



American Jewish Committee

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Assessing the 2006 Midterm Elections

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Elections, like holy books, have multiple meanings – and the 2006 midterm is already shaping up as a generous supplier of material for political actors and observers of every ideological stripe.

For President Bush, while graciously advising a next-day press conference that he was partly to blame for the Republicans’ “thumping,” the deciding factor was Congressional ethics – bolstered by a “disciplined” Democratic campaign. For Representative Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco, the Democratic Minority Leader turned House Speaker-in-waiting in last week’s balloting, voters ended the Republicans’ 12 years of House rule because they wanted a “new direction” – in the way a scandal-tainted Congress conducts its business, for sure, but first of all in the nation’s increasingly unpopular military engagement in Iraq. For Senator Harry Reid, the Nevada Democrat poised to be Majority Leader of a 51-49 Senate, voters “demanded change” – beginning with Iraq.

To some in the news media, the message of the midterm elections – in which Democrats picked up as many as 30 House seats and, through an unlikely run of decisive and razor-thin victories, captured narrow control of the Senate – was that unimpressive administration and Congressional records since 2004, combined with a fatigue factor after six years of mostly unchallenged GOP control, had simply exhausted voter sympathy, beyond the point at which even hard-edged partisan appeals could corral the once-faithful back into line.

But whether the election was about President Bush, or the Iraq war, or the DeLay and Abramoff (and Cunningham, Ney, Foley, etc.) scandals, or the fumbled recovery from Hurricane Katrina, or the summer/fall spike in gasoline prices, or public boredom with the same old faces on the TV news – or some combination of all the above – the impact of the November 7 vote will be dramatic: Both houses of Congress will be under the control of a party that on key issues of domestic and international policy embraces views fundamentally opposed to those of the President, and in which appeals to bipartisanship – such as the one issued by the President in his press conference – ring hollow after years of harshly enforced irrelevance. The great challenges to which Bush pointed that demand a joint administration-Congressional response, including energy independence and immigration reform and the ongoing terrorist

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threat, are going to be confronted in the coming two years in an atmosphere of the most strained, even absent, bipartisanship; reaching across the aisle is a nearly extinct reflex these days on Capitol Hill.

For the Jewish community – a constituency so fully integrated into the American political system that it is often not classified as a minority,² although it represents just 2 percent of the population, and generally some 3 percent of voters – there was much in this election to watch, to worry about, and to be proud of.

Great attention was focused on Connecticut, where Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, running as an independent after losing an August Democratic primary to entrepreneur Ned Lamont, won a fourth term with 50 percent of the vote in a three-way contest (and, according to exit polls, some 60 percent support among the state's generally Democratic Jewish voters). Lieberman, an observant Jew who was the Democrats' vice presidential nominee – a national ticket first – in 2000, has been a stalwart on matters relating to the U.S. confrontation with global terrorism and to Israel's security and well-being; his political vulnerability this year, and the key to his primary defeat, lay in his support for the Iraq war (although he pointed to his criticism of administration strategy). Connecticut voters, impatient with the war, chose him anyway – in testimony to his probity, his prominence, and his long record of public service (and, perhaps, to discomfort with the generally one-issue Lamont, whose vocal supporters ran to the left edge of the Democratic spectrum: risky territory in the so-called "Land of Steady Habits"). Although he won as an independent, Lieberman will caucus with Senate Democrats.

Party Loyalties

If Lieberman's nominally independent candidacy tested (and largely won) the party loyalty of Jewish Democrats, the community was less conflicted in other contests. In fact, exit polls showed Jewish voters overwhelmingly returning to form in this election – as reliable supporters of Democratic candidates. Over the years, Republican fortunes have risen and fallen among Jewish voters; in his 2004 re-election, President Bush was reported to have amassed support from a higher-than-average 24 percent of Jewish voters (although other estimates post a lower figure), a pick-up of some 5 points from 2000. In this year's Congressional contests, exit polls showed just 12 percent of Jews supporting Republican candidates, with 87 percent saying they had voted Democratic.

