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Meet the Leadership: Corporate America and the Religious Right's New Team in the House



John Boehner



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Ralph Hall



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Lamar Smith



Steve King



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Introduction

After picking up an astounding 63 seats in the House of Representatives in the midterm elections, Republicans have selected an extreme contingent of members to lead their caucus and major congressional committees. Bolstered by an infusion of Tea Party and radical freshman members, the House GOP leadership is ready to obstruct the workings of government, rollback progressive reforms, and oppose President Obama at every turn. The Republican leadership appears to have little intention to act as a responsible governing partner and instead plans to promote the agenda of far-right interest groups, the Tea Party, and pro-corporate political groups who buttressed and financed the GOP's 2010 electoral victory.

Incoming Speaker John Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor are favorites of K Street lobbyists and seek to stop progressive legislation—from equal rights and environmental protection to assistance for middle class families and financial industry regulations—in its tracks. Along with incoming Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and Conference Chair Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), the new GOP leadership team seeks to expand the power of corporations at the expense of responsible public policy and the rights of working Americans. Moreover, the Tea Party and the Religious Right will be granted more prominent roles in governing as rightwing darlings like Michele Bachmann (R-MN) find new allies in the GOP's extreme Freshman Class. Praising partisanship and openly refusing to compromise with President Obama and congressional Democrats, House Republicans have not denied the looming possibility of a government shutdown.

Just as troubling as the hyper-partisan incoming House leadership are the newly chosen chairmen of congressional committees who intend to turn the original purposes of the committees on their heads: leaders of the Judiciary Committee are determined to undermine the rights of minorities; the Oversight Committee chairman is resolved to stop government oversight of Wall Street; the head of the Health Subcommittee is one of Congress's most vocal opponents of sexual health education and reproductive rights; the Science Committee chairman wants to put climate change scientists in his crosshairs; and the Republican presiding over the Budget Committee wants to increase the budget deficit in order to provide massive tax breaks for corporations.

Partisan attacks, politically-motivated investigations and reckless policy proposals will dominate the agenda of a Republican-run House whose leaders are devoted to obstructing the workings of government and advancing a right-wing direction for the country.

John Boehner (R-OH) Incoming Speaker of the House



John Boehner

The GOP's dramatic gains in Tuesday's midterm election have positioned John Boehner as the incoming Speaker of the House in the 112th Congress. In his twenty years in Congress, Boehner has been one of the fiercest protectors of Corporate America, and his political and legislative history provide a striking road map for what to expect from his tenure as Speaker.

Following stints in local politics and service in the Ohio State House, John Boehner was elected to the United States Congress in 1990. In his second term in Congress, Boehner helped write the Contract with America and became a stalwart ally of Newt Gingrich, even his "protégé." Boehner backed Gingrich's partisan and confrontational style of leadership, and Gingrich elevated him to the position of GOP Conference Chairman. From there, Boehner became the go-to Member of Congress for corporate lobbyists and business interests.

As Conference Chairman, Boehner "met weekly with leading lobbyists to enlist their support and discuss strategy" throughout his four year tenure. During a vote to remove a subsidy to the tobacco industry, Boehner personally handed out checks from tobacco lobbyists and industry PACs to other congressmen on the House floor. At least one Republican colleague, Rep. Linda Smith, blasted Boehner's actions, saying that "if it is not illegal, it should be." Since his role in the Republican leadership was closely tied to Gingrich, when Gingrich resigned following the GOP's 1998 election loss, Boehner was voted out of his leadership position.

After he was forced out of his role as Conference Chairman, Boehner embarked on a plan to regain support among his Republican colleagues. His leadership PAC, called the "Freedom Project," took in millions of dollars from special-interest lobbyists, and he then used the money to contribute to his fellow Republican candidates. Top contributors included Sallie Mae, Merrill Lynch, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and Cincinnati Financial Corp., which helped make Boehner's leadership PAC one of the best-funded among his peers. The "major sources of financing" for the Freedom Project came from "for-profit colleges and trade schools, and private student lenders," and as chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, Boehner sponsored "legislation strongly supported by private student lenders to restrict the ability of the U.S. Department of Education to make government student loans less expensive by cutting fees."

Boehner told representatives from student loan companies that he has “tricks up my sleeve to protect you,” and he later helped pass a law to bar individuals from refinancing their student loans.

According to Boehner, “I have a good relationship to K Street and people who lobby us.”

Even Boehner’s landlord is a lobbyist, and the Washington Post writes that his landlord’s “clients — including restaurant chains and health insurance companies — hired him to lobby on issues at the heart of Boehner’s work, including minimum-wage increases, small-business tax breaks and tax-free savings accounts to help cover insurance costs.”

In addition to building relationships with corporate lobbyists, Boehner enhanced his standing with the Religious Right. In 2002 Boehner wrote a letter to the Ohio Board of Education urging them to teach intelligent design in public schools, using language derived from anti-evolution activist Phillip E. Johnson. Cyrus B. Richardson Jr., the school board vice president, called Boehner’s letter “misleading” because “it makes it sound like the law says you have to teach intelligent design, when that isn’t in the law.”

He has consistently stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Religious Right throughout his time in Congress. Boehner voted to ban same-sex couples from adopting children and to repeal domestic partnership laws, he opposed hate crimes laws and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and he supported Don’t Ask Don’t Tell and a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. On issues regarding reproductive justice, Boehner voted against protecting reproductive health clinics and backed laws which would compel women to go through biased counseling before terminating their pregnancy. In his speech to the Family Research Council’s 2009 Values Voter Summit, Boehner emphasized his steadfast, 100% anti-choice record. After the 2010 election, Boehner’s chief of staff met with Randall Terry, the radical founder of Operation Rescue, who pressured Republicans in the House to criminalize abortion.

Following Tom DeLay’s resignation as Majority Leader in 2006 (after DeLay was indicted on conspiracy and money laundering charges for which he was recently convicted) John Boehner returned to the GOP leadership and was elected to replace DeLay. From the outset, Boehner pledged to support Republican plans to privatize Social Security, worked against a bipartisan immigration reform bill, and vigorously fought stronger ethics laws. Once elevated to Majority Leader, his leadership PAC received even more financial support from special interest groups. *The New York Times* found that “Mr. Boehner’s biggest donors include the political action committees of lobbying firms, drug and cigarette makers,

banks, health insurers, oil companies and military contractors.” Boehner’s PAC also received \$32,000 from casino-owning American Indian tribes with ties to convicted felon Jack Abramoff.

Boehner only deepened his ties to special interest lobbyists and intensified his pro-corporate agenda after the 2006 elections, when Republicans lost their majority and he became Minority Leader. Like the Freedom Project, the “Boehner for Speaker” committee allowed lobbyists to buy significant access to the congressman. Lobbyists were allowed “VIP access” to Boehner and his top aides if they could raise \$100,000 worth of contributions or more for the committee. But Boehner’s ties to lobbyists don’t end there: he routinely met with business leaders, particularly from the banking and tobacco industries, at his Thursday Group meetings, spent tens of thousands of dollars “to travel to golf destinations on a corporate-subsidized tab,” and gave business associations a larger platform through his America Speaking Out initiative. In September, the New York Times profiled his close ties with K Street:

He maintains especially tight ties with a circle of lobbyists and former aides representing some of the nation’s biggest businesses, including Goldman Sachs, Google, Citigroup, R. J. Reynolds, MillerCoors and UPS.

