

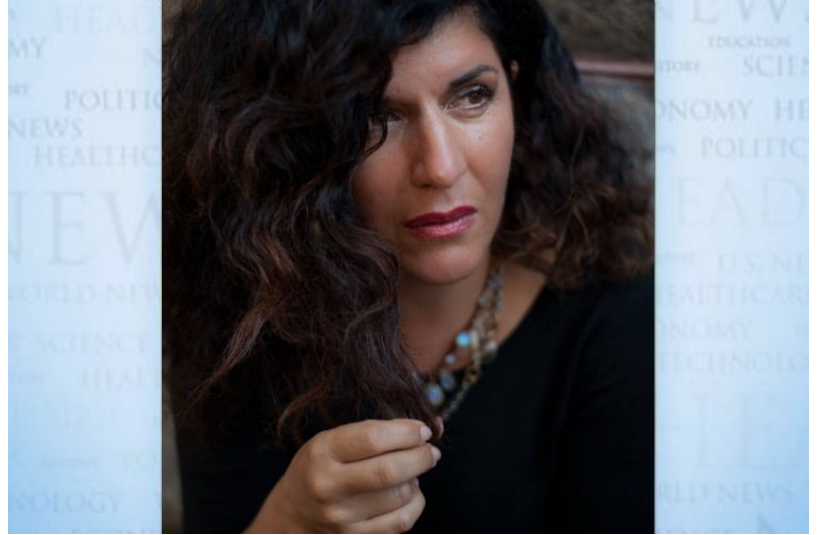


Written by [Salena Zito](#) on July 5, 2023

Main Street Republicans Laser-focused on Kitchen Table Issues for 2024

MONONGAHELA, PENNSYLVANIA — Last September, Rep. Guy Reschenthaler, R-Pa., told then-House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., that if Republicans were going to be successful in gaining the majority in the House in November, they needed to announce their pledge to voters in the heart of America.

Reschenthaler, a member of the Main Street Caucus, a group of over 70 pragmatic conservative House members that grew out of the Republican Main Street Partnership, said it was surprisingly easy to convince him to have 40-plus members come to speak to the voters in a town whose name few could pronounce, even though there is no direct, easy accessibility from Washington, D.C., the Pittsburgh airport or the turnpike.



Salena Zito

The pitch was easy, Reschenthaler said, because they all knew that if they were going to retake the majority, they had to focus on Main Street America.

“We couldn’t focus on the coastal areas or the big cities; it was going to be in small towns like Monongahela, where we were going to make a difference,” he said.

The Navy veteran and JAG lawyer started his political career less than 10 years ago running for a local magistrate’s race in a district that had traditionally voted Democrat.

“I thought that Western Pennsylvania was a perfect example of the country; a perfect microcosm, if you will, the communities we needed to win big in, if we were going to retake the majority,” he said.

He added that Republicans can win over more voters in 2024 in places like Pennsylvania’s Mon Valley, allowing the party to expand its majority in the House and take the Senate. “These are the Main Streets that were for decades controlled by Democrats and just in the last few years have gone Republican by a very large margin.

“It’s really our new base in the Republican Party,” he added. “We’re no longer the party of the country clubs. We’re really the party of those who shower after work, not before work.”

Sara Chamberlain, the CEO and president of the Republican Main Street Partnership, says she hopes this focus will soon be tipping the scale in the Senate next year, the way it did for the GOP in the House in 2022. “We are for sure the majority makers; we have between the House and Senate, almost 90 members, all of which come from all the swing districts that were Joe Biden districts in 2020 except for Santos,” she explained.

Chamberlain said the caucus is very geographically diverse: “We’ve got New York members, New Jersey



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members, Oregon members, and of course Pennsylvania members,” she said of Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick of Bucks County and Reschenthaler, who represents several counties in Western Pennsylvania.

“Without these men and women, we would not have the majority and Kevin would not have the gavel and Speaker McCarthy has credited the Main Street Partnership for everything we did to help him get the gavel,” she said of her organization.

Reschenthaler, the chief deputy whip, along with House Majority Whip Tom Emmer of Minnesota, were deeply influential in pulling together the often-fractured Republican conference — and avoiding an effort to take the speaker’s gavel away from McCarthy during the final passage of the debt ceiling bill they helped guide through the House.

That is the type of pragmatic approach, Reschenthaler said, that embodies the challenges people on Main Street face and navigate in their daily lives.

“We’re very focused on small business, for example, focused on individual freedoms, so people can live as they choose and economic policies that benefit American families,” he said.

“We are Republican by nature, but we’re also incredibly pragmatic,” Reschenthaler said, adding, “We just want to have good public policy that grows the economy, increases jobs, is good for Main Street, as we say, but also that’s achievable.

“Too often people try to push forward policies that are not readily achievable and that’s fine; you can work on those policies long term. But we want to make sure that we’re making incremental changes, we’re being pragmatic and we’re helping Main Street.”

Chamberlain has an eye on the future for these members, all of which are seeking reelection:

“Obviously our purpose at the partnership is to not just keep the majority but also grow it and that is done by passing legislation that benefits the voters back home and reflects their districts,” she said.

What not to do, she stressed, is make the members who represent voters in swing districts walk the plank on some piece of legislation that is never going to pass the Democratic Senate.

Chamberlain said these members are reflective of the values of the people that live outside of the superrich zip codes in our country. “They talk about inflation, they talk about gas prices, they talk about artificial intelligence now, and they are talking about trying to solve the problems that the American people are facing,” she said, pointing to additional topics, such as mental health and H-1B visas.

Chamberlain said these conservatives are going to be where the majority is decided, which is why their message is designed to appeal to their district and Main Street voters: “They’re a group that meets regularly, and they just want to get things done for the country. They want to begin to solve some of the big issues that are facing the American people around Main Street, around their kitchen tables.”

Salena Zito is a CNN political analyst, and a staff reporter and columnist for the Washington Examiner. She reaches the Everyman and Everywoman through shoe-leather journalism, traveling from Main Street to the beltway and all places in between. To find out more about Salena and read her past columns, please visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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