

In my last note I wrote about some possible changes on the horizon for incumbents and what Tuesday's races might mean. There have been some interesting developments in these and other stories.

First off, given today's terrorism news, I have to expect that Karl Rove is just about worn out from dancing jigs in his office. Nothing makes the GOP happier than terrorism, successful or thwarted. The morning press briefing hosted by DHS Sec. Chertoff was interesting for the brazen attempt by Chertoff and AG Gonzales to take the credit for foiling the plan. They made bold claims of inter-departmental cooperation and US CIA/FBI/DHS investigative efforts in coordination with UK MI5 intelligence leading to this result. Interestingly, however, when the director of the TSA got up to the podium it was obvious that he hadn't gotten the same script. He told us what the press had already made clear - that MI5 had cracked this case on their own, and that we had only just found out about it. "We have achieved the kind of screening protocol changes that normally take weeks or months in just the past four hours." Expect to see lots of stories today and tomorrow about how this bodes for the Democrats hopes in November, with plenty of references to Lieberman/Lamont, etc. The mainstream media is so enamored of Connecticut right now that they're in no hurry to leave it alone.

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Tom DeLay has quietly announced that he has no intention to actually run for reelection to his seat:

...it seems "The Hammer" has become "The Quitter."
<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/editorial/4106498.html>

David Wallace, former Mayor of DeLay's hometown of Sugarland, TX, has announced that he will run as a write-in candidate to keep the Dems from "stealing" the seat (as the TX GOP chair puts it):

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/headline/metro/4106855.html>

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I wrote the other day about the ramifications of Rep. Bob Ney declining to run to reelection to Ohio's 18th. I wrote then that the likely replacement on the Republican ballot line would be State Senator Joy Padgett. Well turns out that a perfect storm of state election laws may keep her off of the ballot as well.

In Ohio, if a party nominee steps down prior to August 21st, a new primary must be held. Also under state law, though, if a candidate loses in a primary they cannot run in another primary that year. Padgett ran for Lt. Gov. in the Republican primary this past Spring, and lost, so this "sore loser" provision may very well keep her off the ballot this Fall. Stay tuned for more obscure Ohio election law shenanigans as they develop.

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No more fun to report (yet) from the Montana Senate race, but here's something interesting from Pennsylvania:

Incumbent Republican Senator Rick Santorum is locked in a tough battle with Democratic State Treasurer Bob Casey. Casey, who, like Santorum, is "pro-life" is a real threat who has lead the race by 14 points until quite recently, was able to shrug off challenges from the left of his own party. So, the Republicans, believing Sun Tsu's old axiom "The enemy of my enemy is my friend" sponsored a huge petition drive to get Carl Romanelli, the Green Party candidate, onto the ballot in November. They hoped this would siphon off the votes of disaffected pro-choice voters seeking an alternative to Casey, and give Santorum the win. The Republican effort was successful, and they collected over 93,000 signatures in their drive (67,700 are needed). Now it comes out that many are invalid. "As many as 70,000" say the Dems:

"thousands of Green Party petition signatures are phony, including such names as Mickey Mouse, Mona Lisa, Woody Allen, Robert Redford, George Bush, Gerald Ford and Lee H. Oswald."

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06222/712425-177.stm>

-+-+-+Maryland has a long tradition of Democratic state government, which came to an end with the election of Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. a few years back. Upon taking office he cleaned house — over 340 state employees were fired, usually at the hands of his henchman, Joseph Steffen.

Reporters for the Baltimore Sun who tried to investigate the return of patronage and influence peddling to state government were ruled persona non grata by Erlich, their press credentials were revoked and state employees were threatened with immediate termination for even speaking with the Sun reporters (which, amazingly, was upheld in court).

Now, however, the legislature is investigating, and right in time for election season. Testifying yesterday, Steffen admitted that party affiliation played a role in his firing decisions:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/09/AR2006080900885.html>

-+-+-+The restating-the-obvious award for the day goes to Gen. Wesley Clark, who writes in a Wall Street Journal Op-Ed piece:

The public hasn't quite sorted it out — but they know a failure when they see one. And Iraq, as well as the larger Middle East policy, is such a failure. ...

Iraq isn't Vietnam. America can't just walk away without horrendous consequences. But "stay the course" isn't a strategy. And the longer the bleeding goes on there, the harder the electorate will dig for answers and the tougher they'll be on those who got us in, and aided, abetted and apologized for them.

-+-+-+Expect more fireworks from the Randall "Duke" Cunningham earmarks-for-cash scandal to break before election day this Fall. Bob Ney was part of this, but the scandal could well bring down California Republican Rep. Jerry Lewis and others. The New York Times published a several thousand word piece the other day which quoted heavily from Brent Wilkes, the military contractor whose largess was so exploited by Cunningham. He directs withering blame at Lewis and other, both current and former, officeholders.

The latest development is the leak of a memo by California Dem., Rep. Jane Harmon, about the stifling of a report from a Congressional investigation, detailing a similar failure of the system to contain corruption in the letting of intelligence contracts:

http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-na-duke10aug10,1,4095709.story?coll=la-news-a_section