

When the GOP sat out history

Thomas C. Fox | Jul. 1, 2009 NCR Today

Now there might have been a time when the Republican Party had something - something - to offer our nation. I am trying to remember. Oh, yes, they allege they are "pro-life," but an honest look at the record shows they have fought virtually all life-enhancing legislation in the past several decades, particularly those bills which aid the poorest and most vulnerable among us.

The GOP for the past four decades has sustained itself through its "Southern strategy," which essentially has meant that it has played to southern white racists, stomping on African-American voting rights, since the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

More recently, the GOP sat out the much needed Stimulus Bill. Their criticisms of this emergency measure would have been taken more seriously if they had offered serious alternatives instead of simply voting, en masse, against it. In the nation's dark moment, the GOP saw nothing but political opportunity. They sat out. Forget the well-being of the nation.

With that prelude I draw your attention to several paragraphs in today's Tom Friedman column in *The New York Times*. Referring to the recent Climate Change bill vote in the House he wrote:

This bill is not weak because its framers, Representatives Henry Waxman and Ed Markey, wanted it this way. "They had to make the compromises they did," said Dan Becker, director of the Safe Climate Campaign, "because almost every House Republican voted against the bill and did nothing to try to improve it. So to get it passed, they needed every coal-state Democrat, and that meant they had to water it down to bring them on board."

Friedman then asks: "What were the Republicans thinking?"

It's very sad and most unfortunate that when we need political leadership has its head buried in the sand.

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