

Joe-Mentum No More

Michael Sean Winters | Jan. 19, 2011 | Distinctly Catholic

Sen. Joe Lieberman announced his intention today not to run for re-election in 2012. In the event, there was no clear path, or unclear path for that matter, to a victory for the four-term senator. He burned almost every bridge to the Democratic Party in 2006 when he lost the Democratic Primary and ran as an independent. The few remaining bridges to the Democrats were burned when he endorsed John McCain for the presidency in 2008 and spoke to the Republican National Convention on McCain's behalf. Look for Democratic Congressman Chris Murphy to be the next senator from the Constitution State.

McCain has suggested that President Obama appoint Lieberman to be the next Secretary of Defense. Bad idea. Yes, Obama has a knack for conciliating former rivals, but his former rivalry is not the issue with Lieberman. It is his penchant for playing the prima donna. This was demonstrated most clearly when, during the health care debate in the Senate, the idea was floated that anyone over the age of 55 be allowed to buy in to Medicare. This was an idea Lieberman had supported in the past. But, when it mattered, he shot down the proposal. Why? No one knows. His support for Connecticut's insurance companies had not prevented him from supporting the idea previously. But, the whole episode gave Lieberman a chance to flex his muscles and garner some of the limelight. Meanwhile, of course, the public option withered on the vine.

Obama needs Cabinet members he can trust. Lieberman is a morally upright figure, to be sure. But, he is also someone who would do almost anything to further his own self-image and his own delight in the spotlight. He is not a team player. He would be a disaster as a Cabinet secretary.

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