

Black Caucus Chair On Rangel: Don't Presume Guilt

BY LARRY MARGASAK
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The leader of the Congressional Black Caucus warned fellow Democrats on Monday against rushing to judgment and pressuring New York Democrat Charles Rangel to admit ethical misdeeds.

Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., said members of both parties should not presume Rangel's guilt. However, her message is aimed at Democrats who may want Rangel to admit to the allegations against him to avoid an election-season ethics trial.

The strong statement makes it unlikely that the House Democratic leadership would act against Rangel and risk losing support of the 42-member Black Caucus for legislative initiatives. A House investigative panel last

week announced that it was charging Rangel with unspecified violations of standards of conduct. The charges will be publicly read Thursday at the first proceeding of a separate panel of four Democrats and four Republicans. The eight lawmakers will judge whether the allegations can be proved by clear and convincing evidence.

Lee said in a written statement: "Any rush to judgment to short-circuit the ongoing review of Congressman Rangel by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct will do a disservice to the well-established processes of the House of Representatives. Attempts by Republicans and Democrats to presume guilt before the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct completes its review of the facts, which are only known to them and Congressman Rangel, violates the core American prin-

ciple of the presumption of innocence." Rangel is the former chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. He stepped down from the post last March after the ethics committee found he should have known that corporations paid for two trips to Caribbean conferences.

He has been the congressman representing Harlem for some 40 years, but he has opposition in his mid-September primary.

Several Democrats have returned money Rangel raised for them. Democrats are concerned about an ethics trial while they are campaigning for re-election and while the party faces a serious Republican challenge to the Democratic majority.

On Friday a member of the Black Caucus, Rep. Chaka Fattah, D-Pa., compared a rush to judgment on Rangel

with the Democrats' embarrassment over the forced resignation of an Agriculture Department employee, Shirley Sherrod.

The resignation followed a misleading video posted by a conservative blogger, in which Sherrod said she didn't initially give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. President Barack Obama and others in the administration have since apologized, saying they didn't realize the video took her remarks out of context.

"Haven't we learned anything this week about jumping to conclusions? The railroading of Shirley Sherrod at USDA should be a lesson learned about hasty judgment and action based on inadequate, even false, information," Fattah said. "That lesson must be applied to current case of Congressman Charlie Rangel."

People familiar with the allegations against Rangel, who cannot be named because the allegations are not yet public, said some of the charges are related to:

—Rangel's use of official stationery to raise money for the Charles B. Rangel Center for Public Service at City College of New York.

—His use of four rent-subsidized apartment units in New York City.

—Rangel's failure to report income as required on his annual financial disclosure forms. The committee had investigated his failure to report income from the lawmaker's rental unit at the Punta Cana Yacht Club in the Dominican Republic. Rangel also belatedly disclosed hundreds of thousands of dollars in investment assets.

—His failure to pay taxes on all his income from the resort unit.

Obama Calls On Senate To Pass Campaign Money Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is imploring Republican senators to allow a vote on new campaign finance disclosure requirements, warning them not to resort to political delaying tactics that would block the legislation.

Speaking in the Rose Garden on Monday, Obama said that by standing in the way of the bill, Republicans would be giving special interest groups increased sway in Washington.

"Corporate lobbyists will be able to tell members of Congress, if they don't vote the right way, they will face an onslaught of negative ads in their next campaign," Obama said. "And all too often, no one will actually know who's behind those ads."

The bill would impose new donor and contribution disclosure requirements on nearly all organizations that air political ads independently of candidates or the political parties. The legislation would require the sponsor of the ad to appear in it and take responsibility for it. Obama argued that the bill would also reduce foreign influence over American elections.

"You'd think that making these reforms would be a matter of common sense, particularly since they primarily involve just making sure that folks who are financing these ads are disclosed, so that the American people can make up their own minds," Obama said. "Nobody is saying you can't run the ads; just make sure the people know who in fact is behind financing the ads."