The lopsided exit polls of 2006 are generally consistent with the latest data on American Jews' political affiliation. The American Jewish Committee's "annual survey of American Jewish opinion," released last month, found the community breaking 54 percent Democratic, 15 percent Republican, and 29 percent independent (with the rest declining to answer). A bright spot for the GOP – and confirmation that the significant investments in Jewish out-

² For one example, see the official U.S. Senate listing of minority members who have served in that chamber: http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/minority_Senators.htm For another, see The Washington Post story Nov. 9 on "diversity" in the new Congress – a demographic rundown that omits Jews: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/08/AR2006110802171.html>

reach made by both parties in recent years address more fluid markets than the overall data suggest – is that while New Deal Jews over the age of 60 are five times more likely to identify as Democrats than Republicans, their children and grandchildren under the age of 40 break just two-to-one Democratic. If the adage that people tend to grow more conservative as they age applies equally to Jewish voters, a politically more competitive future awaits. This trend may be reinforced by the continuing growth of the Orthodox community – the most politically conservative voting bloc – as a component of the American Jewish population; the latest AJC survey showed Democrats with a relatively narrow 4-3 advantage over Republicans in that subgroup (not counting the 25 percent who are independent or nonresponsive), while enjoying roughly 4-1 margins in the community's other branches.

As candidates for federal office this year, Jews were prominent – and notably successful. As yet another measure of the community's thorough integration, the twin architects of the Democrats' 2006 campaign to capture Congressional control – Representative Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee – both happen to be Jewish; on Election night, they constituted half of the most-photographed foursome in the Democrats' Capitol Hill victory celebration, alongside Representative Pelosi and Senator Reid.

Increased Count and Clout

The Jewish minority will grow in both chambers in the 110th Congress. There will be 13 Jewish Senators – an all-time high – with the addition of Democrats Ben Cardin, a 10-term Maryland congressman who succeeds the retiring Democrat Paul Sarbanes, and Bernie Sanders, an eight-term Socialist from Vermont who caucuses Democratic and is succeeding the retiring Independent Jim Jeffords. Of the 11 Jewish Senators in the 109th Congress (and, for the purposes of this report, Virginia's George Allen, whose Jewish lineage came to light only late in his re-election campaign, will not be identified with a faith in which he was not raised), three stood for re-election, and all won; in addition to Lieberman, the victors were Dianne Feinstein, of California, and Herb Kohl, of Wisconsin. There will be 30 Jewish members of the House³ in the new Congress, up from 26 in the 109th; six newcomers will join 24 re-elected incumbents. Tennessee and Kentucky will have their first Jewish congressmen – Steve Cohen (who won an open seat) and John Yarmuth (who defeated 5-term Republican Anne Northup), respectively.⁴

³ In the Wyoming at-large Congressional race, Jewish Democratic challenger Gary Trauner was within half a percentage point of six-term Republican Barbara Cubin – a 1,012-vote deficit; this week's voting machine canvass found no significant errors, and elections officials today certified the results. In the unlikely event that Trauner challenges the decision and wins, he'd bring the "Jewish caucus" up to 31.

⁴ The other Jewish freshmen will be former Florida State Senator Ron Klein, who ousted 13-term Republican Clay Shaw of Fort Lauderdale; Tucson businesswoman and former state legislator Gabrielle Giffords, great-granddaughter of a Lithuanian rabbi, who won an open seat; Appleton, Wisconsin, physician Steve Kagen, who won an open seat; and Concord, New Hampshire, lawyer and songwriter Paul Hodes, who defeated six-term Republican Charles Bass. In a special category, John Sarbanes, a Maryland Democrat who won Ben Cardin's House seat, is not

In fact, every Jewish incumbent seeking a return ticket to Congress won re-election – as did every Democrat.⁵ (Even in the earthquake years of Congressional realignment, it should be noted, most House incumbents survive. This year – depending on the outcome of still-undecided contests – between 20 and 22 Republican members were defeated, or roughly 10 percent of party members who sought re-election.) The two Jewish Representatives who will not be returning to the House are Cardin and Sanders, who leapt to the Senate. (The feisty, Brooklyn-born Sanders cruised to victory with 65 percent of the vote – in a state where Jews constitute less than 1 percent of the population; it was yet another example of the general irrelevance of Jewish identity in U.S. political contests, best demonstrated in the state of Wisconsin, where 0.5 percent of the population is Jewish and where both Senate seats are held by Jews. Herb Kohl was overwhelmingly re-elected last week to a fourth term.)

