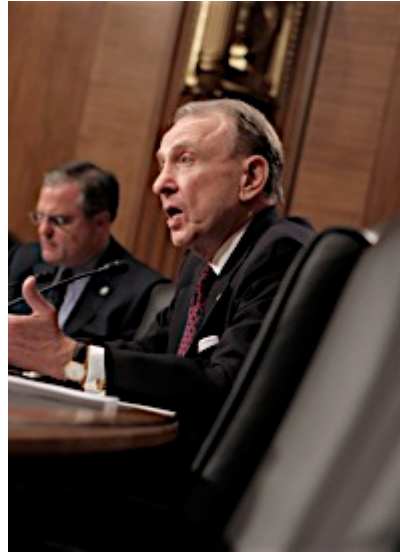




Specter Defects to Democrats

[The move is seen by political pundits and just about everyone else as being a politically expedient one.](#) Specter wants to be reelected in 2010, and will need Democratic backing to win. His Republican opponent in the last election Pat Toomey had a pretty good showing, probably making Specter quite nervous about the next election. One poll shows that he is already trailing 15 points behind Toomey for a next run-off.



Constituents also had been voicing their displeasure with Specter about his vote on the stimulus package, which he has defended as being necessary “to lessen the risk of a far more serious recession than we are now experiencing,” standard administration rhetoric.

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The move brings the Obama administration and the Democrats closer to the much-coveted 60-vote majority, which could eliminate any Republican filibustering in the Senate so perhaps there is more to the move than meets the eye.

For his part, Specter, who is described by Democrats as a moderate Republican, is saying that the Republican Party has moved so far to the right — a claim hotly contended by many — that he is the one who has been abandoned: “I now find my political philosophy more in line with Democrats than Republicans.” It is quite easy to ascertain from Specter’s voting record, however, that he was no more a Republican than he was a Libertarian. At least, he was not a traditional Republican.

But with Steve Schmidt’s (he ran John McCain’s campaign) comment suggesting the Republican Party needs to have a more open-arms policy, and be more welcoming of gays and immigrants (meaning illegal immigrants), this could hardly be the real issue behind Specter’s defection.

[Pennsylvania’s Gov. Ed Rendell told a cable channel interviewer](#) that he, Sen. Bob Casey, (D-Penn.), and Vice-president Joe Biden had been lobbying Specter to switch parties. And with the [president’s phone call to Specter this morning](#), giving Specter his “full support” and assurances that the president was “thrilled to have” Specter, the political machine surely must get some of the credit for Specter’s switch.

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