



Congress

[\[Print\]](#) [\[Email\]](#)

[Share](#)



Tea Party to shake up Congress, GOP

By: [Susan Ferrechio](#)
Chief Congressional Correspondent
November 4, 2010

It's time for a Tea Party in the Capitol.

Dozens of new lawmakers will arrive in Washington in January waving the Tea Party banner and carrying a to-do list sanctioned by the electorate that they won't let GOP leaders ignore.

The list includes repealing President Obama's mammoth health care reforms, slashing spending and downsizing the government.

Given their numbers, the Tea Party factions in the House and Senate are bound to shake up Congress and potentially fracture the GOP if the party resists their agenda.

Already, Tea Party groups are warning congressional Republicans that they could be tossed out in 2012 if they don't heed voters' demands to trim federal spending.

"What we are going to do is make very clear to the Republican leaders that we are going to expect them to act like they got the message," said Randy Lewis, spokesman for the Tea Party Patriots. "And if they don't, they are going to find themselves in the same position the Democrats found themselves in" during Tuesday's election.

About 40 new House members, two-thirds of the incoming freshman class, are affiliated with the Tea Party. Five of the seats Republicans picked up in the Senate were Tea Party candidates.

"These are not folks who are really inclined to compromise," said Mike Tanner of the libertarian CATO Institute. "They are going to push Republicans to the right, so they are going to make a difference."

The Tea Party is already pushing for a House leadership post. Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., who heads the House Tea Party Caucus, is running for Republican conference chairman, the No. 4 leadership job, against Jeb Hensarling, a Texas conservative who has the backing of House majority leader-to-be Eric Cantor. Bachmann's caucus could grow to include a third of House Republicans, enhancing her influence and helping her move the party to the right, particularly on financial matters.

"The last time Republicans were in the majority they didn't act like constitutional conservatives,"

Bachmann spokesman Sergio Gor said. "They were becoming the party of spending. So, we need to make sure we have a core group of conservatives who can prevent the party from straying again."

Tanner and other political analysts say that while Tea Party lawmakers are more numerous in the House, the five elected to the Senate could gain more influence just because the margin between the parties is much narrower.

Tea Party senators are likely to huddle with Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., who backed so many of them in the campaigns and who frequently bucks his party's leadership in the name of fiscal conservatism. That will make it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the party unity upon which Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is counting.

"These people are going to be a pain in the side of McConnell all year through," Tanner said. "They are going to pick at every appropriations bill and have lots of annoying amendments, some of which will pass."

sferrechio@washingtonexaminer.com

More from Susan Ferrechio

- [Tearful Boehner calls election repudiation of Washington](#)
- [Cantor plans run for House majority leader in new GOP House](#)
- [No significant challenge to Reid as majority leader in new Senate](#)
- [House GOP claims voter mandate to limit government, taxes](#)
- [Tea Party to shake up Congress, GOP](#)

Topics

[Susan Ferrechio](#) , [Washington](#) , [Congressional](#) , [Tea Party](#) , [house](#) , [senate](#) , [obama](#) , [election](#)



[Here's why federal departments should be moved out of nation's capital](#)

My father, who oh by the way was a career civil servant working for the Air Force, often said one of the ways to prevent the federal government was becoming even more powerful,...

—[Mark Tapscott](#)

[And now from the same AARP folks who helped bring you Obamacare - a 13 percent health insurance premium increase](#)

Among President Obama's key allies in selling Obamacare was the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the 40-million member liberal non-profit advocacy group that...

—[Mark Tapscott](#)

[OpenSecrets.org on last-minute union campaign spending](#)