

## Democrats Take Over Congress In Elections

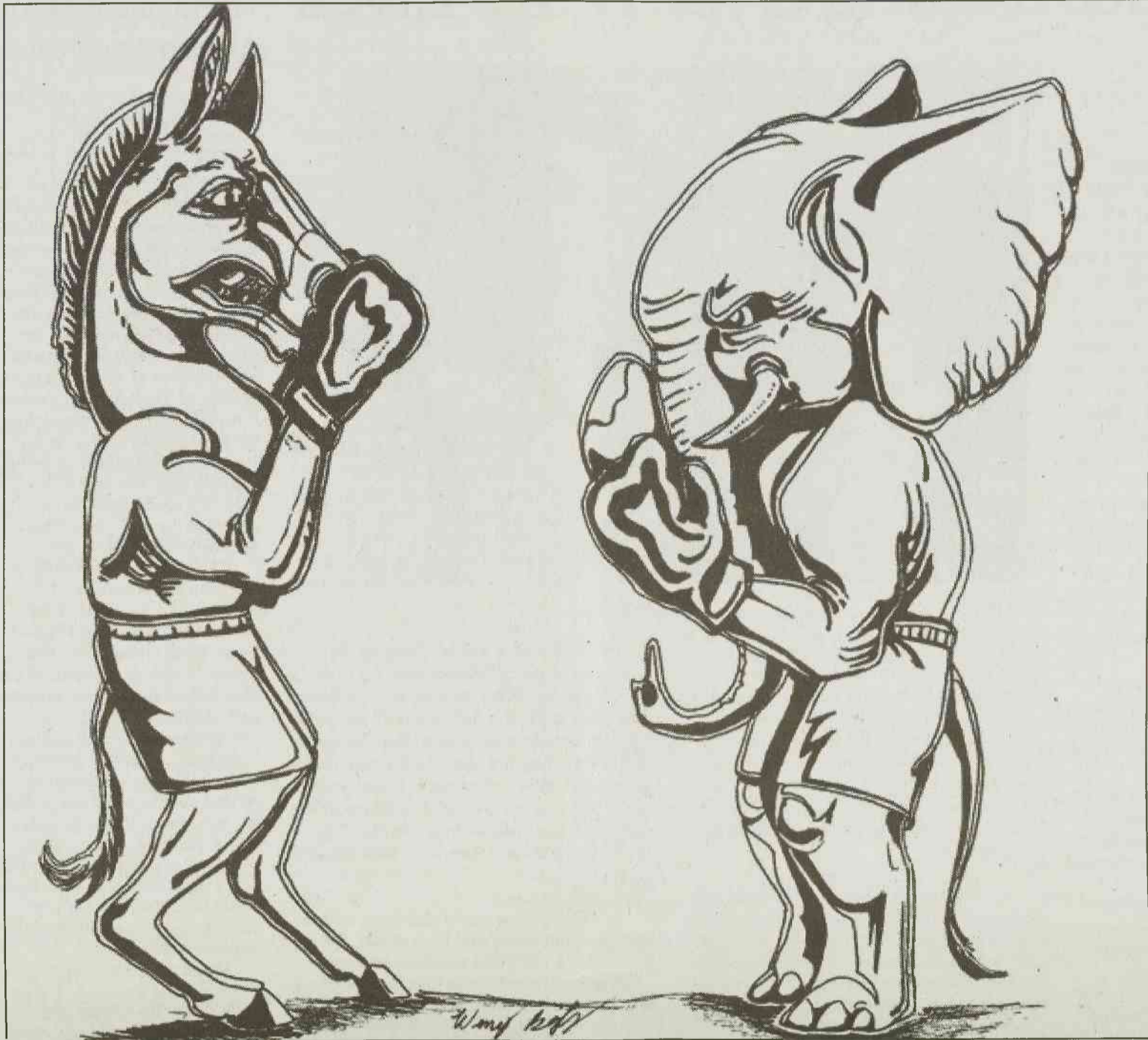


**Kaity Parson**

On November 6th Americans sent a clear message when their vote gave the Democratic Party control of both the House and the Senate. Corruption and sex scandals surrounding Republicans, frustration over the war in Iraq and the President's low approval rating all helped to solidify the win for Democrats after a 12-year fall from grace.