They have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to his campaigns, provided him with rides on their corporate jets, socialized with him at luxury golf resorts and waterfront bashes and are now leading fund-raising efforts for his Boehner for Speaker campaign, which is soliciting checks of up to \$37,800 each, the maximum allowed.

Some of the lobbyists readily acknowledge routinely seeking his office’s help — calling the congressman and his aides as often as several times a week — to advance their agenda in Washington. And in many cases, Mr. Boehner has helped them out.

Special interest groups continue to pay handsomely to gain access to Boehner and his aides. This year Boehner raised well over \$7 million and Fredreka Schouten of *USA Today* writes the “industries giving the most to Boehner” include “insurance companies, drug manufacturers and Wall Street firms, all of which now face new regulations adopted by the Democratic-controlled Congress.” In all, the financial and insurance industries have been his top donors, contributing \$3.8 million to his political committees.

Boehner’s connections to corporate lobbyists and trade associations greatly influenced his political work. He is big business’s chief advocate on the Hill, and his efforts include

“combating fee increases for the oil industry, fighting a proposed cap on debit card fees, protecting tax breaks for hedge fund executives and opposing a cap on greenhouse gas emissions.” Reacting to the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Boehner agreed with the US Chamber of Commerce that taxpayers should subsidize the cleanup, rather than forcing BP to pay for the entire bill. Boehner has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from oil companies, and fought attempts by Democrats to lift the liability cap in order to make BP pay for the entire cost of the cleanup.

Boehner vehemently opposes greater supervision of the financial industry and worked tirelessly against Wall Street reform, comparing new oversight and regulations to “killing an ant with a nuclear weapon.” When speaking to an “enthusiastic crowd of bankers at the American Bankers Association government relations summit,” Boehner told them to fight regulatory reform and not “to let those little punk staffers take advantage of you.” Before the historic financial reform bill came up for a vote, Boehner “met with more than 100 lobbyists” to strategize their opposition, and after the legislation was signed into law, he immediately called for its repeal.

But while Boehner looks after his friends and campaign contributors on K Street and Wall Street, he voted against recent legislation to increase lending and tax relief for small businesses, voted ‘No’ on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, attempted to stop extending benefits to unemployed Americans, and vigorously opposed a proposal to bolster and ensure government funding for the medical treatment of 9/11 rescue workers. He also led the opposition to the DISCLOSE Act, which would have made corporations publicly disclose their political contributions and prevent foreign corporations from spending in US elections.

An unapologetic beneficiary of corporate money and an unwavering ally of K Street, John Boehner consistently supports the interests of big business over the public interest. Corporations and their lobbyists are largely responsible for financing his political operations, crafting his policy proposals, and lifting his political career and ambitions. Not only has John Boehner embraced Wall Street and K Street, but he also worked hard to shore up his support from the Religious Right and other conservative interest groups. As the next Speaker of the House, John Boehner will have even more power to advance the goals of Washington lobbyists and push his right-wing, pro-corporate agenda.

Eric Cantor (R-VA) Incoming Majority Leader



Eric Cantor

Hard-line conservative Eric Cantor is set to take the reins as House Majority Leader after serving in the GOP leadership for eight of his ten years in Congress. Elected in 2000, Cantor was named Chief Deputy Whip in 2002 and became Republican Whip in 2008, making him second only to John Boehner in the Republican leadership. Cantor has proven to be a fierce and steadfast partisan throughout his time in the House. Conservative commentator Fred Barnes, the executive editor of the right-wing *Weekly Standard*, called Cantor the House GOP’s “most valuable player.”

A prolific fundraiser, Cantor founded the Young Guns recruitment program and his leadership PAC doled out more money to candidates than any other in the 2010 election. Wall Street, real estate interests, and the insurance industry were the top donors to ERIC (Every Republican Is Crucial) PAC, which raised over \$5.5 million in the 2010 election cycle. While corporate interests filled ERIC PAC with ample funding, Cantor pledged to preserve massive, budget-busting tax cuts for Wall Street, big business, and the wealthiest Americans. He made a point that he would refuse to negotiate with Democrats on tax policy and would not back anything short of an extension of the Bush tax cuts for the top 2% of the tax bracket.

Cantor was a stern opponent of health care reform and supports fully repealing the reform law. During a town hall meeting, a constituent told Cantor about how her family member, who was suffering from a tumor, lost her health insurance after losing her job. Despite his firm resistance to public health care and the public option, Cantor suggested that the person find an “existing government program [...] Beyond that, I know that there are programs, there are charitable organizations.”

Leaders of the Religious Right have embraced Cantor, an ardent social conservative and the only Jewish member of the Republican caucus. Richard Land, the head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s political arm, recommended that John McCain select him as his vice presidential nominee in 2008, telling the Christian Broadcasting Network that a “choice that I think would ring a lot of bells among evangelical and Catholic social conservatives, and I think could have some real electoral punch to it, is Eric Cantor.”

Staunchly anti-choice, Cantor has a 0% lifetime rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America, and was a vocal supporter of the anti-abortion rights Stupak-Pitts Amendment during the health care reform debate. He also voted against every single bill to expand or fund stem-cell research, calling such research

a “distraction” that would lead the country towards “embryo harvesting, perhaps even human cloning.”

Cantor is strongly opposed to LGBT equality and voted against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Act, and the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, and supported a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. He has a 0% lifetime rating from the Human Rights Campaign.

Cantor opposed the proposed Park51 Islamic community center near Ground Zero, saying, “Everybody knows America’s built on the rights of free expression, the rights to practice your faith, but come on.”

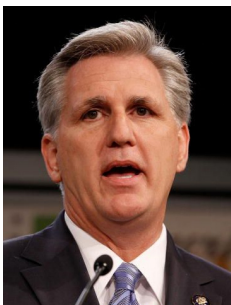
Cantor also led the charge to censor the National Portrait Gallery’s exhibit “Hide/Seek,” demanding that the Smithsonian dismantle the entire privately-funded exhibit. He threatened that the House may defund the Smithsonian altogether if the exhibit wasn’t taken down, insisting that “the museum should pull the exhibit and be prepared for serious questions come budget time.” In addition, Cantor threatened to cut taxpayer funding for NPR after the network fired commentator Juan Williams for making anti-Muslim remarks.

Pandering to the Tea Party, he lent his support to a radical proposal in the Virginia State House that would allow states to repeal a federal law if two-thirds of states supported its retraction. Cantor said that the Tea Party-backed Repeal Amendment represents a “step in the right direction.”

A bitterly partisan politician who consistently opposes the rights of marginalized groups and minorities while reaching out to corporations and the Religious Right, Eric Cantor is slated to oversee and continue the GOP’s “no compromise” strategy.

Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)

Incoming Majority Whip



Kevin McCarthy

A trusted ally of John Boehner, California Republican Kevin McCarthy was the author of the Pledge to America, coordinator of the 2010 Young Guns recruiting program, and the Chairman of the 2008 Republican Platform Committee. McCarthy’s speedy rise through the Republican ranks (he was elected to Congress in 2006) is a testament to his unwavering party loyalty and focus on political strategy

and messaging.

McCarthy was responsible for the GOP’s candidate recruitment efforts in 2010 as part of the National Republican Congressional Committee’s Young Guns program. He built close ties to corporate donors not only to benefit his own campaign but to help numerous Republican challengers across the country. According to *The Nation*, “As he was making his move into more elite party circles, McCarthy raised a million dollars for candidates around the country, much of it from the insurance, securities, pharmaceutical, entertainment and healthcare industries.” McCarthy is a member of the House Financial Services Committee, and the insurance and financial industries have been his biggest contributors.

