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There's a Soccer Mom Born Every Minute

Kevin Carson

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Matt Taibbi, in discussing what's wrong with the Democratic Party mainstream, produced this gem:

Except that this bill [Bankruptcy "Reform"] goes out of its way to stick you even if the debts aren't your fault. In amendment after amendment leading up to the final vote on this bill, Republicans—with the help of a dependable group of contribution-rich Democrats—shot down every conceivable legitimate exemption to means testing. This included proposed exemptions for women whose debts were incurred due to non-payment of alimony and child support, for the dependent spouses of servicemen killed in action, and for people whose debts came about as a result of catastrophic medical problems.

But my absolute favorite is the amendment, proposed by Bill Nelson of Florida, to exempt from means testing individuals whose debts were

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incurred as a result of identity fraud. It would be hard to imagine any legitimate objection to this amendment. The only rational objection to this amendment would be that your tongue is so far up the ass of MBNA that you can't possibly vote for it. Which says something about the Senate; the amendment was crushed, 61–37.

Among the Democrats who voted “Nay” to that amendment were Carper, who received \$86,107 from credit card companies last year, and our Capra-esque civic hero Biden, who received a total of \$144,700 between 1999 and 2004—far more than he received from any other industry...

The whole thing is a perfect microcosm of our national politics. On the front pages, the Democrats feud with the Republicans like pit bulls over a bunch of idiotic and mostly irrelevant social issues, usually involving Jesus—Terri Schiavo, judicial nominations, the bankruptcy claims of anti-abortion terrorists. Whenever the cameras are on, they trot out a shrill hag like Nancy Pelosi—a personage very proficient at being loud, but suspiciously ineffective at instilling party discipline—to hysterically denounce the Republicans as the spawn of Satan. But once the lights are off, they hand the party reins to a few dozen whores who make sure the money votes go the right way.

They do this every time, yet we still buy their Capra act. Are we really all that stupid?

This combination of what Taibbi calls “Capra-esque” rhetoric with corporate money pimping is at the heart of what's wrong with the Democratic Party establishment. It's

also a key identifying feature of the “soccer mom” style in American politics. One of Arkansas’ senators, Blanche Lincoln, is a master of the style. She’s a pro at using the maudlin rhetoric about “America’s working families,” and then voting for whatever Capital One or Citibank sticks in front of her.

We had an interesting discussion of soccer mom politics recently (it started off as a discussion of gun rights, before I derailed it) on the Democratic Freedom Caucus’ yahoo group. I mentioned Dianne Feinstein as a particularly egregious example of the soccer mom politician, and compared her to an odious Northwest Arkansas figure:

She’s a case study in the worst aspects of the soccer mom/security mom/New Democrat axis that’s taken over the party— she was a toady to local real estate interests and the “growth machine” as a San Francisco pol, and today she’s a comrade of authoritarian right-wingers like Orrin Hatch and Dick Shelby on issues like the drug war and USA PATRIOT.

Feinstein is the exact counterpart, as far as I can see, to our Democratic candidate for the 3rd district Congressional seat here several years back: Ann Henry. Henry had been on the Fayetteville city board for years, and was a faithful servant to the local chamber of commerce, real estate interests, and highway pork industry. She fought like a cornered syphilitic rat to preserve the city manager form of government and the large number of at-large directors on the city board. She indignantly denounced local progressives for “class warfare” and being “aginnners” when they complained about the effect of such at-large seats in stacking the board with people from the same rich neighborhood. Of course, when she ran for Congress, she adopted

all the touchy-feely soccer grandma rhetoric about “our working families.” It was all I could do not to spit on the floor every time I saw her face on TV.

Sen. Blanche Lincoln is another “Blue Dog Democrat” of the same kind, who uses the soccer mom rhetoric to fool people stupid enough to be taken in by it, and then immediately goes to work pimping her ass out for evil, filthy things like the bankruptcy “reform.” I’d like to tie her and Joe Lieberman together by their intestines, drape them over the top of the Empire State Building, and see how far they’d hang down the sides.

Logan Ferree responded:

I tend to agree, these soccer mom/security mom type Democrats are typically very supportive of the War on Drugs, generally don’t care about civil liberties as long as they supposedly keep us safe, and fuel a suburban feeling they should have lower taxes and good schools at the same time.

That comment reminded me of another feature of soccer momism—a devotion to outcomes, with no interest whatsoever in matters of principle. Here’s an example:

Before the election, I saw a soccer mom focus group on C-SPAN, and it was absolutely stomach-churning. One woman commented on Bush’s foreign policy, saying that as a mom, she knew she had to draw lines and enforce them, or her kids would walk all over her. Wonderful! So the U.S. is just a great big mommy in combat boots and kevlar, making her “kids” obey her around the world!

