

Can't Walk and Chew Gum?

President Lyndon B. Johnson once described an opponent as unable to “walk and chew gum at the same time.” Today that phrase fits the United States Senate.

Legislation to provide extended unemployment and health insurance for aviation workers was killed yesterday. When only five Republicans joined fifty-one Democratic Senators, a motion to cut off a threatened GOP filibuster failed. The bill was then withdrawn by its sponsor, Senator Carnahan.

Why didn't the Democrats force the GOP to make good on its threatened filibuster?

Why, if Republicans wanted to spike this \$1.9 billion aid package, didn't the Democratic leaders say “talk for as long as you want ... tell these aviation workers they do not deserve our help ... show them Marie Antoinette still lives?”

But they did not call the Republican's bluff. They were snookered.

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle told union leaders “you are where our hearts are.” We want to “to continue the dialogue ... to protect the jobs we got.” But he also warned us last week that “we can't be wishing and hoping.”

Daschle even went so far as to say “I did not receive one phone call or one suggestion. Perhaps, it is my fault for not calling labor.”

He was called. He just could not deliver.

The Senate's message to aviation workers is clear: Go stand in the unemployment line, wait your turn, and someday – maybe next year – we will toss you a lifeline.

Senators and Congressmen need to hear from you ... directly and forcefully. Don't just call. Make an appointment to see them in their state or district offices during the weekend of November 3, 4 and 5th.

Bring along a few (hundred) of your friends. Let them know that if they can't walk and chew gum at the same time, you will find someone who can.

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Have you heard?

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