

September 29th, 2015

RE: An Open Letter to House Leadership Candidates

Dear Candidates,

Change in Washington started with the historic election of the Republican class of 2010. Our new members came from different backgrounds and our political philosophies varied greatly. Our Conference has changed significantly over the last three elections; over half of our members have served in Congress for less than five years and never in the minority. We swept into Washington united by the common goals of restoring Constitutional principles that made America great, providing our constituents relief from the heavy-handed government expansion brought on by the Obama Administration, and creating opportunities for hardworking families.

Time and again, the efforts of our new historic majority were stymied by a Democrat-controlled Senate. With the Senate returning to Republican control this year, we were optimistic that the return to regular order in both chambers would get Congress moving again. Sadly, we have not seen that materialize.

In the House, dissatisfaction among some in the rank-and-file continued to grow culminating into the events of last week. It is clear our Conference is fractured. Abraham Lincoln once said, “[n]o man has authority to give up the rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with, and mould from, disorganized and discordant elements.” Now is the time for introspection. Our leaders and candidates for leadership must ask themselves, how can we create a new sense of unity and inclusion from division and divisiveness?

With this in mind, the undersigned encourage candidates to incorporate the following reforms into your leadership platforms:

- **Restore True Regular Order**: We need to end the cycle of crisis legislating, which begins at the committee level. Committees need to be doing more hearings, more mark-ups, and more formal conferences. Member priorities with 150 co-sponsors or broad bipartisan support at the committee level must be taken up even if they are not aligned with the priorities of the Chair. Committee Chairs should move legislation supported by the Committee to the floor and leadership should allow votes on all legislation moving out of Committee.
- **Empower Subcommittee Chairs**: Unfortunately, far too often subcommittee chair is a ceremonial title. We need to empower subcommittee chairs by ensuring committee resources are allocated to each subcommittee chair to enable them and their staff to effectively shepherd legislation.
- **Create a Culture of Inclusiveness**: Leadership often bends to the will of the vocal minority while neglecting the policy priorities of the silent majority. As a Conference, we should strive to ensure all voices are being considered by leadership and the will of the majority of the Majority is being effectuated.

- **Develop Committee Support for Legislation:** Legislation is sometimes plucked from members without any committee review or sufficient co-sponsors to demonstrate support from the members. This leads to legislation moving directly to the floor without significant member input. If legislation is worthy of floor consideration, outside of exigent circumstances, it should at least be vetted by the committees of jurisdiction and members should have the opportunity to offer germane amendments.
- **Committee Members Should Have Input on the Selection of Chairs:** Members of committees have quality insight as to who can best lead, yet under the current structure individual members have no input as to the selection of their Chair. Seniority should remain a primary factor in determining the Chair; however, committee members should play a more direct role.

The acts of the past week were historic in nature. Shifting Leadership positions alone will not change the culture or bridge our Conference's divisions. Our Conference must move from a command-and-control leadership structure to a bottom up member driven approach to governance.

We would like to thank you for your willingness and desire to lead during this tumultuous time within our Republican Conference.

Sincerely,

JAMES B. RENACCI
Member of Congress

MARK E. AMODEI
Member of Congress

LOU BARLETTA
Member of Congress

REID J. RIBBLE
Member of Congress

MIKE KELLY
Member of Congress

TOM MARINO
Member of Congress

JOHN RATCLIFFE
Member of Congress

VICKY HARTZLER
Member of Congress

BILL FLORES
Member of Congress

KRISTI L. NOEM
Member of Congress

STEVE STIVERS
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RANDY HULTGREN
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JEFF DUNCAN
Member of Congress

RAUL L. LABRADOR
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JOESPH J. HECK
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JUSTIN AMASH
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ANDY BARR
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AUSTIN SCOTT
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RICK CRAWFORD
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BOB GIBBS
Member of Congress