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He's 32 and rated highly by the ADA and some of the things he's said recently have raised a few eyebrows

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Senator Biden: A Young Liberal Against Busing

WASHINGTON — Joseph R. Biden of Delaware, youngest man in the Senate (32) and with impeccable liberal credentials (an 81 percent rating from Americans for Democratic Action), says forced busing is an idea whose time is past.

And he says liberals should move beyond the notion that opposing busing is reactionary and racist.

Odd as this may seem, there is nothing new about his position. As early as 1972, he shocked liberal friends by coming out against busing.

"Since I had been so active in the field of civil rights, all the knee-jerk liberals assumed I was a knee-jerk liberal on busing," Biden says.

And so, today he is a prominent figure in recent heated debates on busing.

He was not so prominent in the heated Senate debates on busing during his first two years here. "It wasn't a major priority when I came to the Senate," Biden says. "But last year the issue became so clouded that you were either four-square busing or four-square civil rights. No one was talking about it rationally."

That year, Biden remained against busing, which he describes as "the atom bomb of anti-discrimination weapons," but he opposed anti-busing legislation that he considered unconstitutional. "The Gurney amendment would have opened up every civil rights decision from 1954 onward," Biden says.

Then he agonized for months over the dilemma. Finally, Biden decided that he would have to come up with his own solution. He planned to sponsor an amendment this fall prohibiting Department of Health, Education and Welfare-ordered busing.

But Biden changed his timetable (See BIDEN on 2-L)