In addition to their significant numbers, Jewish members will have significant clout in the 110th Congress. In the Senate, Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter, one of two Jewish Republicans, will relinquish the chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee – a post that put him at the center of critical civil rights, privacy rights, church-state and other constitutional contests, as well as judicial nominations, in the 109th Congress. (He is expected to become the committee's ranking minority member.) The new Senate is likely to have six of its 20 standing committees chaired by Jewish members: Michigan's Carl Levin, who is now in his fifth term, at Armed Services; Lieberman at Homeland Security and Government Affairs; Feinstein at Rules and Administration; California's Barbara Boxer at Environment and Public Works; Kohl at Aging; and Schumer at Joint Economic.

The 13 Jewish Senators in the 110th Congress will be: Boxer, Cardin, Norm Coleman of Minnesota (Specter's lone Republican colleague in this outsized *minyán*), Russ Feingold of Wisconsin, Feinstein, Kohl, Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, Levin (longest-serving of the group), Lieberman, Sanders, Schumer, Specter and Ron Wyden of Oregon.

In the House, the unofficial "Jewish caucus" – an entity Jewish members, atypical of minorities, have resisted creating⁶ – will be led by Henry Waxman of Los Angeles, who last week won his 17th term with 71 percent of the vote. As in the 108th and 109th, the incoming

Jewish himself, but has a Jewish wife, is raising his children in the Jewish faith, and belongs to a local synagogue. His father is retiring Senator Paul Sarbanes.

⁵ Representative William Jefferson of Louisiana could prove the Democrats' one exception; facing federal corruption charges, he defied his party and sought re-election, drew 12 opponents (8 of them Democrats), won 30 percent of the vote, and will face a December runoff against the second-place finisher, a Democrat.

⁶ If there were a House "Jewish caucus," its 30 members next year would be: Gary Ackerman, D-NY; Shelley Berkley, D-NV; Howard Berman, D-CA; Eric Cantor, R-VA; Steve Cohen, D-TN; Susan Davis, D-CA; Rahm Emanuel, D-IL; Eliot Engel, D-NY; Bob Filner, D-CA; Barney Frank, D-MA; Gabrielle Giffords, D-AZ; Jane Harman, D-CA; Paul Hodes, D-NH; Steve Israel, D-NY; Steve Kagen, D-WI; Ron Klein, D-FL; Tom Lantos, D-CA; Sander Levin, D-MI; Nita Lowey, D-NY; Jerrold Nadler, D-NY; Steven Rothman, D-NJ; Jan Schakowsky, D-IL; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-FL; Adam Schiff, D-CA; Allyson Schwartz, D-PA; Brad Sherman, D-CA; Henry Waxman, D-CA; Anthony Weiner, D-NY; Robert Wexler, D-FL; and John Yarmuth, D-KY.

Congress will have one Jewish Republican in the House⁷: Eric Cantor of Richmond, Virginia, who won a fourth term with 64 percent of the vote (against, as it happens, a Jewish challenger, Jim Nachman), and – after a term as Chief Deputy Majority Whip – is on a path to rising prominence in GOP ranks. Other Jewish members, all Democrats, include some of the nation’s most seasoned and most quoted lawmakers – on domestic and international affairs. In addition to Emanuel, poised for the fourth-ranking House leadership post, senior Jewish House members in the 110th are expected to include the chairs of four out of 17 standing committees: Waxman, a veteran investigator of executive branch incompetence, at Government Reform; Tom Lantos, of San Mateo, California, the lone Holocaust survivor in Congress – and the Hill’s conscience on matters of human rights, democracy, and the necessity of confronting tyranny – who is in line to chair International Relations; Barney Frank, of Newton, Massachusetts, one of the sharpest Bush critics and an outspoken defender of civil rights and the underprivileged, who is in line to take over Financial Services; and Bob Filner, of San Diego, California, a one-time Freedom Rider who has devoted himself to education, social justice and economic development, and is now set to take over Veterans Affairs.

