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# Tom Coburn, M.D.

U.S. Senator for  
**Oklahoma**

E-Newsletter



## Message from Dr. Coburn

Wednesday, November 8, 2006

### **DR. COBURN SAYS ELECTIONS SHOW “TOTAL FAILURE OF BIG GOVERNMENT REPUBLICANISM” AND A HUNGER FOR “HONOR AND DIGNITY” IN CONGRESS**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Senator Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK) released the following statement tonight regarding the outcome of the mid-term elections:

“Although this election represents a short-term setback for Republicans, it could be an important turning point for the Republican Party and, more importantly, the country. Every incumbent was reminded that the American people, not party establishments, hold the reins of government. Throughout our history, when the American people rise up and force change our country benefits. In our system, the wisdom of many individual voters still outweighs the wisdom of a few,” Dr. Coburn said.

“Many factors contributed to these election results. The American people obviously are concerned about the conduct of the war in Iraq. Members of both parties have an obligation to work together to offer creative and constructive solutions that will help our troops accomplish their mission.

“The overriding theme of this election, however, is that voters are more interested in changing the culture in Washington than changing course in Washington, D.C. This election was not a rejection of conservative principles per se, but a rejection of corrupt, complacent and incompetent government.

“A recent CNN poll found that 54 percent of Americans believe

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government is doing too much while only 37 percent want government to do more. The results of this election reflect that attitude. Among the Republicans who lost their re-election bids a surprising number were political moderates who advocated a more activist government. Several Republican members of the appropriations committees, which have been on a spending binge, also were not re-elected. On the other hand, the two Republican senators who pulled off the most impressive victories were unapologetic conservatives, Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and John Ensign (R-NV). It is also notable that the Democrats who won or who ran competitive races sounded more like Ronald Reagan than Lyndon Johnson.

“This election does not show that voters have abandoned their belief in limited government; it shows that the Republican Party has abandoned them. In fact, these results represent the total failure of big government Republicanism.

“The Republican Party now has an opportunity to rediscover its identity as a party for limited government, free enterprise and individual responsibility. Most Americans still believe in these ideals, which reflect not merely the spirit of 1994 or the Reagan Revolution, but the vision of our founders. If Republicans present real ideas and solutions based on these principles we will do well in the future.

“What Republicans cannot continue to do, however, is more of the same. Our short-term, politically-expedient, bread and circus governing philosophy has failed. Iraq is an important issue in the minds of voters but it is not the only issue. Our majority was severely weakened by a long series of decisions that pre-date the public’s current concern about Iraq.

“Republicans oversaw a seven-fold increase in pork projects since 1998. Republicans increased domestic spending by nearly 50 percent since 2001, increased the national debt to \$9 trillion, passed a reckless Medicare expansion bill and neglected our oversight responsibilities. While some of these decisions may have helped secure specific seats in the short-term the totality of our excess did not secure our majority, but destroy it.

“There should now be less doubt about whether overspending and pork projects are bad policy and bad politics. This year, in particular, pork did not save our vulnerable incumbents but helped drag them down. The challenges facing our country are too great and complex for members of Congress and their staff to continue to be distracted by endless earmarking.




“Some have said that Republicans and Democrats now need to govern

from the middle. I disagree. We do not need to govern from the center as much as we need to govern from conscience. When politicians have the courage to argue their convictions and lose their political lives in an honest battle of ideas the best policies will prevail.

“The American people do want civility but they also want real debate. Civility does not mean an absence of conflict, but a return of honor and dignity in our politics. The great debates in American history like the Lincoln-Douglas debates or the debates about the Constitution were intensely confrontational, but no one feels soiled after reading them. That same quality of debate is possible today if politicians put their country first and party second. The problems facing our country are too great to not have these debates. Voters are bored and tired of partisan role playing in Washington. The answers to securing Iraq, winning the War on Terror, and preventing the impending bankruptcies of Medicare and Social Security will not be discovered by portraying the other party as the focus of evil and corruption. If we don't debate these issues with honor and agree on solutions we will be the first generation of leaders that left the next generation worse off, and we will see our relative power in the world diminish.

“One of the great paradoxes in politics is that governing to maintain power is the surest way to lose it. Republicans have the ideas to solve our greatest challenges. If we focus on ideas, our majority status will take care of itself,” Dr. Coburn said.

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