



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 15, 2010

## Rep. Shuler Will Challenge Pelosi for Minority Leader Role

Following the results of the midterm elections, Nancy Pelosi declared her intent to maintain a leadership role in the U.S. House of Representatives, though in a different capacity during the 112th session of Congress — as House Minority Leader. However, Pelosi's pursuit of the coveted position will be challenged by North Carolina Rep. Heath Shuler, who contends that while he does not believe himself to have a chance to secure the position, he has elected to vie for it in order to make a statement against Pelosi's leadership.



On [CNN's State of the Union](#), Shuler expressed his rationale for challenging Pelosi:

We've just come off the largest ... loss for the Democratic Party in almost a century.

And to be able to put Speaker Pelosi as minority leader is truly ... unacceptable for our party.

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The sentiments of Shuler, a member of the Blue Dog Democratic caucus, are reminiscent of those articulated by the Blue Dog Coalition of Democrats in Congress, which lost 24 of their 58 members in the midterm elections. Responding to the election results, the Blue Dogs indicated that Pelosi should not pursue the job of House Minority Leader, though they were wholly ignored.

Utah Rep. Jim Matheson, co-chairman of the Blue Dogs, blamed Pelosi's agenda for the Democrats' historic losses on November 2. He concluded that Pelosi should not continue to serve as a virtual mascot for the Democratic Party and that the Democrats should undergo renovations in order to remain contenders in the 2012 elections.

"When you have the largest turnover since 1948, then it's time to shake things up," he remarked.

Similarly, Shuler asserts that Pelosi's agenda was "so far to the left [that] it has been demonized by everyone involved and made it very difficult to be able to get a real message out clearly to the American people."

Furthermore, Shuler believes that with Pelosi at the forefront of the party, it will have a difficult time acquiring the support of moderate and conservative Democrats.

If she doesn't step aside then ... I'm going to press forward. I can add and subtract pretty well. I don't have the numbers to be able to win, but I think it's a proven point for moderates and the Democrat Party that we have to be a big tent. We have to be all-inclusive. We have to invite everyone into the party.

Much like the Blue Dogs, the Democrats who were defeated in the midterm elections this year took the opportunity to address Pelosi in a [letter](#), virtually begging her to step aside from her leadership role in the party and give the Americans a chance to disassociate her from the Democratic Party. An excerpt stated:



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Many of us want the chance to run again and reclaim the seats that we lost on Tuesday. With you as the leader of House Democrats, the hangover of 2010 stands no chance of subsiding.... One mark of a strong leader is the ability to discern when it is time to pass the baton. As defeated members, whose party needs to rebuild, we are counting on you to show the strength of your leadership in this dark hour. We ask that you step aside as leader of our party in the House.

Coming to Pelosi's defense are South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn and Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer.

Clyburn told *State of the Union*, "We spent 12 years in the wilderness (after losing the House in 1994); four years ago we came into the majority. Who was leading the team then? Nancy Pelosi." He asserted that Pelosi helped to bring America "out of the wilderness ... into the land of milk and honey."

Seemingly unperturbed by her party's requests to step aside, Pelosi continues to plan for the next session of Congress. According to *Politics Daily*, "Pelosi has said she would keep [Clyburn and Hoyer] in the leadership, with Hoyer as minority whip and Clyburn taking the newly created position of assistant leader, which would be third in the hierarchy."



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