Jewish lawmakers are also well-positioned to assume the chairmanships of significant subcommittees. Wielding particular impact will be Nita Lowey, of White Plains, New York, a now-10-term Democrat in line to take over the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs – holder of America’s foreign aid purse-strings; Lowey will be one of 10 Appropriations subcommittee chairs, dubbed the “cardinals,” in the inner ring of Congressional power circles. On the powerful Ways and Means Committee, 13-term Michigan veteran Sander Levin is in line to assume chairmanship of the Trade Subcommittee; an opponent of the Central American Free Trade Agreement, he would be in a position to reshape the nation’s economic relations abroad. (Alternatively, Levin has standing to press for chairmanship of the Social Security Subcommittee – hardly an inconsequential post.) On Judiciary, New York’s Jerrold Nadler, an 8-term powerhouse on church-state relations and privacy rights, is set to take over the Constitution Subcommittee.

Nowhere are Jewish members more intensely concentrated, however, than on International Relations – where they hold six of the top nine seats in the Democrats’ seniority ranking, virtually assuring leadership of key subcommittees – including Europe (with Boca Raton, Florida’s Robert Wexler in line to chair), Middle East and Central Asia (New York’s Gary Ackerman), and International Terrorism (Brad Sherman of Sherman Oaks, California). Howard Berman, a 13-term Representative from Van Nuys, California, who is among the most senior Democrats on both International Relations and Judiciary, can be expected to assume a key chairmanship on one of those panels in the new Congress.

Other Races of Interest

One prominent race in which Jewish voters’ traditional policy orientations were tested was the Senate contest in Pennsylvania, where Republican Rick Santorum, third in his party’s

⁷ Upstate New Yorker Benjamin Gilman held the role of lone Jewish House Republican before Cantor’s arrival in 2001. Gilman, a human rights champion, strong Israel advocate, and old-school moderate, retired in 2003 after 15 terms.

leadership ranks, faced Democrat Bob Casey Jr. and was badly defeated. Casey, the Pennsylvania State Treasurer, identified himself as a foreign policy moderate committed to Israel's security, and critical of Iraq engagement although not an advocate of immediate withdrawal – but he fought his race largely on domestic, even personal, issues. While both candidates disapproved of abortion, Santorum's position was the more doctrinaire, a reflection of a “social conservative” political style many came to regard as self-righteous.

On issues of greatest concern to committed pro-Israel voters, however, the question in Pennsylvania was whether to dislodge a proven stalwart: In his two terms, but especially in recent years, Santorum had carved out a niche as the Senate's most insistent voice against Islamist extremism, the threat of global terrorism, and the danger of Iran's nuclear program – to the United States and its allies, in particular Israel. In a Congress thick with friends of Israel, Santorum's fierce dedication to Israel's security and the mutually beneficial U.S.-Israel relationship was exceeded by no one; his leadership on these issues will be missed. Santorum was also chief Republican sponsor of the Workplace Religious Freedom Act, in an unlikely partnership with Massachusetts Democrat John Kerry. According to exit polls, Pennsylvania's Jewish voters supported Santorum at roughly twice the national average for Republicans in federal contests this year; at any rate, with about 5 percent of the vote, their impact in a 59-41 percent drubbing was limited.

In another race of interest, 15-term veteran Representative Jim Leach of Iowa City, a former Foreign Service Officer widely respected as a Republican voice of moderation and a thoughtful observer of the international scene – and, ironically, a lonely GOP vote against authorization for President Bush to commence the Iraq war – lost to Democrat Dave Loebsack in a contest not even considered close before Election Day. (Leach won his last term with 60 percent of the vote.) This was not the only case in which a moderate Republican, deprived of his usual share of Democratic and independent votes in a potentially swing district, went down to defeat in a mood of anger and change – but it was an especially telling one.

Also worthy of note was the victory – with 56 percent in a three-way race – of Minneapolis Democrat Keith Ellison, the first Muslim ever elected to the United States Congress. An African-American convert to Islam, he was faced during the campaign with questions about anti-Semitism because of his past affiliation with the Nation of Islam; similarly, concerns were raised because of his ongoing relationship with the Council on American Islamic Relations, a group that has been associated with radical Islamists. In the course of the campaign, Ellison denounced Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, espoused his commitment to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reached out to the Minneapolis Jewish community (a significant portion of which resides in his district), and indicated his intention to travel to Israel with the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (which issued a press release noting his “ground-breaking” election). For the most part, Ellison – one of whose opponents was Republican Alan Fine, a business school lecturer who is Jewish – focused his campaign on the war in Iraq and social justice issues; he was endorsed by the *American Jewish World*, a Twin Cities Jewish newspaper.

