



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on June 25, 2015

Conservatives Smack Down Team Obama-Boehner Over Retribution

House Speaker John Boehner's rampage against House members who defied him on the ObamaTrade vote has begun to backfire — and he may be starting to back-pedal, due to public pressure.

As *The New American* [reported here](#) yesterday, Representative Ken Buck (R-Colo.) was the latest in a string of conservative House members who have been targeted by Boehner in reprisal for failing to support "the team" on TPA/Fast Track authority for ObamaTrade, the president's pseudo-free trade package involving the [TPP](#), [TTIP](#), and [TiSA](#).



The rebellious House members, most of whom are members of the House Freedom Caucus, saw voting their consciences — in this case, upholding the Constitution and the interests of their constituents — as being more important than supporting "the team," which, in this case meant Team Obama-Boehner and their corporatist TPP paymasters. As a result, Boehner and his GOP capos began stripping rebels of their leadership positions.

Last week Boehner and House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) booted GOP Reps. Cynthia Lummis (Wyo.), Steve Pearce (N.M.), and Trent Franks (Ariz.) from the whip team. Then Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) was stripped of his chairmanship of the House Oversight Government Operations subcommittee.

Next on the chopping block was Rep. Ken Buck (R-Colo.), the House freshman class president. Boehner allies had asked him to resign as freshman president, which Buck refused to do. Two of Boehner's freshman allies, Reps. Mimi Walters (R-Calif.) and Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), then called a freshman class meeting for this morning to remove Buck. However, as *TheHill.com* reported today, the freshmen decided against impeaching Rep. Buck.

The failure to oust Buck has been greatly overshadowed by another development: the announcement by Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) that he is reinstating Rep. Mark Meadows to his subcommittee chairmanship. *Politico.com* called the move "a stunning reversal" that could foreshadow more rebellion amongst House members fed up with the Boehner coterie.

"It is a stunning reversal for Chaffetz, and, by extension, the GOP leadership," *Politico* noted, "and could embolden the several dozen conservative Republicans who defy Speaker John Boehner, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.)."

The Meadows case had attracted particularly high national visibility and pushback, thanks in large measure to House Freedom Caucus chairman Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), who not only took to the airwaves, making the case against Boehner on conservative radio talk shows, but also worked behind the scenes to get committee members to overturn Chairman Chaffetz's decision. National talk show



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hosts Laura Ingraham and Mark Levin especially raked Boehner and Chaffetz over the coals for taking revenge on the Freedom Caucus members.

“Jordan’s guerrilla campaign seemed to work — the majority of the overwhelmingly conservative committee said they wanted Meadows back,” Politico reported. “On Wednesday, Chaffetz invited members of the panel to a meeting in the committee conference room —the gathering was ‘Members only — unfortunately staff are not permitted,’ according to the invitation.”

That closed meeting reportedly went on for several hours, with Chaffetz laying out his case for removing Meadows. However, in punishing Meadows for going against Boehner’s TPA rule vote, Chaffetz had himself violated a House rule. According to Rule 19 (a) (1) of the House Republican Conference rules, a committee chair can select his chairmen “unless a majority of the Republican Members of the full Committee disapprove the action of the chair.”

But it was Jordan and Meadows who had the majority, not Chaffetz and Boehner. The committee voted to keep Meadows.

“I respect Mark and his approach,” Chaffetz said in a statement following the closed committee meeting. “The discussions and candor have been healthy and productive. Ultimately, I believe we both want to do what is best for the country. Obviously I believe in Mark Meadows or I would not have appointed him to this position in the first place. It is in the best interest of the Committee to move forward together. Therefore, I have asked Mark to continue in his role as subcommittee Chairman.”

Meadows said he will “continue to vote and conduct myself in accordance with my conscience, what my constituents want me to do, and what is best for the country.”

Will Boehner Back Off?

Do the backdowns on Reps. Buck and Meadows signal that Team Boehner/Obama have finished meting out retribution for the ObamaTrade rebellion? Maybe — or maybe not. TheHill.com reported yesterday that more heads may yet roll.

“More Freedom Caucus lawmakers could be next on the hit list,” the Capitol Hill paper reported. “Rep. Scott Garrett (R-N.J.), one of the caucus’s founding members, chairs a subcommittee on the powerful House Financial Services panel. Jordan holds a subcommittee gavel on the House Oversight Committee. And Rep. John Fleming (R-La.) leads a Natural Resources subcommittee.”

And there are other ways of punishing rebels, besides withholding, or taking away, leadership positions. Team Boehner can also cripple a member’s campaign fundraising, which is what Rep. Raul Labrador (R-Idaho), another House Freedom Caucus member, says is already happening. He was among the 34 House Republicans voting against the TPA rule. “Because voting against the rule is almost like a capital crime here, and we know what’s going to happen to us,” Labrador told *Congressional Quarterly Roll Call*. “We know that the leadership is going to come against us, we know that they’re already telling our donors not to give money to us, which, by the way, I think is unethical. We know exactly what they’re doing.”

According to Labrador, there is mounting dissatisfaction with the current House GOP leadership’s iron-fisted rule. “That’s not leadership,” Labrador said. “That’s tyranny.”

Photo of House Speaker John Boehner with President Obama: AP Images

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