

LaTourette syndrome

Across the country, at least in congressional districts that still remain competitive, Republican incumbents are running scared. And well they should. Most of them have spent the past six years aiding and abetting an executive branch that has subordinated the welfare of the nation to its own lust for power.

Now, as that executive branch is being exposed on a daily basis by revelations of incompetence and malfeasance, of violations of the national trust, these congressional party loyalists want us to forget about their complicity in the sorry state of affairs that they helped to create.

That's why I was stunned to see the Beacon Journal's endorsement of Steven LaTourette, who represents Ohio's 14th Congressional District. As your Sept. 25 editorial ("For the U.S. House") correctly noted, "he is essentially a loyal Republican," a fact that effectively contradicts a subsequent observation that "his presence (in Congress) adds to the possibility of overcoming arch partisanship."

That, by inference, suggests that Democrats are responsible for the "arch partisanship" that has come to characterize our national politics. No honest observer can believe such a charge, when it is a fact that Democrats in Congress have been effectively excluded from the legislative process for the past several years.

As a loyal Republican, LaTourette has done nothing to date to indicate he has any interest in challenging the Republican leadership's exclusionary use of power. Most egregious of the kudos you extend to him, however, is the statement regarding his "independence" on matters such as the minimum wage. You conveniently forgot to point out that the minimum-wage legislation he supported was a Republican alternative, a less-than-subtle piece of legislative extortion in which the poorest of our citizens would be thrown a bone as long as the wealthiest were relieved of the "onerous" burden of the estate tax. That's some independence.

LaTourette's Democratic opponent is Lew Katz, by your own admission a competent and knowledgeable individual. His exit plan for Iraq indicates that he has given a lot of thought to the single most pressing issue facing the nation today. Where is LaTourette's plan? Why have we heard nothing from him on this subject?

No, Steven LaTourette, "loyal Republican," is part of the problem, not the solution. The voters in the 14th Congressional District should end his career and elect Lew Katz.

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