

The Inside Story Of Dean's Sabotage

by Debra Hanania-Freeman

When Senate Democrat Tim Johnson was rushed into emergency surgery on Dec. 13 to alleviate intercranial bleeding caused by a congenital defect, Democrats across the nation held their breaths. Prior to that day, many Democrats outside of his home state of South Dakota had never even heard of the centrist Democrat. But, the realization that he might not be unable to serve out the remaining two years of his term, highlighted the fragility of the Democrats' 51-49 lead in the Senate. The press wasted no time in speculating that, should Senator Johnson die, South Dakota's Republican Gov. Mike Rounds would likely name a Republican to succeed him; a move that would not only erase the Democrats' one-vote majority, but would also give Vice President Dick Cheney the decisive vote on critical issues.

Fortunately, Johnson is recovering well and there is no reason at all to believe that he will relinquish his seat. However, the close call reintroduced a discussion of the number of additional seats the Democrats *could* have won, were it