



Written by [Laurence M. Vance](#) on November 4, 2010

What a Republican Majority Will Not Mean for Liberty, the Constitution, and Limited Government

So, the Republicans regained control of the U.S. House of Representatives with a margin of victory that made it the largest shift in power since the Democrats won a 91-seat House majority in 1948. Republicans are understandably ecstatic, but because they didn't win control of the Senate, and since we are stuck with a Democratic president for two more years, they seem a little too confident for a party that controls only one-third of the government.



House Republicans have been this ecstatic only three times in recent history. The first time was in 1994 when Republicans gained control of the Congress for the first time in 40 years. The second time was when George Bush was inaugurated in 2001 with a Republican-controlled Congress. And the third time was when Republicans regained control of the Senate in the 2002 midterm election. This was made necessary because Vermont Republican Jim Jeffords switched from Republican to Independent a few months after Bush was sworn in and upset the Republicans' precarious 50/50 Senate majority (Vice President Cheney could break ties, effectively giving the Republicans a majority).

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Only once in history have Republicans controlled the House with a Democratic Senate and a Democratic president, but that was back before the Civil War under President James Buchanan. Republicans controlled both the House and Senate under a Democratic president for two years during the presidencies of Grover Cleveland, Woodrow Wilson, and Harry Truman, for four years during the presidency of Andrew Johnson, and for the last six years of Bill Clinton's presidency.

I hate to rain on the Republicans' parade, but a brief look at Republican political history shows that we have no reason to be optimistic about a Republican majority in the House or anywhere else.

A Republican majority in the House will not mean any more than it did when the Republicans controlled both the Congress and the presidency under Dwight Eisenhower. With a Republican in the White House and a Republican majority in the Congress, one would think that the entire New Deal could have been



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repealed and the government restored to at least its pre-New Deal levels. Yet, we are still stuck with New Deal programs today, including the largest entitlement program in the federal budget — Social Security.

A Republican majority in the House will also not mean any more than it did when the Republicans controlled both the Congress and the presidency under George W. Bush. The damage done by Republicans when they were in total control of the government is incalculable: the arcane Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the nationalization of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, federal bailouts, free-speech zones and other infringements on civil liberties, the draconian PATRIOT ACT, the repulsive TSA, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, skyrocketing congressional spending, doubling of the national debt, assassinations, torture, and illegal surveillance. And then there is the No Child Left Behind Act, which further federalized local public schools; and the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, the largest expansion of the welfare state since Lyndon Johnson; and the Department of Homeland Security, precursor of the police state.

A Republican majority in the House will not mean anything different from the last time a Republican Congress had to contend with a Democratic president during the last six years of Bill Clinton's presidency. Republicans overwhelmingly supported the Iraq Liberation Act that declared it was U.S. policy to support "regime change" in Iraq. George W. Bush later cited this act in his desperate attempt to justify launching an invasion of Iraq in 2003. Also passed was unconstitutional legislation that strengthened gun control laws and further regulated health insurance.

A Republican majority in the House will not mean something dissimilar from a Democratic majority with a Republican president. Every Republican president since Eisenhower has had the misfortune of serving with a Democratic majority in Congress for at least part of his term, and usually for the entire duration. The last Republican president to preside over a Democratic Congress for his entire term was George H. W. Bush. Under these circumstances, one would expect that a Republican president would at least make an attempt to block Democratic legislation. But when some clearly unconstitutional bills passed Congress — with the help of Republicans in the House and Senate — Bush signed them instead of using his veto power. I am speaking of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Civil Rights Act. And then there is Bush's intervention in Iraq in 1991 that laid the foundation for a decade of brutal sanctions and his son's full-scale invasion in 2003.

A Republican majority in the House will not mean anything different from when Republicans held a majority in the Senate under a Republican president. Throughout Ronald Reagan's first term, and for the first half of his second one, the Republicans had a majority in the Senate under a Republican president. With the most conservative president since Calvin Coolidge, the repeal of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society seemed within reach. But not only was this never attempted, the budget increased, the deficit exploded, the national debt expanded, Sandra Day O'Connor was installed on the Supreme Court, and Social Security and Medicare tax rates were raised.

A Republican majority in the House will not mean anything more than business as usual with a complete Democratic majority. The total Democratic control of the government, such as that that existed during the entire tenure of Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and part of the presidencies of Harry Truman and Bill Clinton violated the Constitution in a myriad of ways. Yet, many of the increases in taxes, spending, federal agencies, federal regulations, and assaults on liberty and property were passed with the help of Republicans at the time they were supposed to be the opposition party.

The Republican record is a dismal failure. They can neither be trusted nor taken seriously. The history



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of the Republican Party is one of compromise after compromise and sellout after sellout. On the night of the recent election, Wolf Blitzer of CNN twice asked House Republican Minority Whip Eric Cantor to name one specific program that the Republicans in the House are going to cut now that they have a majority. Cantor twice couldn't name one.

Republicans have no intention of dismantling the welfare, warfare, regulatory, interventionist state. Foreign aid will continue. Farm subsidies will continue. Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid will continue. The war on drugs will continue. The U.S. global empire of troops and bases will remain intact. The occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan will continue. The destruction of civil liberties because of the war on terror will continue. The building of a fascist police state in the name of national security will continue. The Constitution will continue to be ignored and violated.

Oh, Republicans will have their alibis and excuses. They will claim their hands are tied because they don't control the Senate. Then they will insist that they need a large enough majority in the Senate to avoid a filibuster. Next will be the cry that they need a veto-proof majority. If we just had another Republican president, they will say, we could really do something to reduce the size and scope of government. And then when they get one the result will be the disastrous presidency of George W. Bush all over again.

What will a Republican majority in the House mean when it comes to restoring liberty, strictly following the Constitution, and returning to the limited government of the Founders? Until Republicans all vote like Ron Paul, a Republican majority in the House, the Senate, or even the whole government will mean absolutely nothing.

Photo: Tea Party Patriots celebrate as the television announces that Republicans have gained the majority in the House of Representatives as the Tea Party Patriots hold an election night party in Washington, Nov. 2, 2010: AP Images



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