Around a decade ago, I saw Chuck Schumer participating in a role-playing game on federalism, and he commented that when he talked to his constituents “sitting around the

about some restaurateurs who attempted to track handwashing with a machine that electronically scanned an employee's ID badge and set off an alarm unless he disarmed it by turning on the water and using the soap dispenser. Anyone who ever wet their toothbrush and squeezed some toothpaste down the sink as a child—i.e., anyone—could probably figure out how to beat this. If anything, the utterly demeaning attitude that such a device reflects would likely inspire people to deliberately piss on their hands who had previously washed them without a second thought. But if the people who designed these ads were right, a major part of the population shares the delusion that words on a sign or in a statute book have some supernatural efficacy, like the Creator's "Fiat!" in Genesis.

As one example of how truly idiotic some of the Marching Moms can be, I remember Courtney Love making the remarkably delusional claim that the father of her child would still be alive if the anti-gun gospel had been properly heeded earlier. (I can't resist mentioning that, if I were going to ban something that likely resulted in Kurt Cobain's suicide, she ranks higher on the list than legal firearms.) Be that as it may, though, Courtney apparently hadn't been fully briefed on the Marching Moms' talking points about "reasonable, common-sense regulations." Cobain offered himself with a shotgun, for cryin' out loud! Those things are legal for hunting even in the UK (although you've got to be an upper-class twit to afford the license fee).

kitchen table" (another soccer mom-ism that makes me retch) about gun control, they didn't care about abstract rights or what the Constitution said—they just wanted to "make our children safer." I can imagine similar conversations around "kitchen tables" in Germany when the Enabling Act was being passed by the Reichstag. That political discourse could become so utterly, ass-brainedly dumbed down, in a country that produced the Lincoln-Douglas debates, is obscene.

Hilaire Belloc nailed this tendency a hundred years ago, in *The Servile State*:

It is not difficult to discern that the practical man in social reform is the same animal as the practical man in every other department of human energy, and may be discovered suffering from the same twin disabilities which stamp the practical man wherever found: these twin disabilities are an inability to define his own first principles and an inability to follow the consequences proceeding from his own action. Both these disabilities proceed from one simple and deplorable form of impotence, the inability to think.

On a related note: the Arkansas *Democrat-Gazette*, usually a predictable neocon rag, atoned for a multitude of sins when it nicknamed Blanche Lincoln "Miss Blank."

Chris Toto was the next to jump in:

I've attended a few local "Million Mom Marcher" meetings to find out what passes for conscious thought with these people as well as to provide some "cognitive dissonance."

They seem to have a collective disdain for self responsibility, as if they own their neighborhoods and towns without owing anyone else any rights

respect at all. They have no clue about the difference between a public community and a private community. When asked where were the parents when little Johnny blew off little Tad's head, it becomes a universal, glazed over eyeballs moment. Few of them get it. Those that do, don't care; they just want to foist responsibility on someone else, anybody else via legislation.

I frequently see these same people driving around in their minivans and SUVs with a cell phone in one ear, a cigarette in the other hand, often inconsiderate of any one else on the road. Many of these same people whine about pollution and not having enough parks for lil' Johnny to play in (keep the mess away from home) meanwhile they pitch their ciggy butts and fast food bags out the car window wherever. Pollution and Sprawl are always someone else's fault and responsibility, never theirs. Same thing with responsible, civil weapons control. One of the ring leader MMMs in my area endured her husband being mugged and shot to death on a NYC subway. Because her husband had no means of self defense, everyone else has to lose their rights to self defense as well. Yeah, that makes a lotta sense. When I pointed out the possibility that if more people like her husband were armed on subways, that the probability of muggings would dissipate, she jumped to the conclusion that armed chaos & mayhem would necessarily result.

If we think about it, this is the same intolerant mentality that helped lead to the various Temperance over reactions, like the Prohibition, the outlawing of Prostitution and the War On

Some Drugs (except of course, for "mother's little helpers"). Now I respect the right of people wanting to dissociate themselves from such behaviors, but they don't have the right to snuff out others who have alternative association preferences.

Of course, the "keep the mess away from home" mentality that Chris refers to has been central to the "Progressive" mentality since the movement's Crolyite origins a century ago. Progressivism, historically, was a managerialist ideology of the white collar middle class. And one of its priorities was to regiment and regulate the lower orders, and subject them to proper "professional" supervision, so that their squalor and disorder wouldn't spill over into the white bread suburbs.

The magical thinking associated with "the law," manifested as a belief that words on paper produce some sort of effect in the real world (gun laws=reduced gun crime; drug laws=reduced drug use; etc.), is also typical. Last year the local nanny statist (with some outside money and help from assorted anti-smoking advocacy groups) got a restaurant and bar smoking ban on the ballot in Fayetteville. Their radio ads (by some cranio-rectally impacted outfit called "YouthCaN") were a textbook example of the goo-goo's magical view of "law." One radio spot had the supervisor at a public swimming pool asking patrons "peeing or non-peeing section?" In another, a restaurant *maitre d'* asked "handwashing or non-handwashing section?" He then explained: "the handwashing section is for people who prefer their servers wash their hands after using the bathroom." The visitors' response, in both cases, was "isn't there a law" against peeing in the pool/not washing your hands?

Now, you'd think even the most pathological of liberal do-gooders would know better than to believe a "law" could stop anybody from peeing in a pool or skipping their post-toilet hygiene, if they were so minded. I saw a news story once