



A Deficit of Decency:

Author: Zell Miller

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About The Author:

Zell Miller, a lifelong Democrat, was elected to the Georgia Senate at the age of 28. Fourteen years later, he won the first of four terms as Georgia's lieutenant governor and he was later elected governor for two terms. From 2000 through 2004, Miller served as a United States Senator from Georgia. His conservative views have made Miller question the Democratic Party so extensively that he delivered a keynote speech at the 2004 Republican National Convention. Miller has authored six books, including the *New York Times* best seller, *A National Party No More: The Conscience of a Conservative Democrat*. He also serves as a correspondent for *FOX News*.

General Overview:

In *A Deficit of Decency*, Miller identifies the multi-faceted challenges we face as a nation today. All of America's problems, writes Miller, necessitate a return to "a sense of duty and decency that lies at our nation's foundation."

Throughout his book, Miller addresses issues including elitism and pandering in Washington, D.C., declining Christian values, the unfair federal tax code and criminals earning millions as professional athletes.

Miller also responds to the criticism he has received from longtime friends and allies because of his turning against the Democratic Party. His goal in writing *A Deficit of Decency* is to "save this great nation from itself."

*** Please Note:** This CapitolReader.com summary does *not* offer judgment or opinion on the book's content. The ideas, viewpoints and arguments are presented just as the book's *author* has intended.

The Foundation of Decency

While *A Deficit of Decency* is not about Miller's faith, this treatise cannot ignore God. He simply shares with his readers the "only way [he] know[s] how to look at this great country with which God has blessed and trusted" us. Miller holds up Benjamin Rush as an example of the kind of man America needs today. Someone once asked Rush the question, "Are you a Democrat or an aristocrat?" Rush answered, "I am neither. I am a Christocrat. I believe He, alone, who created and redeemed man is qualified to govern him."

The Death of Duty

Miller bemoans the loss of duty in our country: the uncomplicated notion that "duty is enough" has been discarded in America. Duty and decency were central tenets held by those who founded America. The way we are able to live today and the rights we often take for granted were wrought by the countless people who have "done the boring, the uninviting, the unenlightening, and the unrecognized thing to make America what it is." Duty has died in America.

In February 2004, Miller addressed the Senate. He quoted Arnold Toynbee, author of *A Study of History*, who wrote, "Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in today." This was written prior to 1975.

The response to his speech was stunning: Miller received over 16,000 emails from people all across America. The speech was sent around as forwarded email messages. Dr. D. James Kennedy, a central figure in the conservative movement, ran the speech on a network of more than 700 radio stations. Miller's message about a deficit of decency struck the hearts of many who are just as concerned about the death of decency in our great country.

Washington, D.C. (Doesn't Care)

Newly elected United States senators arrive in Washington, D.C. prepared and excited to get to work making important changes for the people of their home states. But within five minutes of their arrival, incumbents inform them that the campaign is not really over. In fact, it's just beginning.

A new senator's first job is to get reelected and to help other members of "the team" to get reelected as well. Also clear during initiation in Washington is the requirement that senators ask for more and more money from special interest groups. The lobbying groups will pay for the next election, increasing a senator's chances of reelection. Instead of senators serving their constituents back at home, they serve the special interest groups that hold the purse strings.

Supporting President Bush

Miller was a Democrat since the day he was born, but by the end of 2003, he was angered and disappointed with his Party. It became "painfully obvious" that his "lifelong allegiance was being cannibalized, eaten alive by the special interests and their own

narrow agenda.” Miller looked at the potential Democratic presidential candidates and found them too out of step with his morals.

It shocked many when Miller sat down with Sean Hannity on *Hannity and Colmes* (a staple of the *FOX News* channel) and blurted out that he would support President Bush for the upcoming election. In spite of his voting for every Democratic presidential candidate since 1952, Miller threw his weight behind President Bush, finally cementing his split with the Democratic Party by giving a keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention (RNC).

In his speech, Miller tried to heed the advice of his wife, who gently suggested Miller talk as though he were talking to their granddaughter. But he wasn’t able to do it. Years after his first campaign in Georgia, speaking on street corners and from truck beds, Miller’s voice still rises, his eyes flash, the deep scar between his eyes grows deeper, and “that well-worn instinct to remove the hide from [his] opponent takes over.”

In a sure-spoken and strongly worded speech, Miller stated that the Democratic Party had abandoned the strong defensive stand made by great Democratic leaders of the past, including Harry Truman in running the Red Army out of Iran and Franklin Roosevelt in leading an army of liberators through Europe during WWII. The leaders of his party see, in a “warped way,” America as the problem, not the solution. Miller then went on to outline how the very weapons and defense projects that Senator John Kerry voted against have equipped our country to protect itself and promote democracy around the world.

Liberal Media Backlash to the RNC Speech

Immediately after finishing the speech at the convention, Miller had an interview with Chris Matthews on *Hardball*. Both men quickly got testy and Miller uttered the words he wishes that he could retract: “You know, I wish we... I wish we lived in a day where you could challenge a person to a duel.”

