



## Judd Gregg and Bipartisanship

New Hampshire's Democratic governor, meanwhile, has agreed to appoint a yet unnamed Republican to replace Gregg for the next two years, despite the fact that another Democrat could give the party a filibuster-proof majority, depending on the outcome of the legal battle between Norm Coleman and Al Franken over last November's Senate election in Minnesota. Gregg had made it clear that he would not leave the Senate if his departure would further diminish the Republican minority.



But as is often the case, there is less to this exercise in "bipartisanship" than meets the eye. While Obama has praised Gregg for his "strict fiscal discipline," the New Hampshire senator has often supported the kind of "big government" programs that Republicans routinely denounce on the campaign trail and vote for when in office. And Lynch is not likely to appoint a Republican inclined to filibuster against any part of the Obama agenda.

New Hampshire has a plentiful supply of "moderate" Republicans, often called RINO's (Republicans In Name Only) by their more conservative brethren. Not a few were "Republicans for Lynch" in the governor's three successful election campaigns. The governor will no doubt find within that group a respectable Republican to hold down the seat for the next two years and then retire, leaving the seat open for the 2010 election.

Gregg has, indeed, shown enough fiscal discipline to win a number of "Taxpayer Hero" and "Golden Bulldog" awards from taxpayer and "watchdog" organizations during his 16 years in the Senate. But when the watchdogs weren't watching, he "brought home the bacon" in sufficient quantity to have two university buildings named after him (Gregg Hall at the University of New Hampshire and the Judd Gregg Meteorological Institute at Plymouth State University) and to obtain federal funds for the creation of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College. The ranking Republican and former chairman of the Senate Budget Committee and a member of the Appropriations Committee, Gregg played a key role in passing the \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program last fall and was the leading Republican negotiator in getting the last \$350 billion reauthorized in the new Congress.

In a TV interview, Gregg characterized the purchase of shares in the failing financial institutions as "an investment by the taxpayers" that will be paid back with interest when the economy recovers. Even before his nomination to the cabinet post, Gregg appeared to be on board with Obama's \$819 billion economic stimulus package, though he differed on some of the details. "I'll probably vote for it, but I'll



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on February 3, 2009

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try to change it first," he told the New Hampshire *Union Leader*.

Despite the high cost to the states of illegal immigration in welfare, healthcare, and education, Gregg supported Sen. John McCain's "guest worker" and "pathway to citizenship" immigration reform bill that critics called amnesty for those who entered the country illegally. More importantly, Gregg was cosponsor with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of the No Child Left Behind Act that was the centerpiece of President Bush's domestic agenda. The law, with its testing requirements and other mandates, is an unprecedented extension of federal involvement in elementary and secondary education, an activity for which the Constitution gives no authority to the federal government. Funded at \$17.4 billion when it passed in 2001, No Child Left Behind had grown to a \$24.4 billion program by 2007. The Department of Education, meanwhile, had ballooned from \$42.2 billion to \$54.4 billion during the same time period.

The program highlights a remarkable reversal of Republican policy since 1980, when the Republican Party nominated conservative icon Ronald Reagan for president and adopted a platform calling for the elimination of the federal departments of Energy and Education, the two cabinet-level departments created during the Carter administration. During the Reagan years, Republicans could blame congressional Democrats for blocking efforts to eliminate unnecessary programs and give the country a smaller and less costly government. But in 1996, after winning control of both Houses of Congress, Republicans flexed their rhetorical muscles and added Commerce and Housing and Urban Development to the list of departments to be eliminated. The GOP continued to control Congress for the next 10 years, six of them under a Republican president while the departments slated for extinction somehow managed to survive and prosper.

Now we will have one of the authors of the No Child Left Behind Act as head of the Commerce Department, where the man often described as a "flinty fiscal conservative" can help sell his fellow Republicans on Obama's plans for increased "investments" in the department's myriad programs of grants and subsidies to corporations large and small. And the governor of New Hampshire, who last year signed one bill repealing the state's parental notification law and another establishing civil unions for same sex couples, will likely appoint to the U.S. Senate a "moderate" Republican who supports the Democrats' "pro-choice" and "gay rights" agenda.

New Hampshire and the nation will somehow endure the blessings of bipartisanship.



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