In the midst of the 2010 campaign, McCarthy crafted the GOP’s Pledge to America along with staffer and former Exxon lobbyist Brad Wild. Progressives and movement conservatives alike criticized the manifesto, arguing that the document was a rehash of Bush economic policies and short on both vision and substance. Erik Erickson of the prominent conservative blog RedState wrote that McCarthy’s Pledge was “perhaps the most ridiculous thing to come out of Washington since George McClellan.”

Despite the GOP’s avowed commitment to balancing the budget, the Pledge calls for tax cuts that would cost trillions of dollars but asks for only \$100 billion in budget cuts for next year. McCarthy’s Pledge insists on the permanent extension of the Bush tax cuts along with additional tax cuts but does not clearly indicate where it would make spending cuts. In an appearance on MSNBC, McCarthy couldn’t name a single program he would cut. A report by *Bloomberg* shows that the likely targets of the cuts include vital funding for education, cancer research, police and firefighters, and aid to low-income families. Economist Paul Krugman found that the Pledge contained “nonsensical promises” and that the “Republicans aren’t even pretending that their numbers add up.”

In one of the most devastating critiques of the GOP’s budget gimmicks, Howard Gleckman of the Tax Policy Center discovered that if Republicans want to balance the budget while making trillions of dollars worth of tax cuts and maintaining the Pledge’s vow not to cut the defense budget or entitlement programs for seniors and veterans, they would have to “abolish all the rest of government to get to balance by 2020”:

Everything. No more national parks, no more Small Business Administration loans, no more export subsidies, no more NIH. No more Medicaid (one-third of its budget pays for long-term care for our parents and others with disabilities). No more child health or child nutrition programs. No more highway construction. No more homeland security. Oh, and

no more Congress. No more nothin'.”

The Pledge’s reckless budget tricks helped confirm McCarthy’s reputation for concentrating on political strategy over sound policymaking. For example, McCarthy constantly disparages the economic stimulus, but requested tens of millions of dollars of stimulus funding for projects in his district.

Loyal to his Party’s right-wing social agenda, McCarthy voted against hate crimes legislation, the repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell, and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and opposed the Equal Pay bill and protections for women in the workplace. For his voting record in 2009, He received perfect 100% ratings from the American Conservative Union and Gary Bauer’s far-right Campaign for Working Families.

Preferring political grandstanding to serious policymaking, McCarthy helped pass off the GOP’s agenda of irresponsible promises as fiscal conservatism, and authored a platform that demanded balanced budgets while calling for extraordinarily expensive measures. McCarthy’s relentless partisanship allowed him to move quickly through GOP circles in Washington, but he failed to produce a substantive or original agenda for the Republican Party.

Peter Roskam (R-IL) Incoming Chief Deputy Majority Whip



Peter Roskam

Illinois Republican Peter Roskam will be serving as Kevin McCarthy’s right-hand man as the GOP caucus’s Chief Deputy Whip. Then-state senator Roskam was elected to Congress in 2006 with just 51% of the vote, defeating Iraq War veteran Tammy Duckworth in the extremely close race to succeed Henry Hyde. Before he was a member of the Illinois state legislature, Roskam began his career in politics by working as a legislative aide to Tom DeLay (R-TX), and later as an aide to Hyde. Roskam has diligently advanced the agenda of corporate lobbyists and Religious Right groups while in Congress, becoming a leading opponent of government oversight, environmental conservation, and rights for women and the LGBT community.

Roskam helped organize the GOP caucus’s “America Speaking Out” event, which Rep. McCarthy said would help “the common voice of the common man” shape the Republican Party’s agenda for the next Congress. However, Roskam’s

forum served as a platform for lobbyists from corporate interest groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, and the Retail Industry Leaders Association, who predictably criticized government regulation and oversight on business.

Although he’s a member of the Ways and Means Committee who calls himself a principled opponent of government spending and waste, he used taxpayer dollars to advertise his tele-town hall meeting about “out of control spending.” In 2008, Roskam was even caught using taxpayer money to pay for thousands of self-promoting mailings just weeks before the election, which according to government watchdog Public Citizen said was “a clear violation of the franking laws,” which prohibits House members from sending such mailings ninety days before an election.

After dismissively referring to climate change as “junk science” while campaigning for Congress, Roskam went on to consistently vote against efforts at improving environmental protection and building a clean energy economy. He is also a prominent supporter of expanding offshore drilling, and erroneously claimed that the country has “enough oil and gas to get us off foreign oil.”

Like his predecessor Henry Hyde, one of the House’s most vigorous opponents of abortion, Roskam is a staunch social conservative. He is opposed to a woman’s right to choose without exception, even in the cases of rape or incest. When explaining his opposition to abortion rights for women who have been raped, Roskam facetiously asked in a newspaper interview “why women can have abortions if rapists cannot be executed.” Roskam also is an avowed opponent of stem-cell research, having “led the fight against embryonic stem cell research in the [Illinois] state senate” and later voting against the Stem Cell Research Act.

Also while a member of the Illinois State Senate, Roskam was at the forefront of the 2006 opposition to a state law barring discrimination based on a person’s sexual orientation, slamming the state’s Human Rights Act as “a building block for gay marriage” that would “lead to some unpleasant situations.” In Congress, Roskam voted against the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, hate crimes laws, and protections for gays and lesbians from discrimination in the workplace. His solidly conservative voting record earned perfect 100% ratings from rightwing, anti-choice and anti-equality organizations like the Family Research Council and Gary Bauer’s Campaign for Working Families.

Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) Incoming Chair of House Republican

Conference



Jeb Hensarling

Jeb Hensarling clinched the post of GOP Conference Chairman after Indiana Rep. Mike Pence stepped down from the position. Elected to Congress in 2002, Hensarling has proved to be one of the most vocal conservatives in the House, consistently siding with corporate interests and trumpeting discredited and regressive economic ideas.

Before winning his House seat, Hensarling worked as a “career political aide” to Republican U.S. Senator Phil Gramm. He later “landed a job with a hedge fund managed by Sam and Charles Wyly,” two Republican mega-donors who helped launch Hensarling’s corporate and political career. In July, the Wyly brothers were charged by the Securities and Exchange Commission with “fraud by using secret overseas accounts to generate more than \$550 million in profit through illegal stock trades.” According to *The Dallas Morning News*, “two of the Wyly companies for which Hensarling worked – Maverick Capital and Green Mountain Energy – were tied to the improper trading scheme described by the SEC.” Hensarling, who has received \$107,200 in campaign contributions from the Wyly family over his political career, has denied involvement “in the Wyllys’ legal matters or tax strategies.”

In 2006, Hensarling was elected chair of one of the most right-wing caucuses in the House, the Republican Study Committee. The caucus is “organized for the purpose of advancing a conservative social and economic agenda in the House of Representatives,” and its agenda includes passing a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, overturning *Roe v. Wade* and ending a woman’s right to choose, and extensively cutting taxes for corporations.

Hensarling’s 99% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union is one of the highest in Congress, beating out even Speaker-designate John Boehner and incoming Majority Leader Eric Cantor. Hensarling considers himself a Tea Party Republican, saying, “In many respects, I guess I would say I was into Tea Party before there was a Tea Party.”

