

Obama Losing Liberal Base and Youth. Could Cost Democrats Big in November

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By turning off much of his party's key liberal supporters, President Obama has jeopardized the re-election chances even of some Democratic incumbents whose seats had been considered safe. If the liberal base stays home in November, the Obama program's lifespan will be short and sour. At the same time he is losing liberals, Mr. Obama's support among idealistic college students is also eroding.

According to Rasmussen pollsters, Obama's general approval rating plunged from 65 per cent upon taking office to 45 per cent today. Larry Sabato, director of the Center For Politics at the University of Virginia, says the Republicans are poised to have a net gain of 47 House seats and likely eight Senate seats. "If anything," says Sabato, "we have been conservative in estimating the probable GOP House gains..."

What's turning off liberals is that on issue after issue, Obama appears to be little more than a slicker copy of his stumbling predecessor. When the Republicans under George Bush elected to bail out Wall Street, Obama helped them finish the job even though congressional mail ran overwhelmingly against it.

Instead, he might have created a massive jobs program to restart the economy with paycheck power as FDR did with his New Deal. But Obama's half-hearted make-work blueprint appears to be too little and too late. "For Vulnerable Democrats, Economy Fuels Election Fears," *The New York Times* reported September 4th. "Seeking to keep the focus away from Mr. Obama and the national economy, Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona emphasizes her work for rougher border controls and support for the stimulus money that saved the jobs of local teachers and public safety workers," the paper said. Her campaign manager, Rodde McLeod, says, "We're running our own race." Translation: the man in the White House is now a liability, not an asset.

A related article in the same issue is titled, "In a Shift, Fewer Young Voters See Themselves as Democrats." Reporter Kirk Johnson writes, "The college vote is up for grabs this year—to an extent that would have seemed unlikely two years ago, when a generation of young people seemed to swoon over Barack Obama." He quotes Mandi Asay, 22, spokeswoman for the University of Colorado's College Democrats, as saying: "People are angry—about the budget deficit, health care plan, angry about this and that. I feel like Republicans definitely, definitely have a chance of getting back on their feet." The percentage of collegians who identify themselves as Democrats has dropped about five points to 57 percent in roughly two years, according to Pew Research Center.

On health care, perhaps the No. 1 concern of liberals after the wars of aggression in the

Middle East, Obama surrendered on the public option issue when he might have campaigned for it dramatically in person on hospital doorsteps around the country. Instead, the public got the idea that he regarded it as, well, optional.

And liberals who saw the president as a champion for ecological sanity, are also disillusioned. Writing in the July issue of “Sojourners” magazine, which defines itself as “Faith in Action for Social Justice,” author Bill McKibben writes Obama’s honeymoon with progressive Americans “took what looks like a lethal blow” when oil began washing ashore in the marshes of Louisiana last Spring.

True, Bush had relaxed the relevant environmental regulations “But it was Obama himself who had stood up three weeks before the spill and announced that he was lifting a long-standing moratorium on offshore drilling...” McKibben points out. Obama promised “We’ll be guided not by political ideology, but by scientific evidence,” when, “In fact, the president has basically ignored scientific evidence when it’s come to energy policy,” McKibben wrote.

And Paul Craig Roberts, the former Assistant Treasury Secretary under President Reagan, writes, “Obama... is committed to covering up the Bush regime’s crimes and to ensuring that his own regime can continue to operate in the same illegal and unconstitutional ways.” He points out, “To the consternation of his supporters, Obama is leaving 50,000 U.S. soldiers in Iraq. The others are being sent to Afghanistan and to Pakistan, where on Obama’s watch war has broken out big time with already one million refugees from the indiscriminate bombing of civilians.” Says Roberts: “The change that we are witnessing is in Obama, not in policies. Obama is morphing into Dick Cheney.” Obama has even multiplied the illegal CIA drone attacks in Pakistan that have claimed the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians, possibly because he himself has been a long-time clandestine asset of that intelligence agency.

Where President Eisenhower once got a landslide voter response for his campaign slogan of “Peace and Prosperity,” it should surprise no one that President Obama’s failure to deliver either one of those ideals has turned off a nation—starting with disillusioned liberals and college students whose energies played a major role in his election. As Tom Paine is said to have once remarked of a British politician, “As he rose like the rocket, he fell like the stick.”

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