Beyond head counts, chairmanships, and races of special interest, the midterm results pose far less tractable questions of the import of this new Congress for issues of concern to the Jewish community in general, and to the American Jewish Committee in particular. As noted, one is not likely to lose money on a bet that partisan strife – as opposed to the vision of bipartisan cooperation espoused by President Bush and the new Congressional leadership – is for the most part likely to prevail. Nevertheless, the President's post-election remarks, as well as those of his Democratic interlocutors, suggest some areas where the common ground that both sides ostensibly seek may prove achievable, and the best interests of the nation served.

Policy on Israel

First and foremost, the 110th Congress can be expected to maintain its staunch bipartisan support for a safe and secure Israel, and for strong U.S.-Israel relations. Prospective Speaker Nancy Pelosi has a long history of support for Israel, as well as personal ties to the Jewish community. Many others acceding to leadership positions and committee chairs are long-standing allies of Israel and the Jewish community as well; indeed, as noted, not a few of these happen to be Jewish themselves, and many have extensive legislative records not only on Israel and Middle East issues but on matters relating to the security and well-being of Jewish communities abroad, minority rights, the fight against anti-Semitism, and Holocaust memory and restitution. (Bipartisanship has been the rule on all these matters.) To be sure, there are several Democrats slated to assume leadership positions or chairmanships who have been viewed as problematic when it come to Israel; in the main, however, these members' responsibilities do not encompass international affairs and their influence on Israel-related policy is not likely to be significant.

A test case was House Resolution 921, introduced in the wake of last summer's Hamas and Hezbollah attacks on Israel and the groups' kidnapping of three Israeli soldiers; the resolution, "Condemning the recent attacks against the State of Israel, holding terrorists and their state-sponsors accountable for such attacks, supporting Israel's right to defend itself, and for other purposes," was approved July 20, 2006, by the lopsided vote of 410-8, with 4 members voting "present." Of the eight nay-sayers, seven were Democrats, as were all four who recorded themselves "present." Included among the resolution's opponents were senior Democrats John Conyers, of Detroit, who will chair the Judiciary Committee in the 110th Congress, and John Dingell of Dearborn, Michigan, who will chair Energy and Commerce.

The overwhelmingly bipartisan consensus on Israel is not likely to extend across the international affairs spectrum – and certainly not to the handling of the Iraq war, an issue that played a significant role in carrying the new Democratic majority to power. While the President will retain his preeminent role in foreign policy, Congress can be expected to move strongly to utilize long-dormant oversight powers to assert differences and test policy decisions not only on the handling of the war, but also on the challenges posed by Iran's and North Korea's nuclear activities. (The Iran Libya Sanctions Act and the Iran Freedom Support Act, initiatives to apply sanctions in answer to Iran's nuclear program and its support for terrorism, enjoyed bipartisan backing. Approved in the final hours before Congress broke for

a pre-election recess, IFSA had 61 Senate cosponsors, including half the Democratic caucus; there were 360 cosponsors in the House, a number that made a roll call virtually superfluous.)

Energy Initiatives and Immigration Reform

Over the last two years, the national security implications of growing American dependence on foreign energy sources has increasingly come to the fore as a bipartisan talking point – linked as well, more so on the Democratic than on the Republican side, to the looming environmental catastrophe traceable to ever-expanding usage of fossil fuels – and as an issue of concern to the general public. There is potential here for partnership between the President and Congress. To be sure, politicians of all persuasions have been paying lip service to the issue of energy dependence for years, and even decades, with little result – in part because of conflicting visions within the two parties on how to address this issue; Republicans tend to favor supply-side and domestic production approaches, while Democrats have tilted toward encouraging conservation and fuel efficiency and promoting alternative energy sources.⁸ The best achievable result may be a grand political bargain – including increased domestic production, distasteful to Democrats, and strengthened mandatory fuel efficiency standards, long opposed by Republicans – to produce a multi-faceted, comprehensive approach to the fuel dependence crisis.

