



NEWS

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Kerry Wins N.H., But Can a Senator Who Votes to the Left of Ted Kennedy Go All the Way?

John Kerry wins New Hampshire primary by 13 points. But does his voting record on economic and social issues make him unviable as a national candidate?

WASHINGTON – John Kerry (D-Mass.) is now the undisputed frontrunner in the field of Democrats running to oust President Bush. But will his voting record on taxes, economic issues, and social issues make him an unviable candidate to face President Bush this fall?

According to MSNBC's Hardball host Chris Matthews, who covered the primary on that network last night, the answer is no. **Matthews said repeatedly that Mr. Kerry has a voting record in the U.S. Senate to the left of America's most famous liberal, Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).**

Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), the nation's leading taxpayer advocacy organization, today completed some research and issued a comparison of the voting records of Sens. Kerry and Kennedy, as well as Rep. Bernard Sanders (D-Vt.), the only self-proclaimed socialist in the U.S. House.

The results? Mr. Matthews is correct, at least where economic and social issues are concerned. **According to Washington, DC's National Journal, which rates the voting records of members of Congress, Mr. Kerry had a 94% average liberal voting record on economic issues since 2001, while Mr. Kennedy scored 86.5% during the same time period.** The two senators had identically liberal scores on social issues (81.5%) during the 2001-2002 scoring period. Mr. Sanders of Vermont, who serves as a signpost of voting for America's Left, scored almost identical to Mr. Kerry on economic issues (95% liberal) but scored less liberal on social issues (72.5%).

According to the Almanac of American Politics, National Journal's rating system "establishes an objective method of analyzing congressional voting ... and classified them as either economic, social, or foreign policy. ... The votes in each of the three subject areas were computer weighted to reflect the degree they fit the common pattern. ... Members of Congress were then ranked according to relative liberalism and conservatism."

Meanwhile, during his career in the U.S. Senate, Mr. Kerry has held an average score of 8.4 out of 100 on ATR's congressional scorecard. This is compared to an 8.75 average by presidential candidate John Edwards (D-N.C.) and 15.75 by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

"Americans vote on taxes," said Grover Norquist, who heads ATR in Washington, **"and candidates like Kerry, who vote against tax relief and for tax hikes will have a hard time explaining themselves in the fall. How does Kerry explain that he's further left than Teddy Kennedy and the House's token socialist?"**

Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all federal, state and local tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or at jcollegio@atr.org.