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OUR OPINION

## Blunt best choice to replace Bond in Senate

U.S. REP. Roy Blunt has the experience and judgment to represent Missouri well in the U.S. Senate, and for these and other reasons is commended to voters.

Blunt is vying for the seat that has been held by retiring U.S. Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond. As such, Blunt's conservative approach to governance will more closely approximate the approach that Bond, a fellow Republican, has pursued during his time as governor and then in the Senate. Democratic nominee Robin Carnahan, by contrast, would pursue a more liberal course that would be out of step with the majority view in the show-me state.

Blunt has been a member of the U.S. House for 14 years, was Missouri Secretary of State for two terms and spent 12 years as Greene County clerk. During those years in government, and as the former president of Southwest Baptist University, Blunt has shown the ability to lead and has risen to become a member of the Republican House leadership team.

In recent weeks Blunt has stepped in as an advocate for farmers in Missouri and nationwide who could be subjected to proposed regulatory shifts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He has been an advocate for alternative and clean energy sources. He also has argued for smaller government that fosters the business growth needed to drive the U.S. economy.

"The government doesn't 'create' freedom or prosperity, or solid private jobs, or a future of opportunity. The government can help and must. But the American people will do the rest, given half a chance," Blunt said in a white paper.

Those sentiments resonate with Missourians who see government as a partner in development and not as the chief author of economic growth.

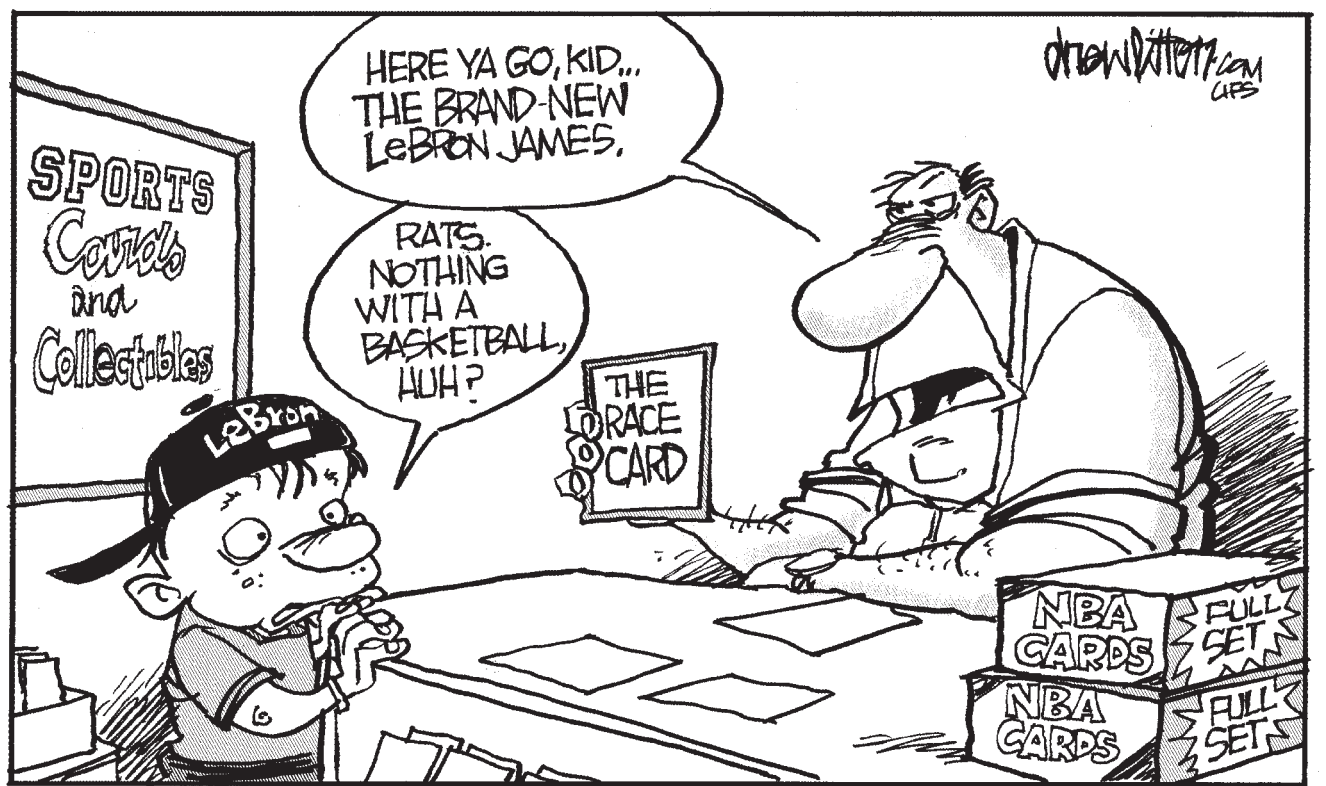
Carnahan has spent six years as secretary of state. She has been an advocate for election reforms and continued upgrades in an office that was first computerized during Blunt's tenure. While those accomplishments are commendable, her political views and policy proposals do not provide the best solutions to issues facing Missouri and the nation.