A vocal proponent of corporate influence in government, Hensarling consistently resists campaign finance reform legislation. Hensarling vigorously worked to defeat the Shareholders Protection Act, which he described as a threat to freedom, and tried to stop the bill from coming out of the House Financial Services Committee.

He said, “I do believe that the corporate entity does have, as

the Supreme Court [in *Citizens United*] has said, political rights of free speech under our First Amendment. Frankly, I wish they were broader than they are.”

Hensarling described himself as “one of the top 2 or 3 or 4 most conservative members in the House of Representatives when it comes to economics,” and has spoken in favor of the privatization of Social Security and the reduction of benefits for new retirees. He is also the chief cosponsor of Paul Ryan’s radical “Roadmap for America’s Future.”

He made waves by championing the so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR), which would dramatically constrain the ability of government to generate revenue. In Colorado, which enacted TABOR in 1992, budget problems became so severe that the state faced a fiscal crisis and Colorado’s Republican governor successfully pushed for its partial repeal. Hensarling also advocated for a constitutional amendment to significantly shrink the size of the federal budget, but when asked by Eliot Spitzer of CNN how he would reduce the deficit, he was unable to name any specific programs that he would cut.

Criticizing the American Clean Energy and Security Act, Hensarling said the bill would enact a “national energy tax which according to studies at MIT could pose a \$3,128 burden on every working family in America.” However, according to the non-partisan PolitiFact.com, the legislation does not include a national energy tax, and the person who conducted the MIT study denounced GOP leaders like Hensarling for “misrepresent[ing]” his study, saying Republican claims were “wrong in so many ways it’s hard to begin.”

Darrell Issa (R-CA) Incoming Chair of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



Darrell Issa

Known for his “bombastic style and attention-seeking investigations,” Darrell Issa plans to use his position as Chairman of the Oversight Committee to launch scurrilous investigations into everything from the ACORN, which is no longer even in existence, to climate change scientists. Issa has pledged to pursue the Obama White House just as vigorously as House Republicans investigated Bill and Hillary Clinton after the GOP took control of the chamber in 1994, telling a Republican meeting that he will use his subpoena powers against “the White House” instead of “corporate America.” He

told Politico that he wants to hold “seven hearings a week, times 40 weeks.” The journal also reports that Issa is planning to “roughly double his staff from 40 to between 70 and 80.”

According to *Politico*, “Many Democrats — and, truth be told, even a few Republicans in the House — regard Issa as something of a clownish figure, full of bluster and a perfect representative of an age of polarized, cable TV-driven politics,” but whose anti-Obama zeal “endears him to tea partiers.”

An impassioned detractor of President Obama, Issa told Rush Limbaugh that Obama is “one of the most corrupt presidents in modern times.”

Issa’s targets include financial watchdog and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau architect Elizabeth Warren, who is feared by Wall Street, and the climate change scientists who were baselessly and wrongly attacked by a right-wing smear campaign. Issa wants to investigate scientists who supposedly “played fast and loose with both the truth and our money.” *Mother Jones* reports that scientists are bracing for “a committee [that] will devote a good deal of time to hauling government and university climate scientists before Congress.”

It seems that smear campaigns propped up by the right-wing media may provide a blueprint for Issa’s investigations, with growing speculation that he will probe ACORN, even though it no longer operates, and take up the New Black Panther Party voter intimidation investigation. Even many Republicans dismiss right-wing paranoia about the New Black Panther case, and ACORN has been vindicated and cleared of the purported wrongdoings that caused it to fold. Issa has also discussed investigating the claims that the alleged White House job offers to Joe Sestak and Andrew Romanoff were potentially criminal, even though none of the actions the White House took were illegal or violated the law in any way.

Issa is a steadfast conservative who has received perfect scores from the American Conservative Union and Phyllis Schlafly’s Eagle Forum. He became a star of the conservative movement when he led and heavily funded the effort to recall California governor Gray Davis. But the Congressman has a checkered legal history along with a record of misrepresenting and exaggerating his past. Today, Issa is the richest member of Congress.

While he is proud of his self-aggrandizing tactics, Issa drew the ire of many, even his fellow Republicans, when during a hearing on funding for health care for first responders of the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks, he said:

I have to ask why... the firefighters who went there and everyone in the City of New York needs to come to the federal government... How much money has

the federal government put out post-9/11, including the buckets of \$10 and \$20 billion we just threw at the State and the City of New York versus how much has been paid out by the City and the State of New York?

It’s very simple: I can’t vote for additional money for New York if I can’t see why it would be appropriate to do this every single time a similar situation happens, which quite frankly includes any urban terrorist. It doesn’t have to be somebody from al-Qaeda. It can be someone who decides that they don’t like animal testing at one of our pharmaceutical facilities.

It simply was an aircraft, residue of the aircraft and residue of the materials used to build this building. It had no dirty bomb in it; it had no chemical munitions in it.

With Issa in charge of such a powerful committee, Republicans hope to recreate if not surpass the intense and unwarranted scrutiny of the Democratic White House during the Clinton era.

Paul Ryan (R-WI) Incoming Chair of the House Budget Committee



Paul Ryan

As the incoming chair of the Budget Committee, Congressman Paul Ryan has been placed on the GOP leadership fast track. He has received significant praise from Republican politicians and conservative writers for the platform he authored pushing radical economic beliefs and regressive tax policy.

A far-right conservative who says Ayn Rand is the reason he became involved in politics, Ryan claims that every political debate in Congress “usually comes down to one conflict - individualism versus collectivism.” Ryan believes that once the government dismantles and privatizes programs such as Social Security, more Americans will stop “listen[ing] to the likes of Dick Gephardt and Nancy Pelosi, Ted Kennedy, the collectivist, class-warfare-breathing demagogues.”

Ryan’s “Roadmap for America’s Future” calls for the elimination and privatization of safety net programs and proposes increasing the tax burden on middle and lower class families

while enacting significant tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Americans. Independent analysts believe that the congressman's plan would ultimately increase the federal budget deficit even as it forces the majority of Americans to spend more on taxes and health care services.

His "Roadmap" seeks to eliminate the corporate income tax along with taxes on capital gains, dividends and interests. It would also lower the top tax rate from the already low Bush-era level of 35% to 25%, and would abolish the estate tax and the alternative minimum tax. The Tax Policy Center found that the top 1% of Americans will receive an eye-popping "117 percent of the plan's total tax cuts" while it would raise "taxes for 95 percent of the population."

Ryan's plan includes a regressive 8.5 percent consumption tax that raises the price of goods and disproportionately burdens middle and low income families who tend to spend a higher percentage of their income on consumption than do affluent families.

Jonathan Chait of *The New Republic* writes that Ryan's plan "would amount to the greatest shift of resources from the non-rich to the rich in the history of the United States, by far."

Even though under Ryan's plan the vast majority of Americans would be forced to pay more in taxes, government services would be greatly diminished. Ryan believes that Social Security is a "collectivist system" that should be abolished, and his "Roadmap" calls for privatizing the program and significantly reducing benefits for new retirees. But Ryan doesn't stop at Social Security: the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities writes that his proposal "would eliminate traditional Medicare, most of Medicaid, and all of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)." Instead, seniors, disabled persons, and low-income families would receive a voucher to purchase health services. However, since the value of the vouchers would not be tied to inflation of health costs, "the value of the vouchers would fall further behind the rising cost of health care with each passing year."

