

The messenger, in this case was Stark. His words were crude and offensive but his frank oration is admirable. Stark could have chosen his words more carefully, a fact the Democratic leadership made apparent when they dragged him behind the woodshed. But love him or hate him, Stark had the guts to speak in a way that most of his 434 colleagues won't.

Stark cut through the vapid pabulum that passes for political debate in this country; the junk-food rhetoric composed by spin-doctors, tested by focus groups, and proofread by campaign consultants and lobbyists. Just listen to what emanates from the mouths of the leading candidates of both parties in the lead up to November 2008. Or watch the drivel passed off as incisive political coverage on the 24-hour cable TV stations. Whether it's Hillary, Romney, Guiliani, Edwards, or McCain, not one policy or word is uttered without first being massaged and sanitized, calculated not to enlighten or lead, but to win votes without offending any demographic.

Obama, who was catapulted into second place in the polls because he appeared sincere in the spring, has receded after picking up the playbook of "serious candidate."

Stark got into hot water while speaking of the fundamental choice of policy-makers: one framed as "guns or butter." Eventually societies must choose between military spending and the needs of its citizenry.

The statement was uttered during debate on the House floor following Bush's veto of the popular State Children's Health Care Program (SCHIP), an \$11.2 billion annual program that helps poor parents buy health insurance for their children.

Compare that figure to this week's White House request for \$46 billion more to shovel into the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to an estimate by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, if the above figure is included, by the time the clock runs out on Bush's administration, U.S. taxpayers will be on the hook for \$808 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's roughly 10 times what Bush's father spent to humble Saddam Hussein in 1991.

China won't keep lending us that money forever. Sooner or later, the bill will come due.

What Stark actually told his colleagues: "The Republicans are worried that they can't pay for insuring an additional 10 million children."

"They sure don't care about finding \$200 billion to fight the illegal war in Iraq. Where are you going to get that money? Are you going to tell us lies like you're telling us today? Is that how you're going to fund the war?"

"You don't have money to fund the (Iraq) war or children. But you're going to spend it to blow up innocent people—if we can get enough kids to grow old enough for you to send to Iraq to get their heads blown off for the president's amusement."

These incendiary words launched an explosive backlash from pundits who immediately demanded Stark's head.

Stark was next criticized by the Democratic Party leadership, but survived a vote of official reprimand that Democrats tabled. Stark then publicly apologized Tuesday saying: "I want to apologize to my colleagues, many of whom I have offended, to the president, his family, (and) to the troops. I apologize for this reason: I think we have serious issues before us, the issue of providing medical care to children, the issue about what we're going to do about a war that we're divided about how to end."

If a U.S. congressman can be shouted down for speaking an essential truth: that blood

and treasure is being spilled in a perverse quest by the current resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. to outshine the legacy of his own father, these are truly dire days for our republic.

One wonders what reactions would spew forth from the mouths of those who vilify Stark had they read the words of another great American, a true Republican: Gen. Dwight David Eisenhower:

"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

"We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together."

Too bad his warning so quickly landed in the ashcan of history.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 5, 2007*

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 1022. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

#### HONORING DEL RIO COUNTRY CLUB

### HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 5, 2007*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Del Rio Country Club on celebrating their 60th anniversary in business. A celebration in honor of this achievement is to be held on Saturday, November 3, 2007.

The Del Rio Country Club was founded in 1946 by a small group of community leaders. It was shortly after the end of World War II, gas prices were high and esteems were low. The local community leaders took the gently rolling terrain just north of Modesto, California and invited William P. Bell to design the original eighteen holes. In 1996, the course grew. Del Rio was granted permission from the Federal Government to use the 150 acres as a combination of riparian habitat and golf course. Architect Robert Muir Graves was asked to design a second nine hole course, the River Nine. Then in 1998, the course was updated one more time. Architect John Harbottle supervised the reconstruction of all tees, greens and bunkers on William Bell's original layout.

Today, the Del Rio Country Club has 2 courses. One course is overlooked by a club house that features the Redwood Dining Room. The Country Club also features tennis courts and other family activities. The course is ranked among the top 20 golf courses in Northern California.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Del Rio Country Club on 60

years of business. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Del Rio Country Club many years of continued success.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 5, 2007*

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 968, on passage of H.R. 3678, the Internet Tax Freedom Act Amendments Act of 2007, I was unavoidably detained and unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

#### HONORING THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE STATE CHAMPION SCHOOLS

### HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 5, 2007*

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to recognize and honor the 2006–2007 President's Challenge State Champion schools named by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. In particular, I would like to recognize two Tennessee schools, Percy Priest Elementary School in Nashville and Bartlett Elementary School in Bartlett, TN.

These two Tennessee schools have set examples that others would do well to follow. They have shown commitment to educating students on the benefits of physical activity and maintaining healthy lifestyles. Across the state of Tennessee, these two schools had the highest proportion of students scoring at or above the 85th percentile on the President's Challenge Physical Fitness Test for the 2006–2007 school year.

To promote overall health and well-being, the President's Challenge program encourages all Americans to make being active part of their everyday lives. Percy Priest and Bartlett Elementary embraced these goals and in so doing succeeded in obtaining State Champion status.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the President's Challenge State Champions for being role models for other schools and for improving the overall health and well-being of their students.

#### HONORING THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF NAPA

### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 5, 2007*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the First Christian Church of Napa, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary. The Church has a storied history in the Napa Valley, where it has become a fixture in our community and an important place for people to come together and worship.