



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on December 13, 2012

Amash to Speaker Boehner: “Show Us the Scorecard!”

[“Mr. Speaker, show us the scorecard.”](#)

That’s Republican Representative Justin Amash’s response to a letter he received from Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio) explaining the libertarian-minded congressman’s summary dismissal from the House Budget Committee.

Last week, [Amash and Representative Tim Huelskamp \(R-Kan.\) were booted from the Budget Committee](#) — likely a result of the two congressmen’s record of opposing the Speaker on key fiscal issues. Last year, for example, Huelskamp and Amash voted against raising the debt ceiling and are adamantly opposed to any tax increases. And earlier this year, Huelskamp and Amash cast the only House Budget Committee votes against Paul Ryan’s budget plan that was the darling of Republicans, including Boehner.



The scorecard mentioned by Amash in his statement was reportedly a tally of Republican representatives’ votes used to measure how faithfully the members had toed the party line. As Amash explains on his Facebook page, he was told that he received a “0” on the as-yet-unreleased scorecard compiled by GOP leadership.

“Given my work with Democrats and Republicans on serious proposals to balance the budget, it is certain that the scorecard awarded points for supporting bigger deficits and more debt,” [Amash wrote in response to the Speaker’s letter](#).

According to [sources cited by Roll Call](#), members of the Steering Committee “reviewed a spreadsheet listing each GOP lawmaker and how often he or she had voted with leadership.” Given Amash’s and Huelskamp’s record, it is likely their names ranked at the top of Boehner’s hit list.

Boehner heads the 34-member Steering Committee that includes members of House leadership, committee chairs, and other lawmakers selected from different regions of the country. After meeting last week, the group recommended Paul Ryan be returned to his seat as Budget Committee chairman.

It is easy to see, then, why Boehner could not allow Huelskamp and Amash to sit on a committee whose chairman they alone had the courage to oppose. Once again, the GOP demonstrates that when it comes to leadership decisions, party is given priority over principle.

Two other conservative lawmakers also received committee assignment pink slips last Tuesday: Representatives David Schweikert (R-Ariz.) and Walter Jones (R-N.C.) were kicked off the Financial Services Committee.

In [the letter sent by the speaker to Amash and Huelskamp](#), neither the existence of nor the reliance



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upon the scorecard was admitted to.

Amash is undeterred: "I'm proud of my fight for a balanced budget. Our leaders should be proud of the positions they take." "Americans deserve to know the priorities of the current House leadership team. As fellow House Republicans, we deserve to know how we're being judged when we vote," he added.

Amash isn't alone in his call for the speaker to justify his "purge" of key committees of constitutionally consistent, independent minded representatives. In a statement released this week, FreedomWorks called on supporters to call Boehner and "[tell him to restore these genuine fiscal conservatives to their respective committees.](#)"

Regarding the forced exile of Amash, Huelskamp, and Schweikert (R-Ariz.) — who received FreedomWorks scores of 100 percent, 96 percent, and 96 percent, respectively — FreedomWorks said: "These three principled legislators have stood with the Constitution even when it was unpopular to do so. Their dedication to the principles of lower taxes and limited government is now being punished by a Speaker who would rather concede to the big spenders in Congress instead of making the tough choices."

Huelskamp in [a statement to Breitbart.com](#) reminded Speaker Boehner of the tough choices facing Republicans regarding who they chose to lead them when the next Congress convenes in January. "This is not about losing just four votes [from the members who were purged]," Huelskamp said. "He [Boehner] is worried about the 20 to 30 to 40 to 70 who voted against the debt deal, and is afraid that some of them may decide we want a conservative as Speaker."

When asked whether he believed the speaker's gavel might be taken from Boehner, Huelskamp replied: "Who knows? I'm still a freshman so I'm still trying to figure that out. But, who knows what may happen behind closed doors. Maybe they had a blowout in the Steering Committee meeting today?"

Huelskamp also remarked on the historic nature of Boehner's cleansing of the committees of conservatives. In a statement to Newsmax, he said, "Someone from Kansas has been on the House Ag Committee for over 100 years. And this because of [petty, vindictive politics](#), you pick a fifth-generation farmer off the Ag Committee. I've got a Ph.D., in ag-policy making as well. It's a good fit."

According to a story in *National Review*, Amash told reporters on Wednesday that [voters in his district have his back](#) in his fight against Boehner's demand that Republicans put party above principle or be punished. "If Speaker Boehner wants to come back to my district, he's not going to be met with very much welcome," Amash told reporters.

Amash expressed little faith in the strength of the speaker's backbone when it comes to negotiations with President Obama regarding our imminent plunge off the "fiscal cliff." "I spent a lot of time saying, 'Speaker Boehner is doing the best job we can do.' I did that for a year, a year and a half. But we're not doing the best job we can do," Amash said. "We need people who are going to be bold, we need leaders."

"This is about who's fighting for the American people," Amash continues. "I want to speak out now because I want to encourage my colleagues to be more outspoken."

The criticism is fair given Boehner's recent retreat on the issue of tax increases as a means of -avoiding financial disaster. As [reported by the Washington Times](#), "Led by House Speaker John A. Boehner, House GOP leaders sent a \$2.2 trillion 'fiscal cliff' counteroffer to President Obama on Monday that included the \$800 billion in tax increases, which would be generated through eliminating loopholes and



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deductions in the federal tax code.”

A story published by *The Hill* reported that a cadre of concerned Republicans [have put forward the name of Georgia Representative Tom Price](#) as a possible replacement for Boehner. The article cited not only Boehner’s banishment of Amash, Huelskamp, and Schweikert as an impetus for the mounting movement to select a new speaker of the house, but they pointed to his “willingness to accept increased revenues as part of the ‘fiscal cliff’ negotiations with President Obama.”

As *The Hill* rightly notes, it isn’t going to be easy for Republicans to rid themselves of the Purger of the House. Apart from the support Boehner undoubtedly enjoys among most members of the Republican caucus, there is his record of disregard for rules and votes.

Amash and company should not forget that it was John Boehner who stood in front of a throng of effectively disenfranchised Ron Paul supporters gathered at the GOP Convention in Tampa in August and declared, [“The ayes have it.”](#)

In a few weeks when Congress gets back to work after the New Year, Republicans and Americans will see whether Boehner manages to ignore the crescendo of calls for his replacement as speaker of the house, even if the “ayes” have it.

Photo of Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.): AP Images

Joe A. Wolverton, II, J.D. is a correspondent for The New American and travels frequently nationwide speaking on topics of nullification, the NDAA, and the surveillance state. He can be reached at jwolverton@thenewamerican.com.



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