People receiving government-subsidized health care wouldn't be the only ones affected. Ryan's plan would sharply reduce the likelihood that workers will receive employer-sponsored health care coverage, since it would take away the exclusion from taxable income of employer-based health insurance. As a result, instead of pooling health costs, many older and less healthy Americans would have to buy more expensive insurance plans.

Ryan says that a study by the Congressional Budget Office shows his plan would reduce the budget deficit. However, the CBO study only reflects Ryan's proposed spending cuts and does not take into account changes in government revenue

that would result from the plan's enormous tax cuts for the rich.

After dismantling safety net programs and markedly shifting the tax burden to middle class Americans, Ryan's "Roadmap" actually fails to balance the budget. In fact, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that the "plan would leave the federal budget in dire straits for decades as a result of its massive tax cuts for wealthy households and its diversion of Social Security payroll taxes to private accounts" and that "federal debt would soar to about 175 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2050." The Tax Policy Center maintains that by shrinking revenue by close to \$4 trillion over ten years, Ryan's proposal would cause the deficit to grow by around \$1.3 trillion by 2020.

As Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman writes, while "Mr. Ryan has become the Republican Party's poster child for new ideas," the "Ryan plan is a fraud that makes no useful contribution to the debate over America's fiscal future."

Hal Rogers (R-KY) Incoming Chair of the Appropriations Committee



Hal Rogers

Despite the GOP's Tea Party-inspired rhetoric about slashing government spending, waste, and earmarks, the party named a Kentucky congressman who one newspaper dubbed "The Prince of Pork" to chair the House Appropriations Committee. Republican Hal Rogers, the leadership's choice to chair the powerful committee, pledged to bring "fiscal sanity back to our budgeting process." But Rogers's record on fiscal

issues reveals him to be one of Congress's most wasteful spenders—even the conservative *National Review* called Rogers "an exemplary figure of congressional disgrace" because of his reckless use of homeland security finances.

Taxpayers for Common Sense found that Rogers obtained around \$264.4 million in earmarks from 2008-2010, and requested over \$93 million in earmarks in the last fiscal year alone. Through earmarks, Rogers was able to win \$15 million in federal money for a tiny airport in his district, even though, as ABC News reports, it "has so little traffic that the last commercial airline pulled out in February." He also sponsored a bill that would have provided millions of dollars to the Cheetah Conservation Fund, a group based in Namibia that hired the congressman's daughter to be its grants

administrator. And he used taxpayer money to help a “tiny start-up company in Kentucky that employs John Rogers, the congressman’s son.” David Williams of Citizens Against Government Waste said the congressman’s actions “reeks of nepotism” and are “the kind of thing that gets taxpayers so frustrated with Congress.”

Perhaps no episode better represents Rogers’s mismanagement of taxpayer money than his handling of the 2006 homeland security budget when he was the chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. Rogers used the budget as an excuse to provide significant funding to benefit his rural Eastern Kentucky district. A report in *The New York Times* found that because of Rogers, the creation of a “Transportation Worker Identification Credential” was delayed for years and became unnecessarily expensive when Rogers compelled the Department of Homeland Security to only use an ID card with outdated and less secure technology in order to help businesses in his congressional district.

The New York Times also found that he used homeland security funding to help a start-up company that had recently hired his son, and steered millions of taxpayer dollars to the American Association of Airport Executives, a trade association that paid for the congressman and his wife to go on expensive trips to California, Hawaii, and Ireland.

“As the man in charge of Congress’s homeland-security budget,” wrote Jessica Vrazilek of the *National Review*, “Rogers’s abuse of federal funds is not just a financial scandal — it is a matter of national security.” Danielle Brian of the Project on Government Oversight maintained that Rogers’s actions were “really a perversion of every part of the contracting process.” In 2006, *Rolling Stone* named Rogers one of its “10 Worst Congressmen,” writing, “No congressman has single-handedly put America at greater risk than Hal Rogers.”

Even though the congressman voted against the economic stimulus, he wrote a letter to the Commerce Department asking to use stimulus money to expand access to computer centers in Kentucky. And while he is a fierce critic of the health care reform law, which he dubbed a “socialistic, experimental takeover of health care” and a “monstrosity,” Rogers requested that a reform law program finance health clinics in his district.

While Rogers has no problem routing huge amounts of taxpayer money to his congressional district, he voted against unemployment insurance, opposed tax breaks for middle class families and small businesses, and efforts to incentivize the use of sustainable and alternative energy.

Rogers’s selection as Appropriations Committee Chairman shows that the GOP majority plans to stick to its Washington

ways of helping lobbyists and supporting irresponsible budgets, and valuing insider access over good governance.

David Dreier (R-CA) Incoming Chair of the Rules Committee



David Dreier

David Dreier, who has served as a loyal House Republican since he was first elected to Congress in 1980, is now poised to chair one of the House’s most powerful committees. The Rules Committee is in charge of setting the rules on the debate of legislation, giving it special importance to the leadership of the majority party.

Dreier has emerged as one of the key spokespeople of the House Republican Caucus. “Get him on every show you can,” former Bush adviser Charlie Black said of Dreier in 2004. Former Ohio congressman and Senator-Elect Rob Portman called Dreier “a person that everybody looks to as a spokesperson.” Dreier was even considered a top contender to become Republican Majority Leader after Tom DeLay stepped down from the post following his indictment over a crooked campaign finance scheme.

A chief ally of big business in Congress, he introduced legislation that would significantly cut taxes on corporations and capital gains, but voted against tax breaks for small businesses, assistance for unemployed Americans, and greater oversight of Wall Street. Dreier received awards from many pro-corporate organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Americans for Tax Reform, along with shadowy corporate front groups including the American Future Fund and the 60 Plus Association. He also voted to allow such groups to keep the identities of their individual and corporate donors a secret by opposing the DISCLOSE Act.

Dreier led the push in the House to extend the budget-busting Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, and cited supply-side economist Art Laffer in claiming that the cuts would pay for themselves by helping the government generate, rather than lose, revenue. However, prominent economists from the Brookings Institute, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Economic Policy Institute, and even the conservative American Enterprise Institute agree that the Bush tax cuts steeply reduced revenue. The AEI’s Alan Viard, who was an economist in the Bush Administration, said “there’s no evidence that these tax cuts would come anywhere close” to paying for themselves. According to the Center for American

Progress, “the Bush tax cuts have directly added \$2.5 trillion to the national debt in the full 10 years that they have been law.”

Dreier has used his substantial clout to move the Republican caucus even further to the right on immigration policy-- he is opposed to a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants residing in the country and co-sponsored a bill to build a second, reinforcing fence along the southern border. He also co-authored the REAL ID Act, which severely clamps down on the rights of immigrants, undercuts the rule of law, and sets the stage for a national ID card.

On social issues, Dreier voted to ban same-sex couples from adopting children, voted against including sexual orientation and gender identity in hate crimes legislation, opposed the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, and backed the anti-abortion rights Stupak/Pitts amendment. Gary Bauer's far-right Campaign for Working Families gave Dreier a perfect 100 percent rating for his votes in the last congressional session, while he received a 0 percent score from NARAL Pro-Choice America.

With pro-corporate, conservative Congressman David Dreier set to chair one of the House's most important committees, K Street lobbyists will stand to be the biggest beneficiaries. As one of the GOP majority's most telegenic and media-savvy members, expect to see Dreier publicly represent the Republican agenda of curbing the rights of marginalized groups while increasing the power of corporations.