Comprehensive immigration reform (“CIR”) is another area in which there is potential for bipartisan cooperation. President Bush’s support for an immigration reform package that, among other things, provides a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and a guest-worker program, as well as enhanced enforcement and border-security measures, resonates more soundly with most Congressional Democrats than in a Republican caucus split between CIR supporters and hard-line restrictionists who see any leniency for the undocumented as “amnesty.” Advocates of the latter approach had long argued that public opinion was on their side, but the 2006 election seemed to prove just the opposite, as immigration moderates prevailed over key incumbents and rivals for open seats who had made an enforcement-only approach to immigration a signature issue.⁹ (Arizona, it should be noted, however, also adopted four state-wide referenda directed at cutting off services to illegal immigrants.)

Nevertheless, it is far from clear how quickly the 110th Congress will move forward on comprehensive immigration reform. Even the CIR bill passed by the Senate earlier this year included provisions that pro-immigrant groups viewed as problematic; those groups – and members of Congress sharing their perspective – will have to come to terms with which of these provisions they can live with, as opposed to leaving the present broken immigration system unfixed. Moreover, there are reports of Democratic sentiment that, while some discrete

⁸ These divides are not purely partisan. As the National Journal observed in September, the Democratic Party “is split, for example, over ambitious proposals to require automakers to build more efficient vehicles and over legislation to expand oil and natural gas development offshore.” Members from both sides of the aisle came together during the 109th Congress to support legislation that would promote production of hybrid and alternative-fuel motor vehicles and strengthened fuel efficiency standards.

⁹ “Secure Fence Act” sponsor J.D. Hayworth, of Scottsdale, Arizona, for example, fell some 6,000 votes short of gaining a 7th term; Republican Randy Graf lost by 12 points in southern Arizona’s 8th District.

initiatives like the DREAM Act (which would regularize the status of college-age undocumented who came to this country as youngsters) might be in order, it would be a mistake to afford President Bush a “victory” by enacting a comprehensive initiative, thereby to some extent restoring GOP bona fides with the Latino community in advance of the 2008 presidential election cycle. (Exit polls among Latino voters last week found them shifting significantly toward the Democratic column – a danger sign to Republicans hoping to expand their party’s base in the country’s largest and fastest-growing minority, and part of the rationale for promoting Florida Senator Mel Martinez as the next general chairman of the Republican National Committee.) The danger in the coming Congress is that political expediency may scuttle an opportunity to reform a badly broken immigration system, with no guarantee that such an opportunity will present itself again in the foreseeable future.

Religion and Society

If Middle East policy (excepting Iraq), energy and immigration reform afford the prospect of bipartisan cooperation, the religious liberty area presents a set of issues for which the best that can be said is that we are unlikely to see a reprise of several troubling assaults on the separation of church and state – largely the result of GOP attention to its Christian-conservative constituency. The House-passed Public Expression of Religion Act (which would deny attorneys’ fees to a successful plaintiff in a case challenging an Establishment Clause violation, contrary to the normal practice in civil rights cases), as well as House-passed measures stripping away prohibitions on religion-based employment discrimination in government financed social service programs administered by faith-based organizations, and rolling back the military’s efforts to assure that chaplains provide a “pluralistic ministry,” will not likely move forward again.

On a more proactive level, it may be that the Workplace Religious Freedom Act will advance, if Democratic leaders come to see this antidiscrimination measure as a way to show that they can serve the needs of the religiously observant in a way that Republicans failed to do when the latter were in charge. There is also reason to believe that the Democratic leadership – heading up a more moderate caucus in the 100th, and with James Clyburn, a South Carolina Democrat who chairs the House Faith Working Group, likely to become the new Majority Whip – will look for mechanisms to support faith-based efforts in social service delivery that do not subvert discrimination or break down church-state safeguards.

As the election approached, there were reports that prospective Speaker Pelosi would move quickly upon assuming office to have the House adopt sweeping lobby reform measures, including a prohibition on privately funded Congressional travel if the funder so much as employs a registered lobbyist – even if the lobbyist in question is not involved with the funding or planning of the travel. While there is no question that the time has come to address abuses of the existing system, this proposed change would hinder Congress in the fulfillment of its Constitutional role in foreign-policymaking, as well as hinder nonprofit organizations in their role of educating members of Congress and their staff about some of the most critical issues of the day. While nominally continuing to allow nonprofits to underwrite Congressional travel, this change would actually preclude many such organizations from doing so.