

REPUBLICAN BAD FAITH NEGOTIATION, AGAIN

If you need any more proof that the Republican attempt to break the UAW a week ago Thursday was really just a political stunt, read this article. In it, Republican after Republican attacks Bush for providing relief to the auto industry. That includes four of the Republican Senators who—Bob Corker has assured us—would have supported his "compromise" deal from last Thursday:

John McCain:

John McCain is leading the way, saying it is "unacceptable that we would leave the American taxpayer with a tab of tens of billions of dollars while failing to receive any serious concessions from the industry."

John Kyl:

"I'm very disappointed," said Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.). "The president justified his action with a false choice: it's either this plan or abrupt liquidation of the companies. The White House seems to think that the industry didn't have time to deal with the problem or prepare for an orderly bankruptcy, which is false."

Judd Gregg:

"These funds were not authorized by Congress for non-financial companies in distress," Gregg said, "but were to be used to restore liquidity and stability in the overall financial system of the country and to help prevent fundamental systemic risks in the global marketplace."

Mitch McConnell:

"I have strong objections to the use of Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) funds for industry specific bailouts. And I do not support this action," McConnell said. "But since the administration has chosen to use these funds to aid the automakers, it is important that the date-specific requirements on all the stakeholders be enforced."

Yet this is virtually the same bill, with one caveat: that the manufacturers, "can deviate from the quantitative targets above, providing that the firm reports the reasons for these deviations and makes the business case to achieve long-term viability in spite of the deviations."

In other words, the Republicans are pissed because the President's plan allows the auto manufacturers to "deviate" from Bob Corker's demand that the UAW lower wages below that of Japanese manufacturers' workers by the end of the year if the manufacturers can make a business case to do so.

These Republicans are pissed that GM and Chrysler don't have to cut costs even if there's a good business reason not to do so!!!

Not surprisingly, these Republicans are not alone in disavowing Bob Corker's plan. They're joined by Bob Corker himself:

"The best solution would have been definite terms, within in a finite time period, committed to law, that protected taxpayers," said Corker. "Instead, we have ended up with an agreement open to interpretation, that eliminates the sense of crisis, where taxpayer dollars are expended and we are left to hope that the next administration has the will to enforce the tough concessions necessary to make these companies viable

for the long term. Unfortunately, it is clear that stakeholders are already working to undo those tough concessions.”

Though note: perhaps to paper over the fact that he’s rejecting his own damn “compromise,” Corker has moved the bar by claiming he was demanding even more from the UAW than he had been.

The Corker plan included three major components, which had to be met by a date certain in 2009:

[snip]

- Two, bring wages immediately in line with companies like Honda, Nissan, Toyota, and BMW.

I guess cutting UAW wages by the end of 2009—which is what he was demanding a week ago—wasn’t enough for Corker, and he’d like to do so before this Christmas season.

Because that’s just the kind of guy he is.