



Hot Air Alert

WHEN DEMOCRAT RHETORIC AND REALITY COLLIDE

May 18, 2009

Today, Congress Daily PM reported that:

“Senate Democratic leaders are facing flak from their Caucus and from House members over recent votes to attach gun-friendly Republican amendments to unrelated bills in what critics call an emerging trend of Democrats' pro-gun tilt complicating the legislative agenda.”

They specifically quoted House Resources National Parks Subcommittee Chairman Raul Grijalva who complained:

*“Knowing that the president has said he wants the [credit card bill] by Memorial Day, it's a cheap way to sneak in **provisions that should be fully and openly debated** on their own merits.”*

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a hot air alert.

If Subcommittee Chairman Grijalva feels so strongly that the guns in parks amendment should be “fully and openly debated” on its own merits:

- Why hasn't Chairman Grijalva held a single subcommittee hearing on this issue in the past 29 months?
- Why wasn't the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (a bill that would have been the best vehicle for the gun rights amendment) “fully and openly debated?”

Tip: House Democrat leaders spent weeks devising parliamentary maneuvers to block House Republicans from being able to offer even one amendment to the \$10 billion, 1200-page monster bill.

- Why has the Natural Resources Committee avoided marking up any National Parks related bills in this Congress (including Chairman Grijalva's bill - HR 715 - to expand Saguaro National Park)? Is it so Democrats can hide from having to vote on gun rights amendments that Republicans would be certain to offer?

Perhaps Senator Reid's spokesman best summed up why this amendment hasn't been “fully and openly debated” in the House:

*“House members ‘can be upset all they want, but the fact is that we have had two gun-related votes in the Senate this year, and both garnered more than 60 votes,’ the spokesman said.” **We don't have a Rules Committee in the Senate.**” he added when*

asked about assertions that Reid could do more to prevent the votes.

CongressDailyPM

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POLITICS

Black Caucus, Others Take Shots At Reid Over Gun Riders

by Dan Friedman, with Billy House contributing

Senate Democratic leaders are facing flak from their Caucus and from House members over recent votes to attach gun-friendly Republican amendments to unrelated bills in what critics call an emerging trend of Democrats' pro-gun tilt complicating the legislative agenda. Congressional Black Caucus members plan to raise concerns about the Senate votes in a long-planned Wednesday meeting with Senate Majority Leader Reid -- one expression of what aides said is growing angst among House Democrats.

With 27 Democrats on board, the Senate last Tuesday overwhelmingly passed an amendment by Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., to a bill regulating credit card fees that allows visitors to national parks to carry concealed, loaded guns if state law does not forbid it. President Obama wants the larger bill passed by Memorial Day; it is unclear if Democrats will strip the gun amendment in conference. The national park vote followed one in February where 22 Democrats joined Republicans to pass an amendment by Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., to a District of Columbia voting rights bill to block the District from restricting gun ownership. That vote has contributed to the bill stalling in the House, where leaders have been unable to bring it to the floor without a similar amendment being added.

Such headaches stem from the Democrats' successful electoral strategy of largely abandoning gun control as a national issue and growing their majority with Western and Southern candidates opposed to gun-control measures. With Democratic leaders, including Obama, avoiding fights over guns and majorities in both chambers ready to vote for most pro-gun measures, future amendments rolling back gun control measures appear likely. Such efforts would repeatedly force Democratic leaders to pick between trying to strip them out without votes or allowing them to become law.

That dilemma is exposing fissures between progressives and leaders like Reid, who see the votes as inevitable products of the expanded Democratic tent. Many House members and groups such as the Brady Center, which pushes for restrictive gun laws, want Reid to do more to avoid votes on gun amendments to unrelated bills. Reid this year has avoided procedural tactics to block GOP amendments in a step intended to increase bipartisan cooperation.

"There is no reason to be tacking on irrelevant provisions to 'must-pass' bills," argued House Resources National Parks Subcommittee Chairman Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz. But a Reid spokesman suggested such votes are a result of numbers. House members "can be upset all they want, but the fact is that we have had two gun-related votes in the Senate this year,

and both garnered more than 60 votes," the spokesman said. "We don't have a Rules Committee in the Senate," he added when asked about assertions that Reid could do more to prevent the votes. Grijalva suggested there is some irony that legislation intended to tackle unfair and deceptive practices by credit card companies would have such language suddenly attached last week by members of the Senate. "Knowing that the president has said he wants the [credit card bill] by Memorial Day, it's a cheap way to sneak in provisions that should be fully and openly debated on their own merits," Grijalva added.

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