

me how much he liked my necktie. He told me he was trained as an economist, and he quickly found that he could maximize his utility by working as a wrestler instead of an economist. "My Dad's an ob-gyn, and I make more than he does, working twenty minutes a night."

"On the other hand, you have to travel," I said.

"True, and I also have to spend about four hours a day in the gym," he added.

I like it a lot. An economist turned wrestler. This is even better than a Las Vegas publicist/columnist turned economist.

In London, I had to transfer from Terminal One to Terminal Four, a distance of six miles by ancient bus, to get to the International Building. Then I shopped, ate delicious smoked salmon, and hung out at the Concorde Lounge. London to Washington, D.C., in three-and-a-half hours. I liked it a lot. I imagined the glamorous fellow travelers, more cultured than Alger Hiss, the movie stars, the plutocrats . . .

The reality was somewhat different. The Concorde, as everyone knows, has a small, cramped cabin, which was just fine. But it also had a huge, Li'l Abner-type hillbilly in coveralls sitting in front of me. (What's he doing here?) There was also a screaming little girl across the row. (How can her parents afford it?)

The food service was abysmal. The worst coach food in America is better than what we got on the Concorde. Boiled, tasteless chicken. The flight attendants were almost comically rude. A male attendant smashed his cart into my elbow and then laughed. A female attendant wouldn't speak to me or give me dessert after I caught her snitching my souvenir Concorde briefcase and asked for it back. Then, the male flight attendant just dropped my souvenir pen on my lap while I was sleeping, laughed again, and went on his way. The plane ran out of towels, and was so hot that Pippen in front of me took off his shirt and sat in his undershirt for the last two hours. On landing, it got so hot that the crew had to open the catering door so we could breathe.

All in all, British Air has some work to do on this airplane. Maybe the craft can't be fixed, but it should be back to the drawing board for the staff. I wonder if I can sue . . . □



## What to Filibuster Next?

by Grover G. Norquist

Republican leader Bob Dole's successful defense of the taxpayers against President Clinton's \$16.5 billion stimulus package has convinced congressional Republicans, moderate Democrats, the business community, and the American people that the tax-and-spend Blitzkrieg that appeared unstoppable after Clinton's State of the Union speech can be counterattacked. Before Dole kept forty-three Republicans together to filibuster for twenty-three days, the conventional wisdom in Washington was that the Clinton plan was certain to pass in its entirety. The Democrats maintained strong majorities in the House and Senate and they had a congressional leadership willing to demand and enforce party unity.

True, Clinton had won only 43 percent of the national electorate, but the national media beat the drum of "mandate" and spoke dreamily of a "return to Camelot." Even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, for more than a decade the stalwart defender of Reaganomics, embraced Clinton and abandoned its traditional "no tax hike" position.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> See Daniel Wattenberg's "Clinton's Echo Chamber" in last month's *TAS*. After Wattenberg's article went to press, National Empowerment Television, a fledgling fifth network with programming produced by the Free Congress Foundation and chaired by William Bennett, aired a satellite show on the Chamber sellout, in the course of which Chamber Foundation President Bob Kriebel and board member Richard Rahn resigned. The Chamber has since cautiously begun to oppose parts of the Clinton tax hike.

*Grover G. Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.*

Republican filibuster stopped Clinton's momentum, forcing a detour and even a retreat. Democratic dissenters who criticized the spending package have been rewarded with popular support in the press.

Three factors came together to make the filibuster succeed. First, as Texas Senator Phil Gramm noted, it allowed Republicans to recapture the issue on which they built their electoral successes—opposition to taxes and spending. Even the so-called Republican moderates in the Senate, such as Rhode Island's John Chafee, Vermont's Jim Jeffords, Minnesota's David Durenberger, and Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter, find unadulterated pork-barrel deficit spending offensive.

Second, Dole kept the party together through constant consultation with the Republican Conference, going back to members whenever the White House shifted its position. Dole was helped by a suggestion from Senator John Warner of Virginia that all forty-three Republicans send a letter to the president that put on record their opposition to a spending package that did not "pay for itself" through reduced spending elsewhere.

Finally, West Virginia Democrat Robert Byrd helped forge Republican unity by dealing Oregon's Mark Hatfield, the leading Republican "budget dove," out of the process; stiff-arming Republicans on the Appropriations Committee; and using his parliamentary skill to design an "amendment tree" that effectively prohibited any meaningful amendment from getting onto the floor of the Senate. (Byrd's technique is the functional equivalent of the "closed rule" that the House leadership regularly uses to

ram legislation through without requiring Democrats to vote on amendments that might not play well back in the district.)