Kit Bond was the state's youngest governor at the time of his election in 1972. He won his Senate seat in 1986 and has been re-elected to three more terms on the basis of his constructive, service-oriented approach to government. During his time on an important transportation subcommittee, Bond was a champion for important projects such as Hannibal's Mark Twain Memorial Bridge, construction of a four-lane U.S. 36 between Hannibal and Macon, and completion of the Avenue of the Saints. In each case he won funding that was vital to the projects.

Bond's support for the Water Resources Development Act has paved the way to build 1,200-foot lock chambers at five sites on the Mississippi River and two along the Illinois. During his time as governor, he created the Parents as Teachers program and has been a tireless advocate for education throughout his political career.

Bond's legacy as a public servant, friend, advocate and statesman is exemplary.

Roy Blunt is the clear choice for voters who seek a strong and seasoned advocate to succeed Bond and speak for Missouri.



Caption

AS THEY SEE IT

## Class war brings certain clarity to politics, but is still irrational

THE 2010 election is turning into a class war. The wealthy and the powerful started it.

This is a strange development. President Obama, after all, has been working overtime to save capitalism. Wall Street is doing just fine and the rich are getting richer again. The financial reform bill passed by Congress was moderate, not radical.

Nonetheless, corporations and affluent individuals are pouring tens of millions of dollars into attack ads aimed almost exclusively at Democrats. One of the biggest political players, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, accepts money from foreign sources.

The chamber piously insists that none of the cash from abroad is going into its ad campaigns. But without full disclosure, there's no way of knowing if that's true or simply an accounting trick. And the chamber is just one of many groups engaged in an election-year spending spree.

This extraordinary state of affairs was facilitated by the U.S. Supreme Court's scandalous Citizens United decision, which swept away decades of restrictions on corporate spending to influence elections. The Republicans' success in blocking legislation that would at least have required the big spenders to disclose the sources of their money means voters have to operate in the dark.

The "logic" behind Citizens United is that third-party spending can't possibly be corrupting. The five-justice majority declared that "this court now concludes that independent expenditures, including those made by corporations, do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption. That speakers may have influence over or access to elected officials does not mean that those officials are corrupt. And the appearance of influence or access will not cause the electorate to lose faith in this democracy."

You can decide what's more stun-



**E.J. Dionne**

Political columnist for the Washington Post

ning about this statement, its naivete or its arrogance.

If one side in the debate can overwhelm the political system with clandestine cash, which is what's now happening, is there any doubt that the side in question will buy itself a lot of influence? If that's not corruption, what exactly is it?

And how can five justices, who purport not to be political, sweep aside what elected officials themselves long ago concluded on the subject and claim to know what will or will not "cause the electorate to lose faith in this democracy"? Could anything undermine trust in the system more than secret contributions to shadowy groups spending the money on nasty ads?

The good news is that the class war is bringing a certain clarity to politics. It is also another piece of evidence for the radicalism of the current brand of conservatism. This, in turn, is forcing Democrats to defend a proposition they have been committed to since the days of Franklin Roosevelt but are often too timid to proclaim: that government has a legitimate and necessary role in making economic rules to protect individuals from abuse.

It has thus been both entertaining and educational to watch Republican Senate candidates in Connecticut,

West Virginia, Alaska and Kentucky grapple with the impact of their bad-mouthing of minimum wage laws.

Conservative academics have warred against the minimum wage ever since FDR declared the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 perhaps "the most far-reaching program, the most far-sighted program for the benefit of workers that has ever been adopted here or in any other country."