Ralph Hall (R-TX) Incoming Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology



Ralph Hall

The House's new chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology not only has a dreadful record on issues relating to the environment and science research and education, but also is skeptical of climate change science. Texas Rep. Ralph Hall, who was elected in 1980 as a Democrat, switched parties in 2004 after twice endorsing George W. Bush for president and garnering a conservative voting record. Under

Hall's leadership, the Committee on Science and Technology is likely to become a venue for attacking and investigating climate change scientists and for stripping investments in new science and technology education and jobs.

Hall believes that the science behind climate change is, in

his words, being “manipulated, enhanced or deleted” and says he “want[s] some proof” that climate change is real. The congressman also promotes the groundless and conspiratorial charges that climate scientists are deliberately manipulating evidence, endorsing wrongheaded allegations based on right-wing misinformation. Hall makes clear that he wants to put climate change scientists and the Environmental Protection Agency in his crosshairs.

While serving as the Science Committee's ranking member, Hall used deceptive procedural tactics to jeopardize funding intended to boost science jobs and education. Attempting to derail legislation meant to aid jobs and research in math and science, he attached a last-minute extraneous amendment about pornography in the workplace that would have sunk the bill. Prominent astronomer and writer Phil Plait called Hall's move a “deplorable stunt” and a “blatant partisan ploy.” Ultimately, however, Hall's maneuver failed and the vital bill passed the House.

Hall is one of the oil and gas industry's strongest supporters in Congress, and the industry is one of his top campaign contributors. Hall consistently votes against measures providing for environmental protection and assistance to the alternative and green energy field, including regulations for offshore drilling and renewable energy credits. Over the last five years, the League of Conservation Voters has given Hall 0% ratings for his record in Congress.

Hall was also linked to disgraced Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff. A lobbyist for the U.S. territory the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Abramoff wanted to stop the government from investigating claims of labor and human rights abuses in the island chain. When a teenage girl came forward as a victim of the sex trade in the CNMI, Abramoff prepared a statement, which Hall in turn submitted into the congressional record, challenging the girl's credibility, saying “[s]he wanted to do nude dancing.” Despite media and government reports confirming the 15-year-old's story, Hall assisted in Abramoff's attempts to silence and discredit her. In fact, Hall himself went on an Abramoff-funded trip to the CNMI and “made himself part of a public relations counter-offensive on behalf of CNMI, orchestrated by Abramoff and his lobbying team.”

With a history of opposing science jobs and research, questioning climate change, smearing scientists, and ingratiating himself with lobbyists, Texas's Ralph Hall is a dangerous and extreme choice to lead the House's Science Committee.

Michele Bachmann (R-MN) Chair of the Tea Party Caucus and the Constitutional Conservative Caucus



**Michele
Bachmann**

Although Representative Michele Bachmann failed to capture the post of GOP Conference Chair, she won new allies in the incoming freshman GOP class's many Tea Party enthusiasts and Religious Right stalwarts. Bachmann is the public face of the Tea Party in Congress, and recently founded the Tea Party Caucus and the Constitutional Conservative Caucus.

Before she was elected to Congress in 2006, Bachmann was a state legislator and a dedicated anti-choice, anti-gay, and anti-evolution fanatic. Bachmann became politically active in 1991 when she started working as an anti-abortion activist. Later, as a congresswoman, she cosponsored a measure to give "14th Amendment protections to an embryo or fetus." While serving in the Minnesota State Senate, Bachmann expressed support for teaching creationism in public schools, cosponsored legislation to undermine the teaching of evolution, and said people who believe in evolution are part of a "cult following."

In the State Senate, she spearheaded the effort to pass a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. "The immediate consequence, if gay marriage goes through," Bachmann said, "is that K-12 little children will be forced to learn that homosexuality is normal, natural and perhaps they should try it." She has also referred to homosexuality as "personal enslavement" and a "sexual identity disorder." Bachmann also promoted the claim that gays and lesbians recruit children, maintaining that her mission to block LGBT rights "is a very serious matter, because it is our children who are the prize for this community, they are specifically targeting our children."

Since coming to Congress, Bachmann has built up close ties to a whole host of Religious Right groups, including Concerned Women for America, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, Janet Porter's Faith 2 Action, the Family Research Council, the Susan B. Anthony List, and World Net Daily.

In a prayer meeting for the Minnesota group "You Can Run But You Cannot Hide," she prayed that God would "expand this ministry beyond anything that the originators of this ministry could be thinking or imagine." You Can Run is a fundamentalist organization whose leader described the

execution of gays as a "moral" act since "homosexuality is an abomination," and later suggested that Muslim Americans and Minnesota congressman Keith Ellison, who is Muslim, are planning on "overthrowing the United States Constitution" by "bring[ing] in Sharee [sic] law through the homosexual agenda."

While a guest on the Chris Matthews show in 2008, Bachmann said that Barack and Michelle Obama may "have anti-American views" and called for the media to "take a great look at the views of the people in Congress and find out, are they pro-America or anti-America? I think people would be—would love to see an exposé like that." Although she went on to distance herself from those comments, just this year she told an anti-choice group, "I said I had very serious concerns that Barack Obama had anti-American views. And now I look like Nostradamus."

Bachmann has also accused President Obama of running a "gangster government" and charged that the president is attempting to implement a "vote buying" scheme as part of a settlement with dispossessed Black and Native American farmers.

Most recently, Bachmann blasted Obama for supposedly spending "\$200 million a day" on his trip to India. Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said that Bachmann's figure was "absolutely absurd" and "just comical."

No stranger to anti-government conspiracy theories, Bachmann alleged that most of the U.S. Census was unconstitutional and that the government may use it to put people in internment camps. She opposed funding for AmeriCorps, claiming that "there are provisions for what I would call re-education camps for young people." Bachmann went on to say, "As a parent, I would have a very, very difficult time seeing my children do this," even though her son is currently working for Teach for America, a member of AmeriCorps.

Although she is a fierce critic of government spending, Bachmann has collected around a quarter of a million dollars in federal farm subsidies. She suggested that the country "wean everybody" off Social Security and Medicare and said she supports "reduc[ing] the federal government to its original size." However, in a recent interview with Wolf Blitzer, she was unable to name any specific programs she would support cutting.

Bachmann asserted during the debate over health care reform that the proposed measures "have the strength to destroy this country forever" and accused the government of "reaching down the throat and ripping the guts out of freedom." On the House floor, Bachmann quoted a widely discredited article claiming that the lives of the disabled would be threatened by

the reform law, adding, “So watch out if you’re disabled.”

She plans to hold classes on the Constitution as part of her new Constitutional Conservative Caucus, including seminars by Fox News commentators Sean Hannity and Andrew Napolitano, who recently pushed conspiracy theories about the September 11th attacks. Bachmann also wants Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and constitutional pseudo-scholar and right-wing activist David Barton to lead classes. Barton rejects the separation of church and state, wants the government to regulate or ban gay sex, and believes that the country should write its law according to Biblical dictates.

As leader of the Tea Party Caucus and the Constitutional Conservative Caucus, Bachmann’s clout in the GOP will only grow as the Party moves further to the right. Her proclivity to endorse bizarre conspiracy theories, record of fervently opposing LGBT and women’s rights, and penchant for calling opponents “anti-American” in fact make her more of an exemplar than an anomaly of the rigidly and ardently right-wing House Republican caucus.