Miller struggled with the response of the liberal media. Among the negative things written and said about Miller in the days following the RNC speech were:

- “astonishingly harsh”
- “demonic hysteria” that made it a “good night for Howard Dean,” who is now no longer the “craziest-sounding Democrat on the planet”
- Miller looked and sounded like a “rabid dog looking for someone else to bite”
- “monomaniacal intensity of an ancient prelate condemning heretics to the stake”
- “fire-breathing”
- “a scorching, almost biblical diatribe”

Miller returned to Georgia a depressed man, fearing that his speech and subsequent interviews had done more harm than good. Instead, Miller was stunned to learn that his speech had resonated with voters across the country. President Bush’s campaign manager asked Miller to tour with the president on his bus, beginning in Huntington, West Virginia, and moving through Ohio. As the weeks and months passed in the fall

and winter of 2003, Miller was sent by the Republicans to areas that “had been solidly Democratic and still had more registered Democrats than Republicans.” He visited major swing states, including Pennsylvania, Florida and Ohio.

The Monday night before the election, Miller returned to his home in Georgia feeling confident that Bush would win reelection. When Tom Brokaw colored Ohio red, Miller and his wife both celebrated with Ensures, toasted the president and enjoyed the victory.

Voting for the Advance of Freedom

Miller strongly believes that the election of 2004 stands alongside some of the other most pivotal elections in American history:

- The 1864 reelection of Abraham Lincoln.
- The 1944 reelection of Franklin Roosevelt.
- The 1980 election of Ronald Reagan.

This most recent election reaffirms America’s “faith in freedom.” The run up to the presidential election dragged the old ghost of Vietnam out of our nation’s closet and forced us to confront it.

For far too long, academics, liberals and the media have employed the Vietnam War as the prime example of what’s wrong with using American military force. The 1972 election was the beginning of this view held by many in the Democratic Party: “conventional wisdom held that America was the problem,” not the Communists. A weaker America would assure the rest of the world of their safety.

Today, those opposing President Bush and the War in Iraq hope to “achieve their victory by pulling down the president from *within* rather than defeating the enemy *abroad*.” Political ambition has trumped “wartime solidarity”; the actions and words of those dissidents damaged troop morale and encouraged terrorists to attack again.

On November 2, 2004, the voters sided with freedom, liberty and America, saying that “America is what is right with the world.”

Freedom is the “best idea of man,” and it is at the core of the Bush Doctrine:

1. America will not hesitate to use force to halt terrorism.
2. Liberty works, but it comes at a cost.

Ignored by the Democratic Party

More than five weeks before the presidential election, Miller appeared on *Hannity & Colmes* and predicted that the election was “all but over.” To back up that brazen prediction, Miller said that “no Democrat has ever been elected without carrying four or five Southern states. John Kerry cannot do that. Right now, he’s behind in every Southern state.”

And he was right. But who is listening?

The Democrats must do some soul-searching if they are to have any chance in 2008. Some questions to discuss and consider:

1. Breaking with tradition for the last 80 years, why do more Americans identify themselves as Republicans?
2. Why did Kerry, a Catholic nominee, receive fewer Catholic votes than Bush?
3. Why did the Democrats ignore the South?
4. Why did the Democratic Party “hire ground troops, poll workers, and those who work to get out the votes instead of relying on loyal volunteers to do this critically important work?”
5. Why does the Democratic Party bow to the desires of a small minority (less than 150,000 of the most liberal Democrats) in determining the candidate when there are millions of more conservative voters all across the country?
6. Why did the Democrats support Michael Moore and his ridiculous film?
7. Why, since World War II, have “the Democratic candidates for president only received more than 50 percent of the vote on two occasions?”

As the Democrats scratch their heads and point fingers of blame over the next months, the rising star of the party will be Hillary Rodham Clinton. With her husband at her side, she runs a great chance of snagging the nomination for 2008. But the Democratic Party will have to do more than they did in 2004. They will have to get out the vote: “they are the Cub Scouts against Special Ops. They don’t have the weapons, the warm bodies, or the desire.”

A Tax Code from Hell

The good people around our country sit around their kitchen tables at night, tallying up bills and struggling to make ends meet. But at the same time, the big spenders in Washington, D.C. round spending to the nearest billion dollars.

“Anything that keeps more money at home rather than sending it to Washington” is Miller’s goal. He proposes abolishing:

- All individual and corporate income taxes
- Capital gains taxes
- Self-employment taxes
- Gift taxes
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

How would the government survive without that income? After abolishing all of the above taxes, in their place we would levy a 23 percent tax “taken from every one dollar spent on the final sale of *all* goods and services.”