The House narrowly passed a similar bill last month. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., wants to begin debate on the bill Tuesday, but he faces Republican delaying tactics.

The Senate bill, proposed by Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., removes from the House bill an exemption for transfers between a national organization and its state affiliates and between separate organizations, provisions aimed at helping unions.

However, the bill preserves a contentious House exemption for large organizations such as the National Rifle Association and the AARP. It also adds a requirement that campaign money disclosures by Senate candidates be filed electronically, as they are by House and presidential candidates.

Companies with federal contracts worth more than \$10 million would also be banned from independent political advertising.

Democrats need at least one Republican to support the measure in order to get the 60 votes needed to overcome GOP procedural delays, but their chances of doing so are slim.

So far, not one Senate Republican has swung behind the measure, which is strongly opposed by the party's leadership. Nor is it clear that all 59 Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents will support the bill.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said in a statement Monday that the bill is designed to "protect unpopular Democrat politicians by silencing their critics and exempting their campaign supporters from an all out attack on the First Amendment."

Obama: Things Could Be Worse

BY ERICA WERNER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama, who rocketed to the White House promising "change you can believe in," is now telling voters they shouldn't change a thing.

His message for the fall elections, which are looking ominous for his Democrats, is that Republicans caused the nation's economic troubles, but he and the Democrats are starting to fix them. So stick with the Democrats and don't go back to the GOP.

"This is a choice between the policies that led us into the mess or the policies that are leading out of the mess," Obama said recently in Las Vegas.

Trouble is, it's a tough sell to voters who've seen little progress.

Unemployment is stuck near double digits and polls show many voters have decided Obama's policies are to blame, not his predecessor's.

Obama often frames the argument by saying that Republicans had their chance to drive, then drove the car into a ditch and shouldn't get the keys back. But voters may be concluding that Democrats, who control the White House and both chambers of Congress, have had their

chance at the wheel, too, and haven't gotten very far.

"From the American public's point of view, the people in charge at this point are the people who own the problem," said Andrew Kohut, head of the non-partisan Pew Research Center.

Obama's challenge for the next four months is to turn that perception around.

So he's traveled, from Buffalo, N.Y., to San Francisco, reminding voters of the mess he faced when he took office: a shrinking economy, lost jobs, weak markets, an economic crisis becoming international in scope.

Now, even though unemployment hasn't dropped to the 8 percent level the administration once projected, the economy is gradually picking up and adding jobs, the president says. Putting Republicans in power, he contends, would reverse the momentum.

But the White House knows it can't just be about blaming George W. Bush, though the former president's enduring unpopularity helps Obama's case.

Obama must try to take it a step further and get voters to view Republicans now running for office as little more than extensions of Bush who would advance the ex-president's same policies.

"This isn't about relitigating

history," said Obama senior adviser David Axelrod. "This is about history repeating itself."

Will the strategy work in an election year roiling with anti-incumbent sentiment? That's not yet clear, though it hasn't appeared to boost Democrats' standing much so far. Midterm elections typically deal a drubbing to the president's party anyway, and for Democrats it could mean losing control of the House.

Republicans say they intend to keep the focus on Obama's policies, which they cast as deficit-busting, big-government boondoggles. "Democrats can attempt to spin it any way they want, but unfortunately for them this election is going to be a referendum on the president and his party's failed economic policies," said Rep. Pete Sessions, R-Texas, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee.

But Obama's pickings were slim when it came to campaign themes.

The narrative that worked so well when Obama was a presidential candidate offering himself as a transformational figure who could change Washington is no longer at his disposal. He can hardly claim to have delivered on that promise because he hasn't changed Washington, at least not much, as he's acknowledged.

Langevin Presides Over House

BY ANDREW MIGA
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Rep. Jim Langevin, who is paralyzed from the chest down, presided over the House for the first time on Monday to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Rhode Island Democrat, who in 2000 was the first quadriplegic elected to the House, used a newly installed mechanical lift system to gain access to the speaker's podium in his motorized wheelchair.

