

MY GUESSES ON WHY ROVE RESIGNED

By now you've heard the news: Rove is stepping down. So here's my treatment of possible reasons why he's leaving, in reverse order of their likelihood:

Time with the Family

As he said to the WSJ, he wants to spend more time with this family. Of course, this is a load of horse puckey—if he had wanted to spend time with his family, he surely would have done it before his son went to college.

Republicans Think He's a Loser

The Republicans have finally realized he's a loser. Mahablog links to a well-timed Atlantic article that lays out Rove's failures:

- Social Security
- Faith-based wingnut welfare
- Katrina
- The 2006 elections

It is quite likely that Republicans have finally realized that if you want support from voters, you need to actually deliver on policies, not just promise to. But to change the previous "create our own reality" approach to governance, you'd have to get rid of Rove, because that's all Rove does. With one exception.

Republicans Think He's a Loser, Nativist Edition

I said there was one exception to the rule that Rove simply "creates his own reality" and makes policy promises without delivering on those promises. The exception was supposed to be Latino voters. That is, Rove really did want to court the Latino vote, rather than just claiming Republicans had Latino support. The reason is obvious: if Republicans don't get Latino voters, they're sunk.

Of course, this conflicts (and has, in noticeable ways) with the nativist instincts of the base of the Republican party. About the only thing, at this point, that could mobilize the Republican base (and save some Congressional seats, if not the White House) is to give in to these nativist instincts, and start attacking brown people with gusto. But I doubt Rove would stick around for that—he knows the numbers too well. So it's possible that Rove is out so the Republicans can turn into the full-fledged racist party they've always been.

Update: Athenae goes to Freepi-land, so I (and you) don't have to. And sure enough, they're thrilled to see Rove and his Latino-friendly ways gone.

The Sheriff Is Coming

Several times in the WSJ coverage of Rove's resignation, it notes that, Rove was thinking of leaving a year ago:

"I just think it's time," he says, adding that he first floated the idea of leaving to Mr. Bush a year ago. His friends confirm he had been talking about it with others even earlier.

Of course, it wasn't exactly a year ago. It was more like 15 months ago, when it looked likely that Rove would be indicted in the Plame investigation. So it's quite possible that Rove is leaving just three steps ahead of one of the many sheriffs that have him in their sights. These include: