



Nine of 12 Super Committee Members Named: Tea Party Marginalized

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid was the first to announce his three nominees to the “Super Committee” created by the recent debt ceiling increase, and all three fit the mold of big-spending liberals: Senators John Kerry (D-Mass.), Max Baucus (D-Mont.), and Patty Murray (D-Wash., pictured at left), the latter of whom will also serve as co-chairman of the committee. Reid observed of his picks:



Senators Baucus and Kerry are two of the Senates most respected and experienced legislators. Their legislative accomplishments are matched only by their records of forging strong bonds with their Republican colleagues.

I have great faith in Senator Murray as the co-chair of the committee. Her years of experience on the Senate Budget and Appropriations committees have given her a depth of knowledge on budget issues, and [have] demonstrated her ability to work across party lines.

Notably missing from his selections was anyone even warm to the idea of making serious cuts to the entitlement programs that are increasingly responsible for the governments spiraling deficits. Labor unions and other liberal groups had predictably lobbied Reid hard against naming any of the [Gang of Six](#) because of their suggestion that these programs should be cut significantly. Specifically they pressured Reid to avoid naming Mark Warner (D-Va.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), or Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), as they had expressed support for raising the Social Security retirement age from 67 to 69. None of those named for the committee was supported by members of the Tea Party, and they all have [Freedom Index](#) ratings in the very low double digits.

Speaker of the House John Boehner and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell were next to announce their picks for the committee. Boehner’s included Reps. Dave Camp (R-Mich.), Fred Upton (R-Mich.), and Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas), the latter of whom will serve as co-chairman of the committee with Senator Murray. McConnells Senate picks included Senators Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), and the only member with strong ties to the Tea Party, Pat Toomey (R-Pa.). Those Senators sport Freedom Index ratings in the mid-60s, while the Representatives named have only slightly higher ratings, with Toomey coming in at only an 80 rating, lower than either Upton or Hensarling.

The task of the committee is to find at least \$1.2 trillion in cuts (over the next decade) by November 23 and present their plan to the Congress. That plan will then pass or fail on an up or down vote with no chance for either body to amend the committees recommendations. If the bill fails to pass by December 23, a trigger automatically cuts both military budgets and discretionary budgets, but (except for a



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modest 2% cut in Medicare, to be levied on the providers through decreased reimbursements) leaves Medicare and Social Security alone.

Promises by the Republican nominees not to raise taxes will run into expected Democrat resistance to any attempt to cut entitlements. As *The Hill* put it, The selection of Murray [on one side] and Hensarling [on the other] guarantees the committees televised meetings will be highly political.

In his introductory remarks, McConnell gave away his bias:

My main criteria for selecting members was to identify serious, constructive senators who are interested in achieving a result that helps to get our nations fiscal house in order. That means reforming entitlement programs that are the biggest drivers of our debt, and *reforming the tax code* in a way that makes us more competitive and leads to more American jobs. [Emphasis added.]

In other words, despite rhetoric to the contrary, McConnell has stuffed the committee with enough soft-on-raising-taxes people to push the group to include tax increases in their final recommendations. If only one Republican moves over, it will create the 7-5 majority needed for such a bill to pass the committee.

Rep. Ron Paul has two problems with the Super Committee: One, its unconstitutional on its face, and two, its a gift to the Washington lobbyists camped out on K Street waiting eagerly to preserve and protect their interests. [In an interview](#) with Lou Dobbs on CNN, Paul explained why he voted no on raising the debt ceiling:

Mainly because I have never voted for any of the spending essentially over the many years I have been in Congress I believed that debt was going to be a real problem many years ago and debt is the problem. So you dont get out of the problem of having too much debt by allowing Congress to spend a lot more and granting them another \$2.4 trillion worth of debt. So it never made any sense to me to do it that way: It just digs a hole much deeper and it gets harder for us to get out.

So it was a very easy vote for me, but it became much easier for me when I saw this vehicle they were using to create this Super Congress. I mean, where in the world did that come from, and what is that going to lead to? That is monstrous. I cant find any place in the U.S. Constitution where we have the authority to create such a creature as the Super CongressItassum[s] the responsibility that Congress should be doing.

Paul added that this Super Congress (or Committee) represents an early Christmas present for the lobbyists who will descend like locusts on those committee members not already amenable to their pieces of the government pie. The pressure will be especially great to avoid any automatic triggered cuts to military spending which would happen if the committee cant come up with an acceptable plan. Paul [explained](#):

Concentrating such special authority to fast track legislation affecting so many special interests to a small, select committee is nothing more than an unprecedented power grab.

The founding fathers had strong feelings about taxation without representation and under no circumstances would they have felt [that] excluding 98% of Congress from fiscal decision was appropriate.

I see nothing good coming out of this Super Congress. I suspect it will be highly vulnerable to corruption and special interests. No benefit can come from such careless disregard of the



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Founders design.

Even though the final three members of the committee haven't yet been announced by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, constitutionalists say any attempt by the Super Committee to accomplish the serious work of cutting government spending substantially will die aborning. The Super Congress can be seen as a successful end run around efforts of the Tea Party to rein in government spending. Observers predict that token support for real reformation by those on the committee espousing the ideals of the Tea Party and limited constitutional government will be washed away by the endless political posturing resulting in higher taxes that can be expected by the big-spending liberals as the Thanksgiving deadline draws closer.



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