**W**hen Congress broke for the Easter recess, in the middle of the filibuster, the White House was offering a reduced package of only \$10 billion, with \$6 billion to be paid for with promised reductions. In an effort to pressure Republican moderates, President Clinton flew to Pennsylvania to publicly attack Senator Arlen Specter for not supporting his wonderful spending program, which included pork for Pennsylvania. In concert with the White House, unions asked their staffs to lobby Specter and other, presumably wavering Senate moderates.

But in fact, the Easter recess sealed the spending plan's fate. Senator Dole's chief of staff Sheila Burke said that members returned strengthened in their opposition to the spending package. What happened? Over the Easter break, House Republicans, under the leadership of Tom DeLay of Texas, organized twenty-four simultaneous "town hall" meetings to discuss the deficit spending package. DeLay reported back to his fellow House members that at two of the town hall meetings, hecklers sent by the Democratic Party to speak out in favor of the spending package came up afterwards and apologized, chagrined at what they had learned about the pork included in the spending package. According to Gramm, who attended one of those town hall meetings in (surprise) New Hampshire with Rep. Bill Zeliff, "This plan was not defeated in the Senate, but in discussions around the kitchen tables of America."

When the Senate reconvened, the White House—going around the Senate Democrats—offered a vastly scaled down compromise of \$6.5 in spending, with \$2.5 billion to be paid with spending cuts elsewhere. Fortified by conversations with their constituents, not a single Republican would budge. The deficit-spending "stimulus" bill was dead.

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky points out that in a \$6 trillion economy with a \$300 billion deficit, the saving of \$16 billion in wasteful spending is not important substantively but very important symbolically. "With forty-three Republican senators," McConnell notes, "you may not have forty-one senators

together on a whole lot of filibusters, so it pays to pick your fights."

McConnell thinks Republicans should focus on blocking those initiatives of the Democrats that would change the rules to stack the deck against Republicans. Two power grabs are planned. First is the Striker Replacement bill, which would strengthen union leaders by making it illegal for struck employers to hire replacement workers. This reform would permanently shift the balance in favor of labor unions that today rake in an average of more than \$400 per union member each year.

Second is a "campaign finance reform" that would limit how much a candidate for representative or senator can spend. This hurts challengers, who, unlike incumbents, do not have a federal salary of \$140,000 to live on while they campaign full-time—not to mention a large staff. McConnell calls the proposal



"food stamps for politicians" and wonders if the American people really want to set up an entitlement program that grants politicians "vouchers for broadcast and newspaper ads, preferential mail and broadcast rates; and bonus money if one's opponent rejects the 'voluntary limits.'"

The Democratic reform package leaves intact the loophole allowing unlimited use of compulsory union dues for politics—despite workers' wishes and a Supreme Court decision to the contrary. (George Bush had issued an executive order putting some teeth in the court's decision; Bill Clinton quietly revoked it one January evening, after the White House communications office had announced that there would be no more news that day.)

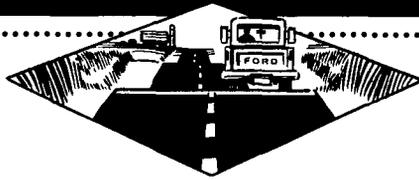
Because of the special rules on the budget, the filibuster weapon is denied to Dole and his party in the fight against the reconciliation bill—Clinton's general spending and tax increase program. To

defeat the general tax package, Senate Republicans will try first to strip out the energy (Btu) tax and the tax on Social Security. The loss of revenue (\$102 billion) would send Clinton back to the drawing board. Should both taxes survive amendment efforts, the Republican strategy will need fifty-one votes to kill the whole bill. While there are a couple of possibilities among Democrats, the chances of finding seven defectors to go with the forty-four Republicans (optimistically counting Kay Bailey Hutchison as the new senator from Texas) aren't good.

On the other hand, the filibuster can be applied to Hillary Clinton's attempt to nationalize the 14 percent of the economy that comprises the health-care industry. Senator Gramm suggests that the Republicans could lay out a set of principles for health-care reform that any proposal would have to meet. These might include requirements that citizens maintain their right to choose their own hospital and doctor and that taxes not be raised. Failure to meet those principles would then engender a filibuster—one that might well be joined by moderate Democrats.

