



“Yes Ma’am,” Yes-Man

By Deborah D. Thornton

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary a “yes-man” is a person who “agrees with everything that is said; especially: one who endorses or supports without criticism every opinion or proposal of an associate or superior.”¹ Other sources are not as kind and add that synonyms for “yes-man” include “flunky, stooge, and sycophant.”² The M and R Games website even offers a very funny “Yes-Man Doll,” which is guaranteed to agree with you all the time and utters a variety of “ego-boosting” phrases, including “I couldn’t agree with you more completely,” and “I’m sure whatever you’re thinking is correct.”³ The doll even comes with a 9-volt battery, for only \$29.95.

Though one might think a “yes-man” husband or children would be nice to have, at least occasionally, our elected officials should be more independent thinking — especially if they hold a Ph.D. in Political Science.⁴ The role of Congressmen is to represent their constituents, all their constituents, to the best of their abilities — whether those constituents are old or young, black or white, Democrat, Republican, or Independent. Unfortunately, Congressman Dave Loebsack (Democrat – Mount Vernon) does not seem to be doing that. Instead, he seems to be filling the role of yes-man to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.

Iowa’s Second Congressional District contains 15 counties, ranging from Corydon (Wayne County) in the southwest to Hiawatha (Linn County) in the far north, and east to the Mississippi River.⁵ There are 440,675 registered voters as of August 2, 2010. Of those, 26.2 percent are registered Republicans, 38.1 percent are registered Democrats, and 35.6 percent are Independent. So, almost 62 percent of the citizens Congressman Loebsack represents are not members of his political party.⁶ In addition, in the 2008 elections, of the 306,358 votes cast in his race, over 118,000 were for the other candidate. So, he only has the recorded support, as indicated by their vote, of just over 175,000 of his constituents, less than 40 percent of those registered.⁷

Yet, Congressman Loebsack casts a straight Democrat, party-line vote the vast majority of the time, according to the analysis on Project Vote Smart. Project Vote Smart is a non-profit, non-partisan effort to provide American citizens with unbiased information about the job that their office holders are doing. Both Democrats and Republicans, including the former holder of the Iowa Second District Congressional seat, Jim Leach — who was also a Political Science professor, support Project Vote Smart.⁸

The following table outlines some key Interest Group Ratings from Project Vote Smart, comparing Congressman Loebsack and Speaker of the House of Representatives — and his party’s leader — Nancy Pelosi.

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Ratings Comparison Chart	Congressman Dave Loebsack	Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi
Interest Group	Democrat 2nd District Iowa	Democrat 8th District California
AFL-CIO	100%	100%
Alliance for Retired Americans	100%	100%
American Civil Liberties Union	100%	100%
American Family Association	0%	0%
American Federation of State, County, & Municipal Employees	100%	100%
Americans for Democratic Action	95%	95%
Christian Coalition of American	0%	0%
Citizens Against Government Waste	4%	6%
English First	F	F
League of Women Voters	100%	100%
NARAL Pro-Choice America	100%	100%
National Association of Manufacturers	21%	23%
National Council of La Raza	100%	100%
National Education Association	A	A
National Farmers Union	100%	100%
National Organization for Women	100%	100%
National Retail Federation	40%	40%
National Rifle Association	F	F
National Tax Limitation Committee	0%	0%
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation	77%	77%
Planned Parenthood	100%	100%
Service Employees International Union	100%	100%
The Children's Health Fund	66%	66%
The Club for Growth	0%	7%

Source: Project Vote Smart, Loebsack: http://www.votesmart.org/issue_rating_category.php?can_id=68964, and Pelosi: http://www.votesmart.org/issue_rating_category.php?can_id=26732

Based on these ratings, it appears that Congressman Loebsack is nothing more than a “Yes, Ma’am” yes-man for Speaker Pelosi. And while the yes-man doll is cute and funny, a yes-man Congressman isn’t. Or maybe Second District Iowans are really Californians in disguise. Either way, the citizens of the district deserve a more independent-thinking representative in Congress.

(Endnotes)

¹ Entry for “yes-man,” Merriam-Webster Dictionary online, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/yes-man>> (September 10, 2010).

² Entry for “yes-man,” Sensagent Dictionary online, <<http://dictionary.sensagent.com/yes-man/en-en/>> (September 10, 2010).

³ M and R Games, <<http://www.mandrgames.com/YESMANDoll.htm>> (September 10, 2010).

⁴ Representative David W. (Dave) Loebsack, Biography, Project Vote Smart, <http://www.votesmart.org/bio.php?can_id=68964> (September 10, 2010).

⁵ Iowa’s 2nd Congressional District & Map, Govtrack.us, <<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/findyourreps.xpd?state=IA&district=2>> (September 10, 2010).

⁶ Congressional District 2, Monthly Voter Registration Totals, Iowa Secretary of State, <<http://www.sos.state.ia.us/pdfs/VRStatsArchive/2010/CongAug10.pdf>> (September 10, 2010).

⁷ November 4, 2008, General Election Results, Iowa Secretary of State, <<http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/results/2008GeneralResults.html>> (September 10, 2010).

⁸ “History,” Project Vote Smart, <http://www.votesmart.org/program_history.php> (September 10, 2010).

Deborah D. Thornton is a Research Analyst with Public Interest Institute, Mount Pleasant, Iowa.

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