



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on December 5, 2012

Boehner Brings Down Conservatives' Wrath in Wake of Committee Firings

[When he kicked](#) Representatives Justin Amash (R-Mich.) and Tim Huelskamp (R-Kan.) off the Budget Committee, Speaker of the House John Boehner (shown), a Republican from Ohio, also kicked up a firestorm of controversy, riling up the libertarian wing of the GOP.



On Tuesday, for example, liberty-minded activists from FreedomWorks and Young Americans for Liberty [visited Speaker Boehner's office](#) "to register their disappointment over the removal of Representatives Justin Amash, David Schweikert & Tim Huelskamp from their committee assignments."

[Young Americans for Liberty](#) is the "largest, most active, and fastest-growing pro-liberty organization on America's college campuses. With more than 300 chapters and 26,000 student activists nationwide, YAL seeks to recruit, train, educate, and mobilize students on the ideals of liberty and the Constitution."

Upon arriving at the speaker's office, a Boehner spokesman refused to answer the protestors' complaints, relying on the safety of the "armed guards" that surrounded the group.

Other, less libertarian conservative groups are also calling Boehner out for his decision to exile Amash, Huelskamp, and others. [Politico reports](#):

Heritage Action accused Boehner of trying to find "creative ways to fund" President Barack Obama's "big-government agenda." The group also compared Boehner with someone who notoriously broke his no-tax pledge: the nation's 41st president.

"In 1990, President George H.W. Bush broke his solemn pledge: 'read my lips: no new taxes,'" Heritage Action wrote in the email to supporters. "It cost him the election. In more than 20 years since, congressional Republicans have avoided making the same mistake. And now, as our nation's economy is struggling to produce growth, our leaders in Congress are about to make precisely the wrong decision."

Club for Growth [also bashed Boehner](#), but encouraged Amash and company, reminding them that their banishment from committee assignments left them "free of the last remnants of establishment leverage against them."

The hits just keep on coming. FreedomWorks, one of the core of the so-called Tea Party groups, described the move by Boehner and the GOP Steering Committee a "remarkably hostile act by leadership."

In [a letter to Speaker Boehner](#), FreedomWorks President Matt Kibbe writes: "We applaud these three



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constitutional guardians for taking principled stands against bloated bills that would cripple our economy and add to our national debt. These men are voting the way that they promised their constituents they would — on principle. I strongly urge you to restore Congressmen Amash, Huelskamp, and Schweikert to their respective committees.”

And there was [this from Erick Erickson, founder of the Red State blog](#), referencing not only Boehner’s booting of Amash, Huelskamp, and others from their committee assignments, but the speaker’s recent embrace of tax hikes as an acceptable option in finding a solution to the fall off the “fiscal cliff”:

Yesterday the three of them purged fiscal conservatives from committees as punishment for being authentically fiscal conservatives.

On the same day John Boehner, Eric Cantor, and Kevin McCarthy punished fiscal conservatives for standing up for their convictions, they sold out their own convictions by agreeing to raise taxes by \$800 billion. They intend to seem reasonable to the press in negotiations with the White House. They’re going through an elaborate kabuki dance, but they’ll get blamed nonetheless.

Pointing their fingers as fiscal conservatives now punished, casting them out as scape goats, will do nothing to woo the media or the White House, but we should be thankful. We should absolutely be thankful for these three men.

As the sun rises this morning we can look at John Boehner, Eric Cantor, and Kevin McCarthy and know the opposition is not just across the aisle, but in charge of our own side in the House of Representatives. All the time and energy I would otherwise have to spend to convince conservatives that these gentlemen would be a problem for the GOP has been spared. They’ve proven it themselves.

“Conservatives must seek retribution or become the paper tiger John Boehner, Eric Cantor, and Kevin McCarthy just declared them to be,” Erickson added.

Boehner has so far ignored the backlash from his heavy-handed purge of members of his party that refuse to demonstrate blind obedience to his every declaration.

Amash, however, hasn’t gone gentle into that good night. Tuesday night, the social-media savvy congressman [released the following statement](#) on his Facebook page:

Rumor has it that I’ve been removed from the House Committee on the Budget. Remarkably, I still have not received a single call, e-mail, or text from Republican leadership confirming this story. In fact, I wouldn’t even have learned about it if not for the news reports. I look forward to hearing from my party’s leadership about why my principled, conservative voting record offends them. That’s sure to be a lively and entertaining conversation.

In the meantime, I can only speculate as to what specifically would make Republican leadership punish several of its party’s most principled members. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, who was kicked off of both Budget and the Committee on Agriculture, voted with me against the 2013 House budget resolution because it does not sufficiently address the federal government’s debt crisis. That was one of only three times during this Congress that I voted against the Chairman’s recommendations in committee. In fact, I voted with the Republican Chairman more than 95% of the time, and I have voted with my party’s leadership more than three-quarters of the time on the House floor.

What message does leadership’s heavy-handedness send? It says that independent thinking won’t be tolerated, not even 5% of the time. It says that voting your conscience won’t be respected. It



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says that fulfilling your commitment to your constituents to work with both Republicans and Democrats to reduce our debt takes a back seat to the desires of corporate special interests. And, most troubling for our party, it says to the growing number of young believers in liberty that their views are not welcome here.

I'll miss working with my colleagues on Budget. I don't relish this situation, but if one thing is clear based on the response from the grassroots, it's that leadership's actions will backfire. If they think kicking me off of a committee will lead me to abandon my principles or stifle my bipartisan work toward a balanced budget, I have a message for them: You're dead wrong.

To his credit, Huelskamp is going down swinging, as well. [He writes](#):

Kansans who sent me to Washington did so to change the way things are done — not to provide cover for Establishment Republicans who only give lip service to conservative principles. If the rest of America is anything like the 700,000 Kansans I represent, then they know that the fiscal and cultural crises facing our nation require drastic changes to the way things are done in Washington — not just symbolic gestures or more of the same.

Finally, [Daniel Horowitz reckons](#) that the Republican establishment's reign of terror will continue until all who will not take the metaphorical loyalty oath are cut off from the GOP. "This is just the opening salvo in a long war," Horowitz writes. "House leaders have made it clear that they will punish conservatives for standing by their election promises. All conservatives in the House need to band together on this because anyone could be next."

By their fruits ye shall know them. Boehner now has shown unmistakably that he will not tolerate colleagues who place fidelity to their oath of office above toeing the party line.

Ron Paul, the patron saint of libertarian-minded Republicans, commented on the controversy, [telling The Daily](#), "They're going to punish freshmen legislators? If you're looking for dissension, then you're going to get it," Paul said. "These congressmen will never cave. They're going to get the support of the people.... They will become heroes."

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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