**T**he April filibuster had benefits beyond encouraging future filibusters. As Newt Gingrich points out, "It forced President Clinton onto national television virtually every night to personally be seen lobbying for more spending instead of deficit reduction." This was a torpedo into Clinton campaign strategist James Carville's goal of wooing Perot-voting deficit hawks to the Democratic fold. The publicity given the budget proposal of Ohio Republican John Kasich, which would have cut \$430 billion over five years without raising taxes, made the Clinton package look amateurish. The DeLay-sponsored town hall meetings on April 17 were a forum for senators as well as House members and will be repeated on June 19, in a format focusing on the entire Clinton package. A Senate staffer calculates that there have been more Republican House/Senate leadership meetings this year than in the past ten years. Gingrich calls the House-Senate cooperation "the best I have seen."

Finally, the Dole-led filibuster was a cheerful reminder that good policy is good politics. The nation seems well pleased with Dole's more aggressive leadership—and we're all at least \$16 billion less poor. □



## The Hate State

by Dave Shiflett

Denver

When the Colorado Rockies opened their first homestand at Mile High Stadium on April 9 (Good Friday, as was pointed out with varying degrees of horror and glee), President Bill Clinton was absent. Many had hoped that Bill, known in baseball circles as "Nookie Dog," would throw out the historic first pitch—picture him on the mound, scanning the stands for any sets of uncrossed legs before letting go a fastball—but according to *Rocky Mountain News* society columnist Bill Husted, the president may have backed out in order to keep solidarity with gay activists, who called for a tourist and business boycott of Colorado after state voters approved Amendment 2 last November, which bans laws giving protected status to homosexuals.

This sounds like the discreet sort of warfare Bill might volunteer for; if so, he joins other prominent Americans who have sworn not to set foot in the Hate State (as Colorado is now known in some circles) until the initiative is repealed. Among them: James Taylor, Whoopi Goldberg, Barbra Streisand, the Kennedy family (who skied in Utah over Christmas to show their willingness to sacrifice), and the city governments of San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Atlanta (where homosexual and heterosexual sodomy can still get you jailed).

Various ACLU chapters have also taken the no-hate pledge, along with several convention groups, including the big-spending National Organization for Women. Martina Navratilova, the famous lesbian tennis player, Aspen resident, and woman of a hard, biker sort of beauty, threatened to move. A speaking

*Dave Shiflett is deputy editorial page editor of the Rocky Mountain News and TAS's Rocky Mountain editor.*

invitation to Connie Chung was withdrawn after a local network rep said he could not, in good conscience, ask this most influential of personages to appear in Colorado and thus seem to take sides in the debate. The *Denver Post* reported that columnist Anna Quindlen is also avoiding the state, though her column continues to be distributed in Colorado copies of the *New York Times*, which editorially endorsed the boycott. Many Coloradans await word on how former Colorado resident Roseanne Barr will



react, but she is still at lunch and hasn't had time to respond.

That's a lot of high-profile support, and boycott organizers promised at the outset that they had a lot more friends out there who could, and would, do maximum damage to the state's economy. Ten percent of the population is homosexual, we were reminded: "your brothers, your sisters, your mailman," etc., etc. The winter snows were falling on the high country slopes even as the votes were counted, but economic doom was rolling our way.

Or so we were told. But things haven't turned out that way. Not even close.

No one saw this drama coming, and Colorado's story may be instructive for the nation at large, especially those states preparing to float similar amendments (at this writing such measures are being drawn up in California, Idaho, Washington, Michigan, Florida, and Maine). There is a price to pay for such legislation, though many probably won't consider it prohibitive.

Colorado's political and media elite had been nearly uniform in opposing A2, and pre-election polls showed that most voters would vote against it as well. But once inside the polling booth, voters made sure no one was peeking through the curtain and then voted yes by 53-47 percent.

The bowels of outrage immediately broke loose. On election night gay activists took over the Democratic Party's victory celebration in downtown Denver, putting a damper on the party's first presidential win in Colorado since LBJ. The front page of the post-election morning paper carried a picture of Gov. Roy Romer at a hastily called anti-Amendment 2 rally at the state capitol: Roy held a protest sign. Pat Schroeder, who represents Denver, published a letter in the *Denver Post* promising to overcome the vote at the federal level. A suicide was blamed on the amendment's passage while activists reported an upsurge in anti-gay violence, which was duly noted in the *New York Times's* call for a boycott. Police officials pointed out that all of the gays who had been murdered in 1992 may have been killed by other gays, but that information didn't seem to matter.

The most significant instrument of repeal, of course, was to be a national boycott of Colorado, which would cause natives to reconsider their votes and also drive home the point that such initiatives would be ruinous to any state stupid enough to follow suit. A campaign to