This “across the board” taxation would result in the following:

1. You would keep every cent of your paycheck.
2. This plan would solve the Social Security and Medicare pending crises by having a simpler and fairer tax.
3. It would “untax the poor, totally and permanently.”
4. It would tax the underground economy.
5. No one would have the right to know how much you earn or how you choose to spend and invest it.
6. Interest rates would plummet and exports would increase.
7. The cost of goods would be reduced.
8. The Gross Domestic Product would increase.

We need to return decency to the tax system so that Americans once again may choose what they want to do with the money they have earned.

The UN (Useless Nuisance)

The most disgusting and discouraging example of the deficit of decency is “that international beacon of bias” known as the United Nations. Many of the people who work with and for the UN are well-meaning, but those running the UN are crooks who are mainly interested in “lining their pockets, providing patronage for their friends, and making America look like a villain.”

Miller didn’t always feel this way about the UN; he recalls the days following the conclusion of WWII. He likened the UN to a beautiful woman with a heart of gold. “Too bad she turned out to be the town whore.”

What’s wrong with the United Nations?

- The UN despises everything American—except American money. The U.S. furnishes 22 percent of the operating budget.
- It has failed to keep world peace and has overlooked or mishandled atrocities, violence, and terror.
- It gave membership to the block of Soviet puppet states.
- Communist delegates are welcomed while freedom-loving people are refused entrance.
- It provides a forum for countries like Cuba and Syria to insult America.
- Secretary General Kofi Annan hails corrupt places and leaders as examples for the rest of the world.
- Annan’s leadership is corrupt; consider the Oil For Food program fiasco.

The bottom line is that the UN is trying to replace democratic process around the world, circumventing the procedures each nation has already established for its own rule. The UN has a goal of global taxation, requiring registration of all children and overriding each nation’s environmental laws and statutes. And the American taxpayers fund almost 25 percent of the cost for these anti-American projects.

As an organization, the UN “wallows in its own self-righteousness,” aiding and abetting “the killing of hundreds of our American soldiers.” It’s time to leave this organization and come home.

Seal the Borders

A major crisis is already underway, but our politicians and leaders are too afraid to address it. More than 12 million illegal immigrants are inside our borders. Their presence has incurred high costs:

- Their medical needs overwhelm our hospitals and emergency rooms.
- Our schools are overcrowded with their children.
- They make up one-fifth of the prison system (each inmate costs taxpayers \$22,000 per year).
- Illegal immigrants from Mexico smuggle in tons of drugs.

Even though these people are breaking the law and enjoying the rights ensured by America without paying taxes, our leaders are cowardly. How much clearer can it be? It is against U.S. law for anyone to enter the U.S. without a passport or visa. But our lenient border security is patchy at best.

We should bring home some of the U.S. troops stationed between North Korea and South Korea. It’s time that South Korea, “a vibrant, powerful country,” look after its own borders. Then we could redeploy some of those troops along our 2,000-mile border to the South and our 4,000-mile border to the North. We must stop the invasion of illegal immigrants before it’s too late.

Except the Lord Build this House

Psalm 127: *“Except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that built it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain.”*

From the very beginning, “God built and kept this country.” There’s no doubt about it. From the Mayflower Compact to the Declaration of Independence, from the Gettysburg Address to the inaugural addresses of every single president of the United States, God is found in the very foundation of our country.

But recently, the ultraliberals have begun attacking our country’s history, wanting to revise it to fit their politically-correct ideology.

The “very soul of our nation is at stake.” Judges are handing down decisions that smack of downright lies about how our country was founded. We must recall our national soul to God so that America’s greatness continues and does not fall.

Voting the Bible

Our country is at a crossroads. Down one road are indecency, corruption, rot and destruction. Down the other road, we will find decency, truth, love, restraint, compassion and freedom.

There are four major issues dividing our country today and the way the voters and legislators answer these questions will determine the road we choose as a nation. Those issues are:

1. Public display of the Ten Commandments.
2. Abortion.
3. Stem cell research.
4. Same sex marriage.

The issues matter now “more than ever.” We must sort out in our hearts the decent way to respond and then do so with conviction and loud voices.

Indecent Role Models

The newspapers have been covered with stories about steroid-use in professional sports, especially in baseball. Two of the biggest, most physical players, Ken Caminiti and Jose Conseco (both MVPs), agreed that between 50 to 80 percent of players use steroids.

How are our young people to know right from wrong if their favorite athletes pump up their bodies and statistics with steroids? There are hundreds of thousands of young kids today who look up to these men as heroes and they would do anything to improve their chances to get into the right college or play for the right team.

It’s wrong, it’s indecent and it’s just one example of what’s wrong with America today.

Liberty is Not a License

Liberty can only exist when we “choose to pursue” happiness with “a voluntary restraint.” The line between liberty and license is a thin one, and many in our country have swerved into dangerous territory. We must remember our duty, our personal responsibility, because if we don’t, America “won’t work.”

Peter Marshall, a great immigrant and pastor who lived during the first half of the twentieth century, prayed a prayer that we should remember today:

“Help us see that our liberty is not the right to do as we please, but the opportunity to please to do what is right.”

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