

DID EVAN BAYH QUIT BECAUSE REID REFUSED TO GIVE PARIS HILTON A TAX BREAK?

In his statement explaining why he was quitting, Evan Bayh named the Harry Reid's decision not to let MaxTax Baucus and Chuck Grassley hold the jobs bill hostage as one of the reasons he does not like Congress.

Just last week, a major piece of legislation to create jobs – the public's top priority – fell apart amid complaints from both the left and right.

Marc Ambinder expands on poor Evan's pique that centrists weren't allowed to hold a jobs bill hostage.

Bayh is an anomaly of sorts; he really grew to dislike the influence of liberal activists on his Senate colleagues. To him, these activists increased the cost of doing business. Reaching out to the other side became more risky than rallying around an ideological pole, even though that rallying around contributed to stasis. When it became clear to Bayh that the White House wasn't going to play his game – wasn't going to sell out liberals at every turn – Bayh decided he had had enough.

As it happens, one effect of Reid's refusal to give into MaxTax Baucus' demands is that it screwed up ConservaDem and Republican efforts to extend estate tax breaks.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's (D-Nev.) decision to move a scaled-back job bills has thrown a bipartisan deal to reduce the impact of the estate tax into

doubt.

Senate leaders discussed moving an estate tax bill through their chamber that would prevent a huge hike in the tax from taking effect in 2011.

In exchange, Republicans would agree to support the jobs bill created by Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and the panel's ranking member, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa).

As Matt Yglesias pointed out last year, extending the Paris Hilton tax has been a favorite project of Bayh's and Blanche Lincoln's. (Here's Ezra on the same issue.)

Particularly given the way Bayh decided to leave without warning Reid, was that the final straw? Poor Evan Bayh won't suffer through another term as Senator if he's not going to be allowed to be a budget hypocrite while calling for cuts in entitlements while pushing to give the super-rich big tax breaks?