



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 31, 2015

Harry Reid's Liberal Legacy

In a video message [broadcast last Friday](#), Senator Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) announced in a surprise move that he would retire at the end of the 114th Congress, in 2016.

The 75-year-old senate minority leader explained, "I don't want to be a 42-year-old trying to become a designated hitter." Said a close friend, "He didn't want to be the old senile guy in the Senate." In other words, he wants to go out at the top of his game: a deceitful, manipulative, determined self-serving prototypical corruptocrat who reminds John Ralston, the "dean" of Nevada political reporters, of Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*.



And Reid has earned such appellations, having built an extensive and powerful network of associations and coat-riders ever since serving as lieutenant governor in a state that is 90-percent owned by the federal government. Reid has also earned, from 1999 to 2014, a [cumulative score of 16 percent](#) on *The New American's* Freedom Index.

Primarily responsible to buying off resistance to ObamaCare, including offering bribes later described as the Cornhusker Kickback and the Louisiana Purchase, Reid's influence in passing the bill in the Senate has caused some to remark that the socialized medicine monstrosity ought to be called "ReidCare" instead.

After nearly 30 years in the Senate and a decade as majority leader before being relegated to minority status in the November elections, Reid learned the ropes, the tricks, and the tools of the trade. And when the rules didn't suit him, he simply changed them. To wit, the "nuclear option," which reduced opportunities for Republicans to filibuster during confirmation hearings for executive branch appointees, allowed for the approval of numerous federal judges that would otherwise never been confirmed.

Reid's list of successful expansions of government overlapped with his ability to build his own personal wealth. While helping with the passage of the \$787 billion stimulus package in 2009, he made sure to earmark much of it for the benefit of himself, his family, and his friends.

In 1998 Reid joined his partner Jay Brown in investing some \$400,000 in real estate just outside Las Vegas. In 2004 the property just happened to be rezoned for a shopping center and Reid cashed out with \$1.1 million.

In 2002 Reid put \$10,000 into an investment fund (run by his good friend Clair Haycock) that bought some land in Bullhead City, Arizona, paying just 10 percent of market value, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Reid earmarked \$18 million of federal funds to build a bridge connecting Bullhead City with Laughlin, Nevada. Reid now carries that \$10,000 investment on his financials at "between



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\$250,000 and \$500,000.”

In 2007 Reid met with another close friend, one Harvey Whittemore, who promised he would raise \$150,000 for Reid’s upcoming reelection campaign. When Whittemore was charged with making campaign contributions in the name of another person, making excessive personal contributions, and lying to the FBI and the Federal Election Commission about the matter, he was convicted and sent to prison for two years and fined \$100,000. When Reid’s office was notified of the conviction, Reid — who earlier had written him a note of thanks for his efforts — told reporters that neither he nor his office had been “in contact” with Whittemore.

Judicial Watch has had Reid on its “Ten Most Wanted Corrupt Politicians” list for years, commenting in 2012 on Reid’s son Rory’s assistance to China’s ENN Engergy Group in their successful attempt to buy some Nevada property for \$4.5 million that at the time appraised at between \$29.6 million and \$38.6 million.

In the summer of 2012 Reid claimed in an interview with the Huffington Post that he had received information from an unidentified source at Bain Capital that Mitt Romney had not paid income taxes for ten years. A few days later he repeated the accusation on the Senate floor, using his profile as majority leader to his advantage. Politifact.com’s “Truth-O-Meter” rated Reid’s accusation as “Pants on Fire!” but the damage to Romney’s reputation had been done.

Reid has repeatedly attacked the Koch brothers, calling them “un-American” and accusing them of trying to “buy America”:

It’s too bad that they are trying to buy America. And it’s time that the American people spoke out about this terrible dishonesty of these two brothers, who are about as un-American as anyone that I can imagine.

Reid’s hypocrisy beggars description. He strongly criticized the *Citizens United* decision by the Supreme Court, which held that the First Amendment prohibits the federal government from restricting independent political expenditures by corporations. Yet immediately following that decision, Reid, ever the pragmatist, set up his own political action committee, accepting funds from corporations interested in supporting Reid and his agenda.

The list goes on.

Perhaps Reid’s legacy is best expressed by the following comment from libertarian economist Donald Boudreaux:

It is the rare politician, of whatever party, who reliably puts principle above personal interest. As a rule, politicians are untrustworthy, duplicitous and cowardly; they are people who have the unusually powerful craving for power and fame; and the successful among them typically possess an unusual talent for camouflaging their craving for power and fame as a saintly calling to “serve the people.”

While still vertical and taking nourishment, Reid has promised to extend and expand his legacy. After all, he said, “I understand this place. I have quite a bit of power as Minority Leader.” To his detractors Reid warned, “Don’t be too elated. I am going to be here for twenty-two months, and you know what I’m going to be doing? The same thing I’ve done ever since I first came to the Senate.”

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