

Richard Duffee's letter to Jim Himes (abridged):

July 9, 2008

Dear Mr. Himes,

On Saturday you asked me to specify what you would need to do to gain the support of the Green Party in the 4th district—that is, for me to withdraw from the 2008 campaign. There were two types of issues involved: 1) how you would compensate us for the loss of our labor in gaining a ballot line, so that we would be able to campaign in the future, and 2) positions we would feel you would need to adopt in order to warrant our support—and how you would need to express, implement, and guarantee those positions. The second is more important and more debatable than the first, having more imponderables and subtleties. I will deal with the smallest issues first, build up to the three largest ones on the basis the smaller ones create, then cursorily pass by 20 issues that, for political reasons, I regard as less essential or more negotiable though their potential benefits may be great.

What positions would we need to see you adopt to believe that our causes are better served by helping you win than they would be by continuing our campaign? I have three essential positions, that is, positions substantially shared by all four Connecticut Green candidates, positions that drive us to run for office because the Democratic Party as a whole so far does not advocate them. I will discuss those three first, then mention some other related positions, the holding of which I would take as evidence of shared interests and perceptions.

First, my own sine qua non is the impeachment and indictment of Bush and Cheney. They are ordinary criminals, war criminals, violators of their oaths of office, and enemies of the Constitution who have committed high crimes and misdemeanors if not treason. Congress is uniquely empowered to impeach and the Senate to try impeached officials. In their unique empowerment to protect the Constitution against its domestic enemies by these means, they uniquely protect the sovereignty of the people. This is not a matter that turns on popular perception, but on law. Whether or not voters say they are concerned about impeachment, they are entitled to a Congress that protects their sovereignty and the Constitution. I cannot bow out of a race leaving no candidate willing to take this position. I will not negotiate the principle of this position.

There may be some room for negotiation in what counts as implementing the principle. But I hold that the following, together, count as the necessary implementation, and would need to hear arguments for deletion of any of them:

- a) Arguing in public for impeachment and indictment—explaining the constitutional and legal grounds for both, and the need for both.
- b) Arguing in public that Shays is obligated to impeach and that he has not fulfilled his oath of office.
- c) Writing Pelosi and Conyers that they must drop their objections to impeachment.
- d) Writing Obama that, if he wins, as a part of his transition he must immediately prepare the Congress to impeach Bush and Cheney on the day the new Congress enters office: January 3, 2009.
- e) Publicly promising to co-sponsor bills of impeachment against both Bush and Cheney on January 3, 2009, and to demand immediate impeachment.
- f) Publicly proposing to incoming Democrats that bills of impeachment must be drawn up for January 3, 2009, and evidence amassed for them, so that the Judiciary Committee can vote to pass the charges on to the House by January 4, 2009.

- g) Working with incoming Democrats between the election and January 3, 2009, to accomplish each of the tasks above.
- h) Resolutely refusing to back down.

I have been publicly advocating impeachment since May, 2006. The majority of the people who work with me and for me agree with my understanding of the need for impeachment. If you do not take all possible legal steps towards impeachment, and I defer to you, I would be betraying them as well as myself, the Constitution, and the people of the country.

Second, I believe we have no right to treat other nations as part of our empire, or as part of a joint empire of the G-8. We pledge our allegiance to a Republic, not to an Empire. We have no obligation to serve in the military of an empire, to pay taxes to support the military needed to police an empire, to run the economic operations of an empire, or to guarantee investors the security of their profits in overseas investments. We should not be dependent on the rest of the world economically, but should produce what we need for ourselves rather than indirectly enslaving people in other countries to work at despicably low wages in order to magnify the profits of our richest citizens. We should not be forcing the devaluation of the currencies of poor countries through the Fed, the IMF, and the World Bank. We should shut down our 725+ military bases in 138+ countries and maintain no more than the military needed to defend our borders against aggression. We should observe strictly the terms of all treaties we have signed except military treaties like NATO, from which we should withdraw. We should dismantle our weapons of mass destruction. We should shut down the CIA and all other agencies that perform covert operations violating the sovereignty of other nations and the human rights of other peoples. Mercenaries like Blackwater should be outlawed. Our discrepancies of wealth being the result of our imperial activity, we should not allow our country to remain the single developed country with the greatest discrepancies of wealth—1% now own as much as 95% of us. Because there is a cyclical cause-and-effect relationship between extremes of wealth and the impulse to empire, we should make military profiteers relinquish the wealth they have acquired through cost-plus contracts, no-bid contracts, and other “welfare for the rich” practices Congress has allowed.

The abhorrent acts of the Bush presidency derive from its imperial nature, and it is imperial for the simple reason that it is designed to run an empire. Empire and Republic are inherently incompatible because empires are systems of slavery at a distance designed to profit the rulers of the imperial country at the expense of some degree of the sovereignty of the subordinate states. The subordinated states can thus be expected to rebel, and their rebellions can only be put down with secrecy, fraud, and violence. Republics, on the other hand, can only function with some degree of openness, tolerance, and honesty. We have given up our birthright—our right to openness, tolerance, and honesty—for the moral mess of potage that empire always is—vast wealth for a few and degradation, squalor, and helplessness for millions—and now billions.

Our imperial reach is so vast that it will take a great deal of legislation to withdraw to our borders and begin to resume our proper role as a nation among others. Tell me what legislation you will support toward the ends above and what you will not support. We will have to go back and forth several times to negotiate this goal. Not until we divest ourselves of our empire will our civil rights and liberties—or even our lives—again be secure. So tell me how you will shed this moral horror of empire. For starters you will need to convince me not only that you intend to vote to withdraw from Iraq immediately (not just 20,000 to 30,000 troops) but that you will vote to cut funding for the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, and that you will never approve funds for such a war of aggression again ever anywhere.

