



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on August 10, 2011

GOP Presidential Candidate Newt Gingrich

Gingrich received a B.A. in history from Emory University in 1965, and a Ph.D. from Tulane University six years later.

At first Gingrich taught history and geography at West Georgia College. But he also developed a yen for politics, running unsuccessfully for a House seat twice, in 1974 and 1976. In 1978, the man holding the seat who had defeated him narrowly two years earlier decided not to run for reelection, and Newt Gingrich finally captured Georgia's Sixth Congressional District.



The scholarly and articulate Gingrich soon became an influential member of the House. It is important to note that Newt Gingrich was always primarily concerned with revitalizing and redefining so-called "conservatism" rather than limited constitutional government per se. During his early years in Congress, for example, he supported turning Martin Luther King Day into a national holiday — a posture more consistent with broadening the political appeal of Buckleyite Republican conservatism than with reducing the size of the federal government. He also pushed to prohibit the IMF from loaning money to communist countries, instead of supporting complete U.S. withdrawal from the illicit international organization.

Gingrich was involved in several high-profile efforts to crack down on corruption in the House, including the discipline of Representatives Dan Crane and Gerry Studds for involvement in the congressional page sex scandal in 1983, and the investigation of Democratic Speaker of the House Jim Wright on ethics charges in 1988.

In early 1989, Gingrich was elected House Minority Whip, succeeding Dick Cheney, who had been appointed Secretary of Defense by President George H.W. Bush. In this, his first formal position of power within the House, Gingrich telegraphed his intention to bring reforms to a House controlled by entrenched (and, Gingrich and his allies maintained, corrupt) Democrats for nearly four decades.

Driven by agitation from Gingrich and other would-be reformers, the House was soon enveloped by scandals. The House bank scandal and the House Post Office scandal laid bare for a disgusted American public the degree to which House members had managed to exempt and insulate themselves from the rules of conduct the American public observes. Gingrich himself was among the many House members guilty of abusing House check-writing privileges, having written a number of overdrafts, including a check for over \$9,000 to the Internal Revenue Service.

Notwithstanding, public perception of venal Democrats versus incorruptible Republicans, and of a need to cleanse the House, reached a fever pitch by fall of 1994. The antics of President Bill Clinton, amplified by the relentless ridicule of Rush Limbaugh and other newly prominent conservative radio talk-show hosts, helped to inflame American public opinion.

Prior to the 1994 elections, Gingrich and his Republican associates unveiled a list of agenda items that



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they pledged to act upon, should they win majorities in the House and Senate. Called the “Contract With America,” the plan received an enormous amount of media coverage at the time.

The contract listed eight procedural reforms to be implemented in the House to ensure greater transparency and to encourage members of the House to abide by the same rules of ethical conduct as everyone else. Additionally, the contract promised legislative action on a wide range of reforms, including tort reform, term limits, tax cuts, Social Security reform, and welfare reform. Although widely credited with propelling the Republicans to their takeover of both houses of Congress in 1994 (the storied “Republican Revolution”), few of the agenda items in the contract were ever implemented, with the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 probably being the most significant outcome. In the end, business as usual prevailed over electoral promises. Lost in the hubbub of policy debate was the fairly obvious point that a “contract with America” — between the federal government and the American people — already existed in the form of the U.S. Constitution; were its limits on government power and spending observed faithfully, no further electoral gimmickry and grandstanding would be necessary.

Following the Republican takeover of the House, Newt Gingrich was elected Speaker of the House in recognition of his leadership in bringing the Republicans back to power on Capitol Hill. He became Bill Clinton’s most vocal adversary, leading the effort to impeach Clinton on sundry charges of corruption and malfeasance. Although the impeachment of Bill Clinton was the defining event of his presidency, it fell short of holding him accountable for crimes more significant than his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky. Under Gingrich’s leadership, charges of giving military secrets to the Chinese in exchange for campaign contributions were dropped from the letters of impeachment, and Clinton was able to defend himself successfully against what were portrayed as minor charges arising from a personal sex scandal.

The political warfare with President Clinton took a toll on Gingrich, and the Clinton administration managed to spin the impeachment as a partisan witch hunt. Accordingly, the Republicans lost seats in the House in 1998 and Gingrich decided to step down as Speaker and to retire from Congress.

Gingrich, the “social conservative,” has been married three times, most recently to Callista Bisek, a former House of Representatives staffer with whom he carried on an extramarital affair during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Candidate Gingrich espouses a range of economic reforms, including more transparency at the Federal Reserve, an optional 15-percent flat tax, and the elimination of the capital gains and “death” taxes. On foreign policy, he favors “a grand strategy for marginalizing, isolating, and defeating radical Islamists across the world.” Gingrich opposes President Obama’s healthcare program because it “creates layers of new taxes, regulations, and bureaucracies that will ultimately make our problems worse, not better.” Gingrich favors comprehensive healthcare reforms, including reforming (though not abolishing) both Medicare and Medicaid, reforming the Food and Drug Administration to speed up approval of new drugs, and expanding the availability of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).

As a longtime member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the country’s premier organization promoting world government, it is not surprising that Gingrich has supported many pet programs of the CFR globalist elites, including expanded powers and more money for the UN and World Trade Organization, and more money for foreign aid.

A self-professed environmentalist, Gingrich touts what he calls “green conservatism” and has written a book entitled *A Contract With the Earth*. He was for many years an alarmist on global warming and



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even starred in a TV commercial with Nancy Pelosi warning of the imminent dangers of climate change. He ardently supported mandatory cap-and-trade legislation and ethanol subsidies, but now that the alleged science behind global warming is being thoroughly exposed and discredited, he has flip-flopped on climate change and some energy issues. Newt Gingrich's guiding philosophy, like that of many "conservatives" of his political generation, is that big government is better tamed and reformed than abolished, that Leviathan, subject to virtuous leadership, can be turned to virtuous ends.



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