Lamar Smith (R-TX) Incoming Chair of the Judiciary Committee



Lamar Smith

Texas Republican Lamar Smith has big plans for the House Judiciary Committee, which he will soon chair—plans that involve undermining the rights of immigrants, scrutinizing journalists and the press, and preserving discriminatory laws against gay and lesbian Americans.

One of Smith’s foremost proposals is to scrap the right of birthright citizenship guaranteed by the Constitution’s 14th Amendment. Smith strongly supports the Birthright Citizenship Act, the constitutionally-dubious proposal to end birthright citizenship through statute, along with legislation to allow states to replicate Arizona’s harsh anti-immigrant law. According to *Mother Jones*, Smith “has a long track record as an immigration hardliner” and “vowed to put a crackdown [on immigrants] at the top of his agenda” in the Judiciary Committee.

Smith also intends to block any attempts to give undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship, and effectively opposes anything short of a “deportation-only strategy,” which would be devastating to human rights, families and communities, and the economy. During an interview with Religious Right

commentator Bryan Fischer, Smith baselessly charged that “two-thirds of the births in public hospitals are now to illegal immigrant women.” He even referred to the DREAM Act, which provides a path to citizenship for young students and military service members who came into the country illegally when they were children as “a nightmare for the American people,” and told anti-immigrant commentator Lou Dobbs that President Obama was “awfully close to a violation of [his] oath of office” as a result of his immigration policy. He has worked closely with Iowa Republican and anti-immigrant zealot Steve King on immigration policy—one reporter dubbed him King’s “soul mate.”

Somos Republicans, a conservative Hispanic organization, even sent a letter to Speaker-designate Boehner asking him to stop Smith from chairing the Judiciary Committee, saying that his “extreme positions” and “insensitive rhetoric towards Hispanics” could jeopardize Republican attempts to win Hispanic votes in the next election. The letter stated that Smith is prepared to use the Judiciary Committee to create “a toxic anti-Hispanic environment” that would be “reprehensible” and “insulting.”

Although as a member of the House he cannot vote on nominees for the Supreme Court, Smith wrote a letter condemning Justice Sonia Sotomayor and alleged that she has “personal bias based on ethnicity and gender.”

Smith is an outspoken promoter of the “liberal media” myth. Last year he said on Fox News that “the greatest threat to America is not necessarily a recession or even another terrorist attack,” rather, “[t]he greatest threat to America is a liberal media bias.” He founded and chairs the Media Fairness Caucus, which he wants to use to take on the “liberal media bias that we see every day.” In the same Fox News interview, Smith went on to say that the “media have given the Obama Administration a free pass” and “you have to rely, frankly, on Fox News...and let me thank Fox, you’re frankly the only balanced coverage out there and it’s much appreciated by a lot of us.”

Fervently opposed to women’s reproductive rights, Smith has consistently voted against a woman’s right to choose throughout his twenty-four years in Congress, cosponsored a bill that seeks to eliminate abortion coverage in private insurance plans, and received a 0% rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America.

Smith voted against all major legislation ensuring equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans, while supporting a ban on adoption by same-sex couples and a constitutional amendment proscribing same-sex marriage. He proudly advertises his 100% ratings from the anti-gay hate groups the Family Research Council and the American Family

Association, and he recently “asked a federal court to let him and not the Obama administration appeal a ruling that strikes down a key part of the Defense of Marriage Act,” saying that he would defend the discriminatory law more vigorously than the Justice Department.

Led by an unabashed right-wing radical, the Judiciary Committee is positioned to become a vehicle for the discriminatory policies proposed by Rep. Smith and his far-right allies on The Hill.

Steve King (R-IA) Incoming Chair of the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law



Steve King

With one of the most stringently anti-immigrant and ultraconservative records in Congress, Steve King of Iowa is a right-wing firebrand whose admiration for Joe McCarthy is reflected both in his politics and policy proposals.

King claims that his first priority in the 112th Congress will be to abolish birthright citizenship, a right plainly established in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution. He said that his legislation will attempt to end what he calls the “anchor baby industry” and that if his bill is ruled unconstitutional he will move to amend the Constitution to repeal birthright citizenship.

King, who has appeared with violent vigilante groups, defended his proposal to have electrified wire on border fences by saying on the House floor, “We do this with livestock all the time.” He erroneously claimed that illegal immigrants kill 25 Americans each day, and referred to all immigrants as criminals and disease-carriers. King compared illegal immigration to a “slow motion Holocaust” and a “slow-motion terrorist attack on the United States.” Opposed to a pathway for citizenship for illegal immigrants working and residing in the country, he said that he would only support comprehensive reform if “every time we give amnesty for an illegal alien, we deport a liberal.” He defended profiling by asserting that police officers should be able to distinguish illegal immigrants from citizens “from what kind of clothes people wear – my suit in my case – what kind of shoes people wear, what kind of accident [sic] they have, um, the, the type of grooming they might have.”

After the deadly earthquake in Haiti, King resisted plans to give Haitian refugees temporary protection status, instead suggesting that deporting refugees already in the U.S. would help Haiti since the country is in “great need of relief workers.” King also fought legislation that would give protective status to translators from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and provide legal status to service members who don’t have citizenship and their families.

In 2005, King successfully marshaled opposition to naming an Oakland post office after former Oakland city councilwoman and activist Maudelle Shirek because he believed that Shirek was “un-American.” After Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee accused him of McCarthyism, he said, “If Barbara Lee would read the history of Joe McCarthy she would realize that he was a hero for America.”

On the House floor, King blasted the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Hispanic Caucus as “separatist groups,” and suggested that a “very, very urban senator, Barack Obama” provided “slavery reparations” through the USDA Pigford II settlement with black farmers.

During the presidential election, King maintained if Obama won that Al-Qaeda “would be dancing in the streets in greater numbers than they did on Sept. 11 because they would declare victory in this war on terror.”

King said that it was “bizarre” for Obama to say his middle name “Hussein” during the inauguration, and asserted that the President “has a default mechanism in him that breaks down the side of race - on the side that favors the black person.” He also dubbed the President a “Marxist” who “doesn’t have an American experience” and is in “violation of his oath of office.” When asked at a rally in support of Arizona’s draconian SB 1070 immigration law if Obama was “bringing small quantities of Muslims into this country,” King replied that he “wouldn’t be surprised that that is the real factual basis.”

Just days before Obama’s victory at the polls, he warned Americans, “When you take a lurch to the left you end up in a totalitarian dictatorship. There is no freedom to the left. It’s always to our side of the aisle.” Earlier this year, he said that Democrats were similar to “Pontius Pilate” and would have supported the Pharaohs of Egypt over the enslaved Israelites in the Bible. On Glenn Beck’s show, King declared that Democrats were trying to “take away the liberty that we have right from God” by having members vote on the health care reform bill on a Sunday.

A fierce opponent of LGBT equality, King strongly opposes the Uniting American Families Act, which allows U.S. citizens and legal residents to petition for their permanent partners (including same-sex partners) to obtain U.S. residency or citizenship. He told the Family Research Council that gay

Americans should stay in the closet if they wanted to avoid discrimination, and equated gay rights with rights for “unicorns and leprechauns.” After the Iowa Supreme Court said that the state’s ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional, he claimed that Iowa could soon become a “gay marriage Mecca due to the Supreme Court’s latest experiment in social engineering.” King has compared homosexuality to incest and described marriage equality as “a purely socialist concept.” While addressing a rally of supporters of the successful effort to remove three Iowa Supreme Court judges from the bench, King said that gay marriage will lead to the breakdown of the family, religion, and the Constitution:

I think that if we can’t defend marriage, that it becomes very hard to defend life. So, if we lose marriage — for instance, if our children are raised in warehouses, so to speak. There have been civilizations that have tried to do that. The Spartans did that. They took the children away and taught them to be warriors. It’s a good way to defend a country, but not much of a way to run a civilization.

