



Does a Conservative Rating Average of 19 Percent Define the "Middle of the Road" of Politics?

Lieberman the "Conservative Democrat"?

When George W. Bush selected Dick Cheney as his running mate, reporters soon began using extremist terms to describe him, placing him on the "hard right," the "far right," someone who was "very, very conservative." But when Al Gore selected Sen. Joseph Lieberman as his running mate this morning, they placed him squarely in the mainstream:

■ On ABC's *Good Morning America*, Terry Moran said: "He's known as a moderate Democrat, who had demonstrated fiscal conservatism in the Senate and a kind of hawkishness in foreign policy."

■ On *The Early Show*, CBS reporter John Roberts explained "He has been a core supporter of Democratic issues, the Chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council of which President Clinton is a member. A real sort of centrist Democrat."

■ On CNN at 7 AM, reporter John King echoed the morning line: "The 58-year-old senator, like Gore, a member of the Democratic Leadership Council. He is viewed as a Democratic moderate...He is in sync with Gore on the major issues, again, both products of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council."

■ On the MSNBC simulcast of *Imus in the Morning*, NBC's Claire Shipman was the boldest: "It is very hard to find negative things to say about Joe Lieberman. I know, look, labor might not be happy. He is a conservative Democrat and they probably don't agree with everything he supports, but, you know, Gore is a pretty conservative Democrat." How can Cheney be "very conservative" with a 90 ACU, and Gore be "pretty conservative" with a Senate ACU average of 10?

On *Today*, Shipman said, "He's a conservative Democrat and an Orthodox Jew...While critics brand Lieberman as a liberal who votes for abortion rights, gun control, and tax

hikes, Democrats say he's more conservative when it comes to issues such as defense spending and family values."

■ A *Time* Online article carried the headline "With Middle-of-the-Road Joe, Al Aims to Ditch Monica." Reporter Frank Pellegrini sounded confused: "He's a moved-to-the-center kind of liberal with a reputation for integrity and relatively straight-shooting. And because he's an orthodox Jew, he won't campaign on Saturdays — just work that promotes, as Lieberman has put it, 'the respect and protection of human life and well-being.'"

Time did not find that to be the time to add that Lieberman draws no heat from hard-line feminists of the Democratic

base on abortion. He supports partial-birth abortions and tax-funded abortions. "He is pro-choice," explained *Washington Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz in a Monday discussion at the *Post* Web site. "Politically, no Democratic nominee in any year can pick a running mate who is opposed to abortion." The media call the Republican platform "hardline" on abortion, but apparently you can be a 100-percent pro-abortion vote and be a "conservative Democrat."

Does an ACU rating of 19 define the "middle of the road" of politics? Or are Democrats so liberal that a 19 puts you in the party's "conservative wing"? If Dick Cheney had averaged an 80 ACU rating, would reporters call him a "liberal Republican"? The media's labeling is shifting the "middle of the road" into the left lane. — *Tim Graham*

Sen. Lieberman's ACU Voting Record

1999: ZERO	1998: 16	1997: 20
1996: 35	1995: 10	1994: 8
1993: 20	1992: 22	1991: 25
1990: 22	1989: 32	
LIFETIME ACU AVERAGE: 19		

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