

Why the Democrats lost

A Caffeinated editorial

The Democrats lost because they lost the message. President Obama, his administration and certainly the House leadership did a poor job of communicating what they accomplished and of refuting the sometimes crack-pot ideas the Republicans, and especially the Tea Party candidates were offering.

Communications matter in shaping perception. The Tea Party was especially successful in convincing the public that Obama was “socializing” the country. The perception of the Democrats as un-American was instilled. Did Obama prove otherwise? No. He didn’t seem to grasp that how he communicated what his administration achieved was just as important as what he actually did. He didn’t make the case that the changes he made may have helped stem the recession. He also didn’t make the case that jobs were his number one priority. What was? Health care reform.

Timing is crucial in communications and in politics. If Obama had put health care on the back burner (or at least seemed to) he may have been able to say he prioritized jobs.

This mid-term election is a tremendous failure for Democrats. The Republicans were led by someone who constantly put his foot in his mouth, Michael Steele, and yet managed to win control of the House. Sarah Palin, arguably the most superficial politicians of all time, is the voice of the Tea Party on a national stage. She talks in platitudes and unsupported statements, and yet the Democrats couldn’t find a way to reduce her credibility.

Nancy Pelosi, who is a brilliant politician, failed to make the case. Obama failed to make the case. And the many incumbents who lost their seat, failed to make the case.

It all comes down to communications and having a message that is relate-able, repeatable, and that resonates with voters. Democrats did not have this in 2010.

