

Ether Zone

CULT POLITICS

MONKEYS COULD DO IT

By: Ed Henry

Have you ever watched Congress in action? You can view the daily activity of the House of Representatives or the Senate as they debate the important matters of the moment. Everyone should watch it, at least once. It's an experience.

On almost any matter, the first thing you will notice is that there is hardly anyone in the chamber. With 441 current members of the House, the great hall is almost empty. The only members present seem to be the ones who want to take to the floor to deliver a speech or argument. You hope that, like you, your own representative is watching his or her television monitor, listening to the arguments pro and con, taking notes, and judging matters as they are presented.

Dennis Hastert, the republican speaker of the House will seldom be there. Instead, one of the other representatives will be conducting affairs. I think they call him the "Speaker pro tem" or something like that.

One by one, various debaters take the podium to deliver their argument and have it recorded in the Congressional Record. They always seem to start with the statement that they would like to reserve the right to "revise and extend their remarks" which seems to mean take-back or change anything they say after they've had time to think about it. The right to do this was also the first law passed by the new 107th Congress when it came into session in January of this year—House Resolution number one.

Another thing that seems routine is that the Speaker Pro Tem recognizes someone in the chamber so that he or she can object that there's "not a quorum present." This is always "so noted" but doesn't seem to make any difference since matters proceed

anyway.

Next to happen are one minute speeches where members take to the podium to deliver a one minute tirade on any subject they want to talk about. This is sometimes very exciting but you never know what's going to come up and they always seem to go over their time limit. Am I boring you so far?

Once we get to matters of the day, real arguments are delivered. These can be brilliant and stimulating speeches delivered by various members of the House. It can go on for days.

I recently watched the House debating the Transportation Bill where the matter of Mexican trucks operating across our border was argued back and forth. It was interesting. There were good arguments for why they should not be allowed beyond the current 20 mile limit. And there were good arguments for why they should since we allow the Canadians to do it and we could make certain that the Mexican trucks passed inspection. It was stimulating, and I've got to admit that I wasn't sure which way I would have voted.

These arguments went on for more than three days, with members coming and going back to whatever they do when not in the chamber. I assume that they kept television transmission from the floor in the background as I was doing, or they had interns and other staff members keeping track. They must have had a pile of reports on the subject although they wouldn't have the Congressional Record from the last day's debates yet.

Finally, when arguments were exhausted, the vote was taken "by electronic means." I couldn't help but think that many of these House members were the same people who screamed bloody murder about the inaccuracies of modern voting methods last November/December and how important it was to stare at ballots and do hand counts.

Anyway, after more than a half-hour of silence and watching the big board tally the vote—what do we get? We get the Democrats all voting one way and all of the Republicans voting the other. Strict party line voting, with maybe a couple of defectors from the democratic side. The most exciting thing was to see which way the two independents voted, and they split.

Wait a minute. What happened to all the days of debating—all of the wonderful arguments pro and con? Could reasonable people possibly accept this as voting one's conscience, as weighing the issues? Why did we have all those speeches? What's the probability that all the Democrats came to the same thoughtful conclusion, and all the Republicans carefully judged it to be another. Not a chance. They just did what they were told to do. Followed their party's marching orders. What are we paying these people for anyway? Why have a debate?

We could get a bunch of Pavlovian trained monkeys to do the same thing. On demand, one group would push the red button. Call them Democrat Chimps. The other group would push the blue button. Call them Republican Chimps. Reward them with bananas instead of campaign money.

Just think of all the cash we'd save. No salaries. No offices and staffs. No special perks like 90 percent of the trust funds covering gift accounts, medical and dental insurance, and so forth. No disappearing interns. No expensive retirement at full pay, which seems justified only by the fact that they didn't do much more when they were working. And we would end up with the same results.

All we would have to pay for would be cages, trainers, a lot of bananas and a zoo that we have already. We could even let them romp around the House Chambers as long as we pay someone to pick up after them. And every two years we could trot one group of monkeys out to the large urban cities and the other group to the rest of America. They could put on a better show for the people and we could watch for other monkeys that might want to join. They could all swear on a stack of bananas to uphold the Constitution.

Is this any different than what we've got now folks? Let's save some money by replacing these cultist priests.



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We also invite you to visit his website at www.poop.org

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