

“The Responsible Left:” Funding Obama’s Expanding Wars \$100 Billion a Vote

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Over the past few days, we [reported](#) on how the White House and Democratic Congressional Leadership waged a dirty campaign to scare up votes to support another \$106 billion in funds for their wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Now, several of the so-called anti-war Democrats who left their principles at the House coat check on their way in to vote Tuesday are trying to explain away their hypocritical votes.

New York Democrat Anthony Weiner, who voted against the war funding in May—when it didn’t matter—only to vote Tuesday with the pro-war Dems, sounded like an imbecile when he made [this statement](#) after the vote: “We are in the process of wrapping up the wars. The president needed our support.” What planet is Weiner living on? “Wrapping up the wars?” Last time I checked, there are 21,000 more US troops heading to Afghanistan alongside a surge in contractors there, including a [29% increase](#) in armed contractors. Does Weiner think the \$106 billion in war funding he voted for is going to pay for one way tickets home for the troops? What he voted for was certainly not the “Demolition of the 80 Football-field-size US Embassy in Baghdad Act of 2009.” To cap off this idiocy, Weiner basically admitted he is a fraud when he said the bill he voted in favor of “still sucks.”

Jan Schakowsky, who has done some incredibly important work on Blackwater and the privatized war machine, also voted against the supplemental in May, but switched her vote on Tuesday. “I do believe my president is a peacemaker,” Schakowsky [said](#). “I’m going to give him what he wants.” A peacemaker who is expanding war? Moreover, what happened to the system of “checks and balances?” If Congressmembers, especially anti-war ones like Schakowsky, start just giving the president “what he wants,” then where is the peoples’ voice?

How are these people sleeping at night?

Obviously these folks are partisans or else they wouldn’t be Democrats, but this “Dear Leader knows best” mentality is cultish. Republican Rep. Ron Paul, who, whatever one thinks of him, has been consistently opposed to these wars, put it best when he rose on the floor Tuesday to [speak](#) against the war funding: “I wonder what happened to all of my colleagues who said they were opposed to the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I wonder what happened to my colleagues who voted with me as I opposed every war supplemental request under the previous administration. It seems, with very few exceptions, they have changed their position on the war now that the White House has changed hands.”

One “anonymous” Massachusetts lawmaker told [Politico](#) that those Democrats who voted

for the war funding and IMF credits are “what we call the responsible left.” Barney Frank, another flip-flopper on war funding, compared the anti-war left to the Rush Limbaugh right-wing, saying, “They have no sense of reality.” Perhaps Rep. Frank should ask the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who lobbied intensely against the war funding he supported if they have “no sense of reality.”

As previously [discussed](#), this vote was a crucial test—because the White House and pro-war Democrats actually needed to get some ‘anti-war’ legislators to vote with them or the bill would have failed—in determining which Democrats have a spine when it comes to standing up to the war and which are just party operatives with their principles and votes up for political bidding.

While the White House [reportedly](#) told some Democrats who voted against the war, “you’ll never hear from us again,” Obama has made it a point this week to intervene to defend those hypocritical “anti-war” legislators who voted with him. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn was one of the 51 Democrats who voted against the funding in May and then consciously misplaced his principles Tuesday. Cohen was targeted for his hypocrisy by activists, spurring President Obama to issue a statement to [local media](#) in his district praising Cohen:

The White House Press Office called the Washington bureau of The Commercial Appeal late Wednesday afternoon offering the statement after anti-war liberals across the country derided Cohen as a “fraud” and one who deserved a place in the “Hall of Shame.”

“Congressman Cohen is a leader in the United States Congress and a strong voice for the people of Tennessee,” Obama’s statement declared, adding that Cohen’s vote will “ensure our men and women in uniform have the resources they need to protect our country.”

What is particularly telling is how Cohen doesn’t even pretend his vote had anything to do with principle or representing his constituents. It was simple partisanship. “Maybe [Obama] just wanted to respond to people who helped him,” Cohen said. “Yes, I was surprised but I’ve been in the president’s corner on several occasions and it’s good to have him in my corner.”

All of this sounds, frankly, corrupt. Instead of using cold hard cash, the White House threatens to pull the rug from under dissenting legislators and offers its support to those who cede their conscience to the president’s agenda. So much for change.

This spending bill is likely to sail through the Senate where there is no group even vaguely resembling the ever-shrinking anti-war crowd in the House. Once again, here are the Democrats who turned their backs on their pledges to vote against this war funding:

Yvette Clarke, Steve Cohen, Jim Cooper, Jerry Costello, Barney Frank, Luis Gutierrez, Jay Inslee, Steve Kagen, Edward Markey, Doris Matsui, Jim McDermott, George Miller, Grace Napolitano, Richard Neal (MA), James Oberstar, Jan Schakowsky, Mike Thompson, Edolphus Towns, Nydia Velázquez, and Anthony Weiner.

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