These critics have never gained traction because most people think it's simple justice that those who work for a living be treated with a modicum of respect. Many voters who express skepticism about government in the abstract nonetheless favor laws that give a fighting chance to individuals with weaker bargaining positions in the marketplace.

The minimum wage battle underscores the difference between 2010-style conservatism and the conservatism of Dwight Eisenhower or even Ronald Reagan. The 2010 right actually imagines a return to the times prior to the New Deal and Teddy Roosevelt's Square Deal, the heady days before there were laws on wages and hours, environmental concerns and undue economic concentration.

The country doesn't need this class war, and it is irrational in any case. Practically no one, least of all Obama, is questioning the basics of the market system or proposing anything more than somewhat tighter economic regulations — after the biggest financial collapse since the Great Depression — and rather modest tax increases on the wealthy.

But even these steps are apparently too much for those financing all the television ads, which should lead voters to ask themselves: Who is paying for this? What do they really want? And who gave them the right to buy an election?

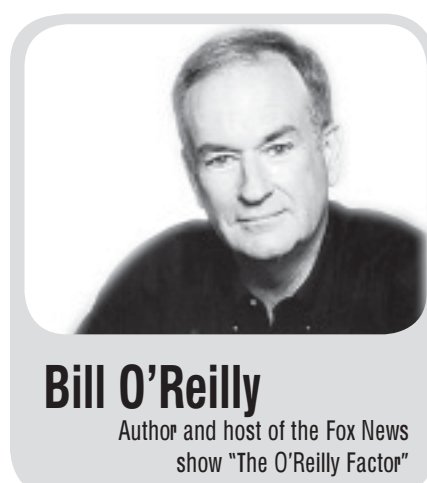
## Ruling seeks to justify injurious behavior under guise of free speech

PUT YOURSELF in this position: You lose a son in Iraq. He is killed fighting for his country. You arrange a funeral for him, an event that is emotionally devastating for your family and friends. Outside that funeral, protestors hold signs saying that God killed your son because he fought for a country that "tolerates" homosexuals. Some of them curse at people attending the service.

That's exactly what happened to Albert Snyder and his family in Maryland. In response, Snyder sued the leader of the hate group, Fred Phelps, and a jury awarded him millions. But the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Virginia overturned the verdict on appeal and even imposed court costs on the Snyder family. The judges rationalized their misguided ruling by writing: "Although reasonable people may disagree about the appropriateness of the Phelps' protest, this conduct simply does not satisfy the heavy burden required for the tort of intentional infliction of emotional distress under Maryland law."

"Reasonable people may disagree about the appropriateness of the Phelps protest"? Are you kidding me? Who exactly thinks God wanted Matthew Snyder dead because America does not persecute gay people? Osama bin Laden?

The federal court's ruling is a legal ruse, a bunch of pinheaded mumbo-



**Bill O'Reilly**

Author and host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor"

jumbo that seeks to justify injurious behavior under the guise of free speech. Forty-eight attorneys general have filed an amicus brief in support of the Snyder family. These prosecutors well understand that words can be used as weapons designed solely to harm American citizens. There is no "reasonable" debate in what the vicious protestors did. They intentionally wanted to inflict emotional distress on the grieving family of a dead soldier. That is against civil law.

One footnote: When Albert Snyder told the court he could not pay the court costs, Phelps told the press he should use his son's death benefits to satisfy the judgment. I hope those judges are sleep-

ing well.

If Phelps and his crew had put forth that God wanted a soldier to die because his family was part of a minority group, the federal court ruling might have been different. Hate crime legislation was attached to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the legal system takes hateful action against minorities very seriously, as it should.

The Supreme Court is now hearing the Snyder-Phelps case, and the outcome is important for all Americans.

With the rise of the Internet, cyberbullying and threatening behavior have become a plague upon the land. Kids are committing suicide because they are humiliated on the Net, and anyone can be targeted by sick individuals. Inflicting emotional distress on another human being is just a mouse click away.

I well understand the slippery-slope free speech argument being put forth by those who believe the federal judges did the right thing constitutionally. I make my living under the First Amendment, and I don't want the government telling me what I can and can't say. But evil is evil, and attacks are attacks. The Snyder family has a constitutional right to privacy and the pursuit of happiness. The despicable Phelps mob infringed on those rights.

Letters are welcome

Letters may be sent to:  
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