

Kudos to Specter

A rare moment of sanity in the political life of our nation occurred when Republican Sen. Arlen Specter rose during the State of the Union message to applaud President Clinton's call for an end to rancor and divisiveness in our politics.

Despite the disparaging glares of some of his Republican colleagues, Mr. Specter alone rose from the ranks of his party in salute to a sentiment that any thoughtful person — Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative — should have rightly saluted. In American politics too often it takes great acts of courage to do only what should be expected of us as decent human beings.

By his example, Mr. Specter instructed us all that partisanship has a proper place in politics: subordinate to civility, decency, good humor, reason and all other laudable qualities of democratic debate.

With the unwitting assistance of his less noble colleagues, Mr. Specter also illustrated how the blind pursuit of "core" convictions can lead otherwise intelligent people to sit foolishly on their hands, unmoved while one among them calls for union and civility. And while all of America rises in applause.

Timothy P. Law
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I am a conservative Republican. Bravo to Arlen Specter for applauding the President's nonpartisan appeal to us all (while the rest of my party sat parochially on their hands). I certainly hope the congressional Republicans can shed the blame for shutting down the government, because the President's an-

swer to the imbroglio was, in effect "just raise the debt [ceiling], and we'll figure something out later, if ever."

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