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DID CONGRESSIONAL GOP LEADERSHIP LET US DOWN?



By Stephen L. Bakke  July 31, 2017

Here's what provoked me:

I'm fighting a personal battle against becoming too ideological. While I am fairly consistent and firm in my beliefs, I try not to expect others to automatically align with me when supporting or rejecting legislation. It seems that kind of inflexibility is what has caused extreme bitterness and gridlock in Washington. I've been reflecting on the castigation of our congressional leaders because of lack of progress on repealing Obamacare. They are accused of losing control of their caucuses. Is that criticism really deserved?

Here's my response:

Did Congressional GOP Leadership Let Us Down?

Republicans hold majorities in the House and Senate while also occupying the White House. As a result, they are chastised for lack of progress on repeal/replace of Obamacare. Congressional leaders McConnell and Ryan are declared incompetent because of difficulty delivering on healthcare reform promises, and are accused of having lost control of their Republican caucuses.

I don't agree with that indictment. Senate Majority Leader McConnell has been able to deliver support of almost 95% of the Republican Senators for the repeal/replace effort. Speaker of the House Ryan fielded a similar percentage in passing the House version of the legislation.

I don't think most of the problem is with leadership, and I respect sincere legislators who hold strong philosophical and values based positions – even if different than my own. Delivering over 90% can't be described as "losing control." Rather, McConnell and Ryan should be given credit for delivering an overwhelming majority of Republican votes.

While chastising McConnell and Ryan, these same critics wag fingers of judgement at Democrats for being too ideological. Do we really want all of our legislators to be ideologues? It seems to me that would be a problem, not a solution.