Langevin, 46, has used a wheelchair since being paralyzed in a shooting accident as a

teen. The Disabilities Act opened access to public places and to employment for people with physical and mental handicaps.

Langevin said his temporary turn wielding the gavel marks an important step for people with disabilities and he hopes it inspires others.

"What a powerful symbol of inclusion and opportunity for anyone who wants to serve in the United States Congress," he said in a telephone interview with the Associated Press on Monday. Congress has become increasingly accessible in the past decade for people with disabilities, he added.

Langevin was paralyzed as a

16-year-old Boy Scout cadet working with police in Warwick, R.I. He was in a locker room watching officers examine a gun they thought was unloaded, when the weapon accidentally fired. A bullet ricocheted off a metal locker and severed Langevin's spinal cord.

The lawmaker recalled lying in a hospital bed after the shooting and wondering what his life would be like from then on.

"I know the inspiration I took from other people and how they overcame their challenges," said Langevin, a leading advocate in Congress for people with disabilities.

House To Improve Internet Access For Disabled

BY JIM ABRAMS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House on Monday celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act by approving legislation assuring that the disabled have full access to the Internet and television.

"The ADA mandated physical ramps into buildings," said Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., sponsor of the bill. "Today, individuals with disabilities need online ramps to the Internet so they can get to the Web from wherever they happen to be."

The bill, which passed 348-23 and now moves to the Senate, takes such steps as making it easier for the blind to access the Internet from smart phones, providing deaf people with the ability to watch new TV programs online with captions included, and requiring that telecom equipment used to make calls over the Internet be compatible with hearing aids.

The measure also: —Gives the blind a fuller TV experience through audible descriptions of on-screen action.

—Makes cable TV program guides and selection menus accessible to people with vision loss.

—Mandates that remote controls have buttons or similar devices to easily access the closed captioning on broadcast and pay TV.

—Provides financial support to help the low-income disabled buy accessible Internet technology.

The legislation does not

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RIVERBOAT DAYS 2010 PARADE ENTRY

Entries are now being accepted for the 2010 Riverboat Days Parade, to be held on August 21st. The parade starts at 9:30 AM. Advance registration is required. Deadline August 2, 2010. The parade size may be limited. Send registration to address listed below.

Parade Theme: "Riverboat Days - Hawaiian Style"

August 21, 2010

Name of Organization _____ Person to Contact _____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

Telephone Number _____ E-Mail _____

\$20 Fee Per Entry: (up to 5 vehicles in each unit per entry fee). **Late fee is \$40.00**

Please check one of the three divisions in which you want to register

Non-Profit/Service Group Commercial Vehicle

Check the type of your entry:

Band Animal Unit Political Float
 Cars Trucks Tractors Other Vehicle

Total Length of Entry: (Include length of towing vehicle) _____ feet long.

Also include the number of units or animals in your entry. _____

DO YOU WANT TO BE JUDGED FOR AN AWARD? YES _____ NO _____

Prizes awarded in the Non-Profit/Service Group: Cash Prizes: \$300, \$250, \$200, \$150, \$100
Trophies will be awarded in the Commercial (3); and vehicle unit divisions (3)

DESCRIPTION OF ENTRY/ORGANIZATION: **What would you like said about your entry?**
Description **must** accompany entry. Please limit description to 50 words.

The parade committee reserves the right to pull any unit from the parade.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO "RIVERBOAT DAYS PARADE" AND RETURN TO:
WAYNE & JOLENE WILLIAMSON, PARADE CO-CHAIRPERSONS
901 W. 3RD STREET, YANKTON, SD 57078
Questions - Phone: Wayne & Jolene Williamson: 605-665-8428
e-mail: wayne@wyn.midco.net

PLEASE RETURN BY AUGUST 2, 2010
ENTRIES POSTMARKED AFTER THIS DAY MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED!