve to be impeached, and was delighted that we formed a task force to further study the topic. I applaud every participant in that debate, and have the utmost respect for those who said that they did not get involved in progressive politics just so they could win, but so they could stand up for what is right and just. I couldn't agree more, but have come to the conclusion that if I were to support the effort to impeach, my actions might actually do more harm than good in the long run.

I believe that if we encourage Congress to pursue an Impeach Bush and Cheney strategy, not only will they be unsuccessful, but Democrats will also lose the battle on everything else we are fighting for:

- a bill that demands we get out of Iraq;
- real reforms in health care and education;
- a good chance to retake the White House in 2008, and
- a permanent setback of the ultra-conservative agenda.

I simply cannot go there. To those who remind me that I encouraged members of DFA to organize a carpool to Washington for the September rally, you are right. Please do whatever your conscience tells you to do. I see my role as DFA chair is to be honest, to provoke and encourage debate, and to facilitate action. Your role as a citizen and fellow progressive is to do whatever you see as right and just.

"The Trouble With Impeachment" is a must read article in September's American Prospect: http://www.prospect.org:80//cs/articles;jsessionid=as4l4H0lfg2hhCFCes?article=the_trouble_with_impeachment. Take time to read it and think very carefully about this critical issue.

With all respect,

Elaine Jones, Chair

Calendar of Events for September/October

Wednesday, September 5: Former Congressman Bob Edgar, new head of Common Cause and retiring General Secretary of the National Council of Churches will speak on “Holding Powers Accountable in an Unstable World” at 7:00 p.m. (note time change) in Mara Auditorium of Masters Hall, Gettysburg College. Sponsored by Gettysburg DFA and others. (Story on page 1.) For more information contact Elaine Jones at 717-677-9442.

Saturday, September 15: carpool to D.C. rally for peace and impeachment. See page 1 for details.

Wednesday, October 3: our regular meet-up features a **town meeting and open mike on local issues** relevant to the November 6 general election. Time: 7:00 p.m. Place: Room 206 Valentine Hall at the Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg.

Environmental Task Force: meets the third Thursday of each month (September 20) at 6:30 p.m. at Café Noel at Hundred Fold Farm above Cashtown. Contact Sue Bumbaugh at longpinelake@yahoo.com

Iraq Task Force: meets the fourth Wednesday of each month (September 26) at 7:00 p.m. at the Ragged Edge Coffee House. Contact AlanOlson@earthlink.net.

Exploratory Committee on Impeachment: meets the second Wednesday of each month (September 12) at 7:00 p.m. at the Ragged Edge. Contact bruceneylon@embarqmail.com or sbknight@innernet.net.

We need your feedback and support: please send your thoughts to wlane@gettysburg.edu and your checks—made out to **Gettysburg Area DFA**—to the return address listed below. Thanks!

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