So, I’m afraid if that happened — if we lose the marriage, we lose the home, we lose the nuclear family then we can’t teach our values. We won’t be able to teach our faith. We won’t be able to teach life. We won’t be able to teach our Constitutional values either. That’s why I’m afraid it’s going to be very, very difficult to defend life.

King was also the only member of the House to vote against a plaque commemorating the slaves who helped build the Capitol, which he said was part of a plot “by liberals in Congress to scrub references to America’s Christian heritage from our nation’s Capitol.”

Louie Gohmert (R-TX) Incoming Chair of the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security



Louie Gohmert

Republican conspiracy theorist Louie Gohmert is set to lead one of the most important subcommittees dealing with issues of terrorism and security. On the House floor, Gohmert claimed that “terrorist cells overseas” were planning to bring pregnant women “into the United States to have a baby” so the babies could become U.S. citizens. “And then they would turn back where

they could be raised and coddled as future terrorists,” Gohmert explained, “and then one day, twenty, thirty years down the road, they can be sent in to help destroy our way of life.”

While Gohmert said that a retired FBI agent corroborated his statements, the former FBI assistant director of international operations said that “there was never a credible report -- or any report, for that matter -- coming across through all the various mechanisms of communication to indicate that there was such a plan for these terror babies to be born.” When CNN’s Anderson Cooper challenged Gohmert to confirm his terrorist baby conspiracy, the congressman admitted that he had not discussed the issue with the FBI and refused to reveal his sources or present any evidence confirming his allegation.

Gohmert is a co-sponsor of the House “Birther Bill,” which targets not ‘terrorist babies,’ but President Obama, who some conspiracy theorists claim was not born in the country and therefore is not eligible to serve as president.

He also propagated the “death panels” conspiracy theory about health care reform, alleging that the reform law is “going to absolutely kill senior citizens” by supposedly “put[ting] them on lists and forc[ing] them to die early.” According to Gohmert, “once the government pays for your health care, they have every right to tell you what you eat, what you drink, how you exercise, where you live.”

Gohmert has appeared on the show of radio host Alex Jones of *InfoWars*, who suggested that the US government was behind 9/11 and the Oklahoma Federal Building terrorist attacks. On the show, the congressman agreed with Jones’s comparison of Obama to Adolph Hitler, calling Hitler “the best example.” Gohmert later said on the House floor that Hitler, like Obama, “sought to activate people who did not normally pay much attention to politics.” “We do have useful idiots today,” Gohmert continued, “who are heard to say ‘wow what we really need is for the president to be a dictator for a little while.’”

On the House floor, Gohmert also likened homosexuality to bestiality, pedophilia, and necrophilia. He told the Family Research Council that he opposes allowing gay and lesbian Americans to serve openly in the military because gays “cannot control their hormones to the point that they are a distraction to the good order and discipline of the military.” When speaking against hate crimes legislation, Gohmert asked, “You think a pregnant mother does not deserve the protection of a homosexual? You think a military member doesn’t deserve the protection of a transvestite?”

Opposing plans to protect endangered wildlife abroad in countries like China, Gohmert claimed on the House floor, “There is no assurance that if we did that we wouldn’t end up with ‘moo goo dog pan’ or ‘moo goo cat pan.’”

Gohmert agreed with members of his party who want a government shutdown, maintaining: “If you can’t get [spending] under control, then we just stop government ‘til you realize, you know, ‘yes we can.’”

Joseph Pitts (R-PA), Incoming Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Health



Joseph Pitts

House Republicans chose Pennsylvania Representative Joe Pitts to chair the subcommittee that oversees health care legislation and also sets policy on abortion rights and reproductive health. Pitts is one of the most fervently anti-choice members of Congress, and also the founder and chairman of the House’s Values Action Team, which coordinates with Religious Right organizations to pass anti-choice and anti-gay rights

legislation. His selection as Health Subcommittee chair was hailed as a victory for anti-choice lobbying groups. Marjorie Dannenfelser, President of the rabidly anti-choice Susan B. Anthony List, called Pitts’s appointment “a major pro-life victory,” and Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council said that Pitts is committed to passing anti-choice legislation with language even more restrictive than that found in the Stupak/Pitts amendment.

Pitts co-authored the restrictive Stupak/Pitts amendment during the health care reform debate, which, if passed, would have barred women who take part in health insurance exchanges from receiving coverage for abortion under their insurance plans. According to a George Washington University study, “the Stupak/Pitts Amendment will have an industry-wide effect, eliminating coverage of medically indicated abortions over time for all women, not only those whose coverage is derived through a health insurance exchange.”

In an appearance on Fox News, Pitts ludicrously suggested that the health care reform law could force counties to open abortion clinics: “87 percent of the counties in the United States don’t have an abortion clinic in them,” but as a result of reform, “they could compel communities that don’t have this service to provide it.”

The nonpartisan fact-checking group *PolitiFact* said that allegations that the health care reform would lead to taxpayer-

funded or subsidized abortion are “false” and an “unsupported ridiculous claim.” But Pitts’s constant promotion of this untrue claim has helped him rise as one of the anti-choice movement’s favorite members of Congress, and he no doubt plans to promote anti-abortion rights legislation in his powerful subcommittee.

Among the measures likely to be advanced is the “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act,” better known as “Stupak on steroids,” which would impel private insurers to drop abortion coverage by taking away the insurance plans’ tax deductions, make the Hyde Amendment permanent, and prevent “any government department from funding any program that touches on abortion in any way, however notional.” The GOP is also hoping to advance the “Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act,” which would defund reproductive healthcare organizations that provide abortions, like Planned Parenthood, even though such financing does not go to abortion coverage. Pitts may also seek the reinstatement of the global gag rule that cuts off funding to international family planning services, and resurrect the Stupak/Pitts Amendment with a very similar bill that he recently introduced, which has already garnered 125 cosponsors.

Pitts’s anti-choice efforts go as far back as his time in the Pennsylvania State House, where he supported the “1982 Abortion Control Act,” which, the Washington Post reports, “required a woman to go to three separate doctor’s appointments for information before undergoing the procedure.”

On the floor of the House, Pitts said that “there, really, are no more eloquent voices for women and children than pro-life women” and alleged that pro-choice Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has “a eugenic way of thinking.” Pitts, who was first elected to the House in 1996, has a lifetime 0% rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America, whose president said, “Putting Joe Pitts in charge of a committee that oversees women’s health programs is like putting Lindsay Lohan in charge of celebrity rehab.”

Pitts is also a fierce opponent of comprehensive sex education, and even authored a letter to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to investigate groups—such as Advocates for Youth—that support safe sex education. Pitts pushed for the extension of tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to fund ineffective and discredited abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. As Chair of the Health Subcommittee, it is likely that Pitts will attempt to increase federal funding for failed abstinence-only programs.

The House GOP’s decision to have Joe Pitts lead the Subcommittee on Health demonstrates the Republican majority’s zeal for rolling back reproductive rights. Pitts’s appointment will bring new power to the Religious Right to

implement their extreme agenda of undercutting health care reform, comprehensive sex education, and a woman's right to choose. ■



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