



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 2, 2011

Tea Party Defectors Targeted

The strongest criticisms were directed at Allen West, who ran on the promise of standing firm in his convictions and not compromising his principles. Tom Trento, director of the Tea Party Founding Fathers, [called](#) the four lawmakers “Stupak defectors”, comparing them to the former House member who at the last minute changed sides on ObamaCare and “betray[ed] conservatives.” The uproar then was so great that Stupak decided to end his career and step down. As Trento noted



These Stupak defectors have flip-flopped to say they’ll vote for Boehner’s wimp-out bill...Stupak stupidly killed his career and had to exit Congress. [These] GOP defectors are heading off the same cliff.

Judson Phillips, head of the Tea Party Nation, [said](#) his organization is planning to call Tea Party sympathizers in Florida later to begin building pressure on West.

When West heard that the Tea Party was turning against him, he responded, “If the folks who one minute they’re saying I’m their ‘Tea Party hero’ and what, three or four days later I’m a ‘Tea Party defector’ — that kind of schizophrenia, I’m not going to get involved in it.” Trento responded, “The explanation to that schizophrenia is simple — the focus is on the principle. The individual representing that principle changed. The focus is on the principle. That’s not schizophrenia.” West’s answer was that he has to vote his own conscience on the matter, and that “It doesn’t matter” if his Tea Party supporters disagree with him.

In his press release [announcing his support](#) of the debt ceiling increase, Mike Kelly said, “I did what I truly believe was in the best interests of this country. While the ... Act is far from perfect, it is consistent with the commitment I’ve made to reduce spending without raising tax rates, while also putting in place the necessary budget reforms to reign [sic] in deficit spending.... The House offered a reasonable plan that would avoid a credit default, cut federal spending, and set the stage for a long-overdue balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.”

In his statement supporting the bill, James Lankford announced: “This bill enacts meaningful, long-term solutions to the national debt - not just a quick fix to get us past August 2. The plan passed in the House tonight makes solid strides towards achieving the goal of cutting spending immediately, capping future spending and committing to the only true solution for our budget woes — a balanced budget amendment.”

Bill Flores issued a statement announcing his support for the bill as well, noting that the act “ensures that House Republicans fulfill our pledge to cut spending more than any debt ceiling increase, establishes enforceable spending controls that change the broken system now and in the long term, and



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has no job-crushing tax hikes on America's families and job-creators."

In the latest release of [The Freedom Index](#), which shows how members of Congress have voted "based on their adherence to constitutional principles of limited government, fiscal responsibility, national sovereignty, and a traditional foreign policy of avoiding foreign entanglements," Rep. Allen West was the only one of the four "targets" of Tea Party angst to score 100, while the other three scored 80, missing the opportunity also to score 100 by voting to extend provisions of the unconstitutional Patriot Act, and by voting to keep American troops in Obama's undeclared war on Libya.

Stepping back from the immediate wrangling in Washington over the debt ceiling bill, it is helpful to remember that the founders designed the electoral process to allow candidates who represented the values of their constituency to represent them in the Congress, and that when and if such individuals failed to live up to their constituents' expectations they could easily be replaced. They are, in other words, replaceable. If a gear in a transmission breaks, it makes little sense to try to operate it with the faulty gear, but instead to replace the broken gear immediately. Constituents in Florida, Pennsylvania, Texas, Oklahoma, and every other state will soon have the same opportunity to judge the performance of their elected representatives and, if they have failed to measure up, replace them.

Photo: Rep. Allen West



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