



## Make Democrats make hard choices

By: Deroy Murdock - March 14, 2013

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Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Calif., has a modest proposal for the U.S. House GOP leadership: Keep Democrats constantly astride the horns of a dilemma.

“We have seen several major pieces of legislation reported to the House floor, such as the Violence Against Women Act, that divide Republicans while they unite Democrats,” McClintock tells me. “Just thinking out loud here, maybe while we still have a Republican majority in the House, we ought to put up measures that unite Republicans around Republican principles and force the Democrats to explain their positions to voters.”

House Speaker John Boehner repeatedly has violated former GOP Speaker J. Dennis Hastert’s rule that legislation must pass the House with at least a majority of the Republican majority. The tax-raising fiscal-cliff deal, pork-filled Hurricane Sandy relief bill, and the warmly named but problematic VAWA all were adopted with nearly unanimous Democrat support and a minority of GOP votes.

This is no way to run a Republican legislative chamber, especially when the Washington Post reports that Obama thirsts to crush the House’s GOP majority and, during his final two years, reinstate California Democrat Nancy Pelosi as speaker for one last, left-wing waltz.

Boehner should follow McClintock’s strategy and schedule daily, stand-alone votes that rally Republicans and let Democrats demonstrate whether they truly stand with the downtrodden or with the prosperous.

As the sequester started, for instance, Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas, offered a brilliant idea: No federal funding for Obama’s 116th golf junket until he restores public tours of the White House. Despite applause for Gohmert’s amendment, Boehner scotched it. What a waste.

So, the question should come before the House. In a separate, individual vote — rather than within a major bill that Democrats might oppose on a party-line basis — the donkeys should decide: Would they rather spend tax dollars to whisk Obama to country clubs or to reopen the executive mansion to Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls and other children who washed cars and sold cookies to fund their now-spiked White House visits?

- As the Heritage Foundation’s James Sherk estimates, taxpayers could save some \$11 billion annually by repealing the Davis-Bacon Act. It requires Washington to pay, on average, 22 percent higher, union-driven “prevailing wages” on federally funded construction projects rather than lower, market-driven wages. Why not scrap this lavish law and devote half the savings to debt reduction and the other half to assist disabled children who live below the poverty line? Force Democrats to choose between construction-union bosses, who pay their campaign bills, and disadvantaged kids, whom they say they represent.

- As the Cato Institute's Chris Edwards calculates, federal civilian employees enjoyed \$128,226 in combined wages and benefits in 2011, versus \$64,560 for the typical private-sector taxpayers who underwrite their paychecks. To practice the "shared sacrifice" that Obama preaches, cut their compensation by 10 percent. This \$12,822 average savings per government employee would finance medical assistance for wounded warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan. Force Democrats to choose between overpaid federal bureaucrats and the military heroes whom they claim to support.

- The Office of Personnel Management specifies that in 2011, federal employees spent 3,395,187 hours caring for 1,202,733 unionized federal workers "when the employee would otherwise be in a duty status." In other words, during this "official time," federal staffers worked for Big Labor, rather than the American people. This cost taxpayers \$155,573,739 -- 11.85 percent above 2010's expense.

The House should kill "official time" and split the savings: half to the Treasury, to reduce the \$16.7 trillion national debt, and half to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, to discover new HIV-AIDS treatments and create an AIDS vaccine. Make Democrats pick between their pals in the government-employee unions and the AIDS patients whom they say they love.

House Republicans thus should give Democrats daily opportunities either to do the right thing...or paint themselves into a corner where their hunger for self-preservation will expose the hollowness of their slogans.