Americans were looking for someone to take the country in a different direction and Democrats are promising to do just that. Incoming Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, along with Senate Democrats, has already outlined a list of priorities they intend to tackle early on to include (but not limited to) the following:

- A federal law on price gauging for fuels such as gasoline, more incentives for the use of alternative fuels such as ethanol, and a repeal of a measure that gives tax breaks to oil companies for expanding their refineries and choosing to drill in the US.
- Raising the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25. Although many states have their own minimum wage standards, the federal minimum wage has remained at \$5.15 for the past 10 years. Senator Ted Kennedy, Chairman of the committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions proposes that the increase take place over a two-year time span.
- Making education for college students more affordable by cutting interest rates on student loans and increasing the amount of Pell Grants from \$4,050 to \$5,100. On the lines of education, Sen. Kennedy also wants to decrease the size of classrooms and look into the flaws of the No Child Left Behind policy.
- Implementation of recommendations by the 9/11 commission concerning national security such as increased port security and border entry and exit screening. The democrats



however, have not given an outline of how to pay for these measures.

- Making healthcare more affordable by changing the Medicare drug benefit program negotiating with pharmaceutical companies, and also expanding health insurance programs to cover other under-represented populations.
- More tax cuts for the middle class and working families. Pelosi mentioned that one way to do this was to revisit tax cuts that were implemented on the higher end and possibly increasing the "millionaires tax."
- Despite the fact that they have not come up with a

comprehensive plan concerning the war in Iraq, Democrats hope to change the course of action and to implement a phased withdrawal of troops.

Time will tell whether or not democrats will be able to follow through with many of the measures, but President Bush has pledged to put partisanship behind and work with party leaders to get things done for the country.

Whatever the case, Americans are looking for change and Democrats have their work cut out for them, especially if they intend to extend their control of both houses for years to come.



**Ashley Smith**

The 2006 midterm elections delivered a striking blow to the Republican Party. With growing uncertainty over the war in Iraq, gas prices, the economy and health care, voters made it clear that the Democratic Party is offering an attractive alternative to the Bush administration.

However, while the situation may look bleak for Republicans, there is still a chance that they can take back congress and retain the presidency in 2008. The future of the Republican Party will depend on key changes they must make to their strategy if they hope to win back voters.

Republicans will have to offer candidates in 2008 that share popular sentiment towards the way the war in Iraq has been handled by the Bush

administration. The public is looking for an exit strategy. Republicans have stuck by the idea of "seeing it through" since the beginning of the war, and Americans are beginning to develop a sour taste in their mouth for dead soldiers. If Republicans hope to win in 2008, candidates like John McCain should be their frontrunners. McCain has distanced himself from the Bush Administration on key issues such as detainee's rights, and has publicly criticized the administration for mismanagement in Iraq. Republicans will need to promote more candidates who look towards a future with a clear U.S. role in Iraq, and a clear timeline for troop withdrawal.

Republicans will also need to get tough on oil companies. Americans are tired of the up and down prices of gasoline and are ready to embrace a new kind of fuel. About ten years ago some of the major motor vehicle companies purchased patent rights to plans for water-powered engines. If Republicans can get their supporters in the automobile industry to really look into water-based clean burning technologies, they could win the hearts of American consumers and environmentalists.

While the money for the reconstruction in Iraq is probably necessary, Americans need to know that their government is still doing things in the United States. If Republicans are to win in 2008, the present administration and those members of the party still in office need to really step up domestic improvement projects. Domestic projects increase jobs and build consumer confidence.

The race in 2008 is going to be a close one, but if Republicans don't make some changes, they will see a repeat of the 2006 midterms.

The clock is ticking and Republicans have less than two years to show the public that they have turned over a new leaf.

