

# DEMOCRATS, BLACKS, JEWS AND WOMEN: WHAT'S HAPPENED TO OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

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When asked about the most ennobling attributes of Democrats, African Americans, Jews and women, many would cite such things as their affinity for the least among us. These groups, it is said, maintain a strong identification with the dispossessed and thus can more readily address their grievances. But is this true?

It is important to distinguish between elites and the rank-and-file. It is one thing to say that the typical Democrat, black, Jew or woman accurately reflects the more positive stereotype about them; it is quite another to suggest that their leaders embody this view. Consider the elected officials of each group.

The public has long looked to the Democratic Party as the party of the underdog. Whether fighting for the rights of labor, or the interests of minorities, the Democratic Party has championed the rights of the disadvantaged in a way Republicans never have. Why, then, when it comes to the rights of the most innocent and defenseless among us, do Democrats abandon their legacy?

Of the 33 members of the United States Senate who recently voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion, 29 were Democrats; there were two Republicans and one Independent. In other words, when it comes approving the killing of a child who is 80 percent born, 88 percent of those are Democrats.

The Born Alive Infants Protection Act requires doctors to give babies born alive during botched abortions the same care and

protection as other babies; previously, they were allowed to die on the doctor's table without treatment. It easily passed the Congress and President George W. Bush signed it into law. But when the initial vote took place on this issue in September 2000, the vote in the House was 380-15. Thirteen of the 15, or 87 percent, were Democrats.

That the party of the oppressed would resist protection for the innocent is mind-boggling. But consider this: on March 27, the House voted 346-49 (with 23 voting "present") urging President Bush to declare a day of prayer and fasting in honor of our troops in Iraq. Of the 49 who opposed this measure, 49 were Democrats. Of the 23 who voted "present," 23 were Democrats. It is not a wild leap to conclude that a party that is increasingly indifferent or hostile to religion will put a small premium on innocent human life.

No group in American history has been more abused than African Americans. One would think that given their oppression, they would lead the fight for the underdog. But not when it comes to protecting kids who survive an abortion: 7 of the 15 members of the House who voted to allow infanticide in 2000 were black. Add to this the two Hispanic House members who voted this way and over half the vote to kill the kids came from minorities.

How can this be explained? Six of the seven blacks who voted against the Born Alive Infants Protection Act voted against the prayer bill (the other black representative was no longer in Congress when the latter bill was passed).

The role of the church in the black community is well-known. That so many black congressmen no longer connect with their religion is disturbing. But it does cast light on their abandonment of the underdog.

Jews have suffered for centuries and pride themselves as defenders of the downtrodden. Yet 82 percent of Jewish

senators (9 of 11) voted against the ban on partial birth abortion; this was disproportionately the worst record of any religious group. On the prayer issue in the House, 7 Jews voted "no" and 11 voted "present." This means that 7 in 10 Jewish congressmen (there are 26 Jews in the House) are so phobic about religion that they could not bring themselves to vote for a day of prayer for our men and women in Iraq.

It is frequently said that women are more peaceful than men. Then why is it that the majority of those in the House who voted to allow kids to die after a botched abortion were women (8 of 15) when they made up only 13 percent of the House at the time? Why is it that nearly two-thirds of the Senators who voted for partial-birth abortion (9 of 14) were women? Why is it that 30 percent of those in the House who voted against a day of prayer were women when only 16 percent of the House is made up of women? So much for the stereotype that women value peace more than men. Or that they take their religion more seriously than men.

What this means is that when it comes to the most basic of civil rights—nothing is more elementary than the right to life—and to the public expression of religion, a very large portion of Democrats, African Americans, Jews and women have lost their moorings. Tragically, we are all poorer as a result.