



Written by [Steve Bonta](#) on January 11, 2023

118th Congress Off to a Promising Start

With the 118th Congress officially sworn in, the new House GOP majority's ambitious agenda has been unfolding at a dizzying pace.

The first action item was to vote in a sweeping set of rules changes by which the House will limit its own powers and carry out its ambitious agenda while remaining responsive to the people. Included in the rules changes are many overdue reforms, including requiring a 72-hour period for reading of bills, replacing the practice of gargantuan omnibus spending bills with 12 discrete pieces of legislation for covering the required spending, and a restoration of the old rule, jettisoned by Democrats in 2019, permitting any member of the majority party of the House to propose a "motion to vacate" the speaker's chair, which would trigger a full House vote on whether or not to retain the speaker (the threat of this motion was used by the GOP in 2015 to force the ouster of unpopular RINO Speaker John Boehner).



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Additional changes include Kevin McCarthy's pledge to give three out of the total nine GOP seats on the Rules Committee to Freedom Caucus members, as well as the scheduling of a vote to establish a special new subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee with the power to investigate misuse of power by the executive branch, including abuses perpetrated by the FBI and the DOJ against political opponents. This committee, long overdue, will be a necessary corrective to the executive abuse of investigative and prosecutory power for political motives that has become routine since 9-11. Before that infamous date, it was generally understood that the FBI and CIA were not to surveil and harass American citizens, thanks in no small measure to the work of the Senate's "Church Committee" of the 1970s. Even then, the Church Committee failed to prove the extensive connections between the CIA and the American media, and in general fell far short of truly exposing the Deep State as then constituted. The new House committee appears to have a much broader writ of authority, although we can certainly expect Deep Staters in the DOJ, the FBI, and the Biden administration to continue the long tradition of stonewalling, intimidation, and coverup.

Other early positive signs include the creation (with rare bipartisan support) of a committee to investigate the influence of the Chinese Communist Party in the United States, and a promised vote on defunding the IRS. All of these, and more besides, must be reckoned as positive developments.

However, given the pragmatic realities right now — the inevitable influence of RINOs within the House Republican caucus coupled with continued Democratic control of both the Senate and the White House



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— we should not have unrealistic expectations. If the GOP can maintain unity in the face of ridicule, threats, and slander — and that’s a big “if” — the House does have the power to simply defund, by refusing to fund, a wide range of obnoxious Federal agencies, certainly including the IRS. Also critical will be the House’s power to investigate — Hunter Biden, the Russia collusion hoax, the raid on Mar-a-Lago, the January 6 Committee, and numerous other episodes of Democratic corruption that have been ignored and covered up.

We are still a long way from genuine, lasting reform in the direction of constitutionally limited government and greater individual freedom. But it must be borne in mind that, just as we did not get into this mess overnight, so too it will take time to undo the damage of generations of maladministration. However, such a spectacle as we have seen in this new year, of a significant number of genuine constitutionalists holding the entire House to account, would have been unthinkable twenty years ago. After years of grassroots education, a better-informed electorate is now electing better-informed representatives, at least in some parts of the country. And if 20 such can achieve the previously unthinkable, imagine what 100 or 200 such will be able to achieve in the not-too-distant future.



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