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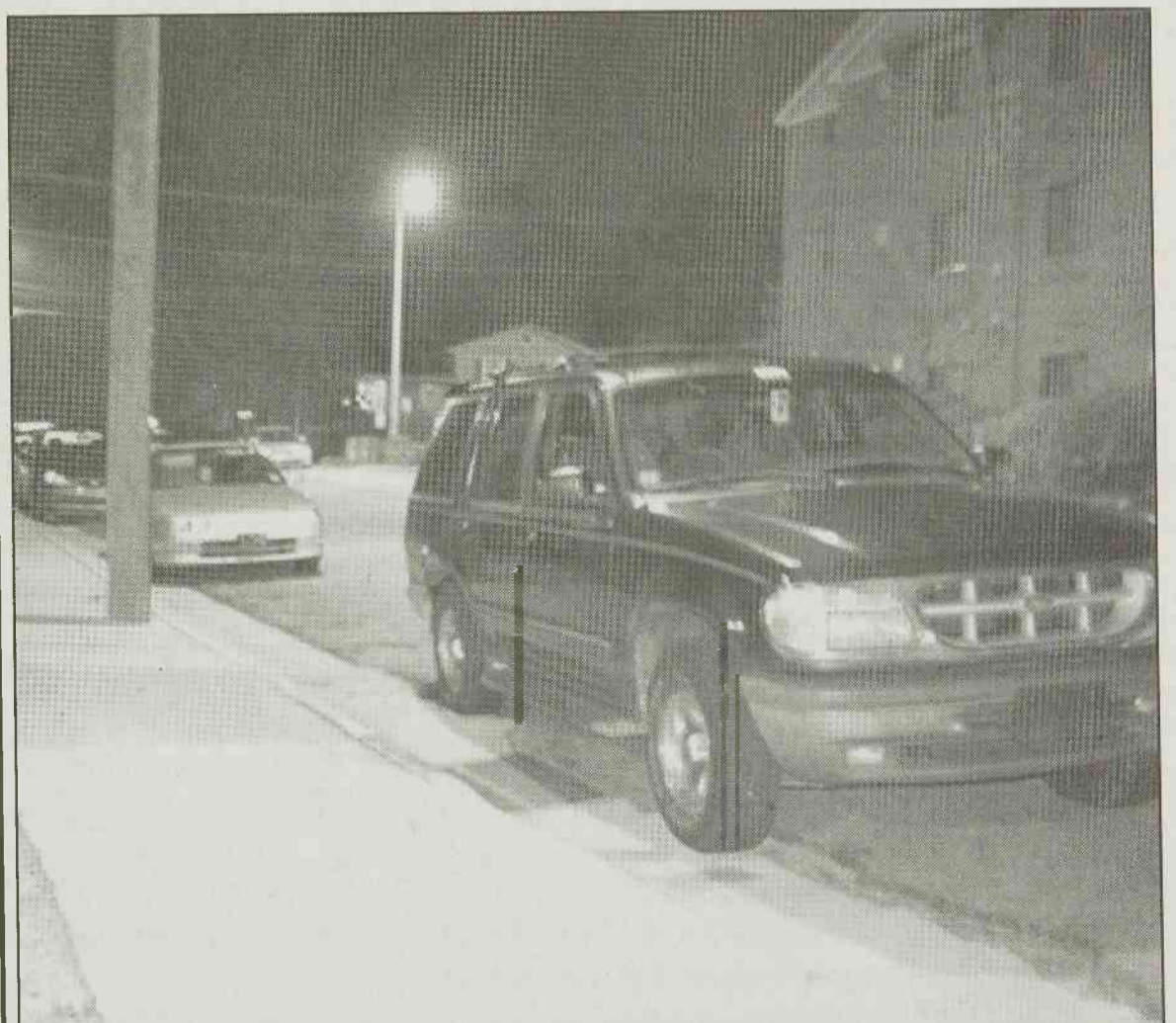
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## Area of Concern "University Place Parking"



Our area of concern for this issue is the parking at University Place Apartments. Every night there are numerous vehicles parked in the road, and on corners. Not only does this block the road, but it is dangerous as well.