Third, my study of environmental law and science, and, in particular, my reading of George Monbiot and Jeremy Rifkin, have persuaded me that billions of us will die if we do not reduce our carbon emissions by 90% by 2030. If you do not believe this is necessary, tell me why. Tell me what legislation you will co-sponsor and what the goals and provisions of that legislation are.

There is a huge variety of bills that can improve the environment in various ways, but I do not believe the Democrats have so far faced the issues squarely. I do not believe Al Gore's recommendations will solve the problems he outlines and do not think he is free of the grip of monetary interests in Green projects. If you cannot convince me that your environmental positions are substantially better than Chris Shays', I'm not going to see environmental grounds to withdraw from the race.

Finally, I'll list some positions I will regard as substantial improvements on current law:

4) The Clinton legislation restricting the scope of the Legal Services Corporation should be repealed and funding should be increased to the level Canada has long had per qualifying person (i.e., 20 times ours as of 1988).

5) Single payer health coverage should be issued to all residents of the US. It is best to make it illegal for insurance companies to have anything to do with health coverage. Pharmaceutical companies should be nationalized because for multiple reasons they cannot meet the substantial terms of free market trade.

6) Consistent with the Declaration of Independence and as part of the second position above, the US should hold no territories as colonies or protectorates that have no voice in Congress. Territories like Puerto Rico and Guam should be placed under the auspices of the UN so that, after 5 to 10 years in which all sides have adequate time and resources to debate in public, free votes can be taken for independence or statehood, and for new constitutions.

7) Property tax should be eliminated as a basis for education and replaced with progressive income tax. Congress should explicitly overrule *San Antonio v. Rodriguez* and recognize education as a right under the Constitution. If necessary, this should be done by Constitutional Amendment. Mandates for performance that are not matched by funds should be declared illegal.

8) Taxation on corporations and individuals should return to the levels of the Kennedy Administration, if not to the levels of World War II.

9) Corporations should lose the protection of the Bill of Rights. Corporations are not persons, but artificial entities created for public as well as private purposes.

10) The Federal Reserve Bank should be abolished. Congress has no right to alienate its powers to a private corporation.

11) The IMF should be dismantled.

12) The World Bank should be drastically reformed—at least so that votes in it do not depend on amount of money invested—or be abolished.

13) The International Credit Union John Maynard Keynes originally proposed at Bretton Woods should be established.

14) The World Trade Organization should be abolished if it cannot be democratized.

15) Speculation in currency should be banned. Currency value should be set by purchasing power parity value.

16) The government should create a program modeled on the CCC to reduce energy consumption. It should, for the first time, implement the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act by employing all people who can work—at a minimum wage of \$15 an hour or better—to retrofit and re-insulate buildings, to create solar power, wind power, geothermal power, hydropower, and hydrogen power on an affordable basis for everyone by

issuing loans that can be paid off by reselling energy to grids. It should reduce monopolistic energy of all types to an absolute minimum while doing this.

17) In the interests of impoverished farmers everywhere, public funding of agribusinesses should be banned.

18) The Peace Corps should be increased in size at least 10-fold and devoted to providing potable drinking water, sanitation, minimally adequate food, shelter, education, and public health to everyone on earth who lacks it. Its links to the CIA and other investigative and covert agencies should be severed absolutely if the agencies themselves have not been scuttled—as 2 above recommends.

19) Guantanamo, the School of the Americas (under any name), and rendition should be shut down immediately. All people who have engaged in torture and given instruction in it should be identified and tried.

20) The right to unionize should be strictly enforced in all workplaces. Any person who gathers the complaints of workers should be protected before a union has been certified.

21) It should be illegal for a CEO's remuneration—in any and all forms, taken together—to be greater than ten times the remuneration of the least-paid employee. If a corporation wants to raise a CEO's pay, it should first have to raise the pay of the least-paid by at least 10%.

22) Ideally, for the US to begin to have the kind of social legislation Europe has—and which is clearly responsible for the fact that Europe is much healthier and more educated than we are—we should have a parliamentary system with proportional representation so that we no longer need to suffer the injuries of our anti-democratic “winner take all” system. Do you favor conversion to a parliamentary system with proportional representation?

23) Finally, the best voting method appears to be range voting, but even instant runoff voting eliminates the “spoiler issue.” The Vermont legislature has voted for instant runoff voting in national races. Why not the Connecticut legislature? As a Congressman, you would have the moral clout to exert a lot of pressure on the Democratic Party in Connecticut to back either range voting or instant runoff voting. If you loudly and clearly proclaim that third parties have a right to be freed of the onus of being spoilers, we will likely believe you are in good faith in saying that it is only this election you want us to back out of. If you don't, we will be able to say that if we are perceived as spoilers, that is your will, or the Democratic Party's, not ours.

I suppose I could do a better job of this letter, but I think the essentials are here. On Saturday I mentioned that I sent you a letter in early January that you never responded to. That letter explains why I am left the Democratic Party. It may provide some background to this letter and may help you understand why I think it essential to maintain the Green Party as an independent party. Please be assured that I am not saying that you are responsible for all the faults of the Democratic Party. But, as you say, you will or would be a freshman representative. I am looking for evidence that you can and will resist a significant number of the forces entrenched in the Democratic Party. There is no way for me to see that without concrete positions and proposals from you. I am attaching a copy of the letter.

Sincerely,

Richard Duffee