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Subject: It's as if the GOP is trying to lose control of Congress

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Fox News: Rosenstein lets Nunes, Gowdy review FBI memo that kick-started Russia probe

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It's as if the GOP is trying to lose control of Congress



By Robert Romano

House Speaker Paul Ryan is not running for reelection in 2018, but apparently intends to serve out his term as House Speaker. That brings the wave of House Republicans retiring or running for different offices this cycle up to 40.

That, after the \$1.3 trillion stinker of an omnibus spending bill, where Democrat priorities like the New York-New Jersey Gateway tunnel were included with an extra \$380 million, Planned Parenthood continues to get \$500 million a year via Medicaid and other government health programs, but President Donald Trump's priorities like building the southern border wall, defunding sanctuary cities and states, and his infrastructure plan were not.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer hailed the spending bill as a win for Democrats: "We don't have the House. We don't have the Senate. We don't have the presidency, but we produced a darn good bill for the priorities that we have believed in."

After that, rumors started swirling that Ryan would not stay on as Speaker, which have proven to be correct.

It's not that the current GOP Congress is without accomplishments. Tax cuts, increased defense spending, repealing the Obamacare individual mandate, drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), stopping some of Obama's midnight regulations and ending Obama's HUD housing zoning takeover rule were all signed into law by President Trump.

Those are things Republicans have been running on for years. And make no mistake, those are huge accomplishments. Ryan deserves a lot of the credit, too.

It's also in the rear-view mirror. On its own, it's not enough to keep the House majority. House Republicans needed a leader who would be setting the agenda, connecting with voters this year about why the GOP should keep the majority and what will be accomplished in Congress next year.

And now the leader of the House will not be leading the re-election campaign in 2018 with skin in the game.

If Paul Ryan was going to retire, he should have done it in December after the tax cut bill was done. It was a high water mark for Congress. There would have been time for new leadership elections. It would have engaged a necessary conversation about the best path forward for Congress, with members choosing the right direction by selecting new leadership.

Instead, Ryan waited, and now has seemingly ceded the 2018 midterm electoral battlefield at a critical moment. It has all the appearance of a retreat, and now, it's practically too late to replace him.

If there is any logic now for Ryan to serve out his term as Speaker, it's that running nobody as the next Speaker versus House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) does better in voters' minds than anybody in current leadership that brought us the omnibus who might presently take over as Speaker. It's a lot like running for President without a candidate. Call it the Spiro Agnew strategy, who was apparently chosen by Richard Nixon as a running mate in 1968 precisely because he was unknown. Nixon ran better on his own.

And perhaps Republican members will run better without having to defend Speaker Ryan.

Again, Republicans have accomplishments. But those now risk being overshadowed by a Republican electorate dispirited by the major concessions given to the other side, and by infighting and a failure to properly defend the President of their own party and the office of the Presidency itself.

It has been revealed the preceding Obama administration spied on what was then the opposition party in 2016, the Trump campaign, under false charges of Russia collusion, and then the secret investigation was carried over into the Trump administration in 2017.

Republicans led by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) have conducted vigorous oversight to expose the Obama spying scandal.

Special Counsel Robert Mueller has far exceeded the scope of Attorney General Jeff Sessions' original recusal from any matters related to the 2016 presidential election.

But it's not enough. So far, Republican Congressional leaders have been unwilling to take on the implications of the out of control Justice Department that is operating its own agenda to overturn the express will of the American people who voted for President Trump in 2016. The rule of law is in grave danger.

Yet, Ryan and company offer no solution for a rogue element in the executive branch that has no place in our constitutional republic, in which the Framers only ever envisioned one president executing the laws.

Let the investigation play out, the wise men preach, and then pretend that those who are leading this investigation have integrity when they have resorted to violating constitutional rights and other misconduct to get what they want. Some offer bills to protect Mueller. It's cowardly.

Elsewhere, President Trump has his agenda on border security, but Congressional Republicans have rejected that by failing to fight for it when they have the power of the purse. It is all very dispiriting to Republican voters. Many will stay home, testing Republican majorities in marginal districts.

The Senate is a different story because of the seats that are up this year. Republicans could still pick up a few seats there, but they need a counterpart.

On the House side, Republicans still need an aggressive legislative strategy that forces the Senate to make big concessions to the President. Unfortunately, most of the must-pass legislative vehicles that might have done this, that is, the debt ceiling, the budget and the omnibus have already sailed.

There is still time to get the southern border wall funded in the appropriations and September funding bills, but it will take a fight to get it in the Senate.

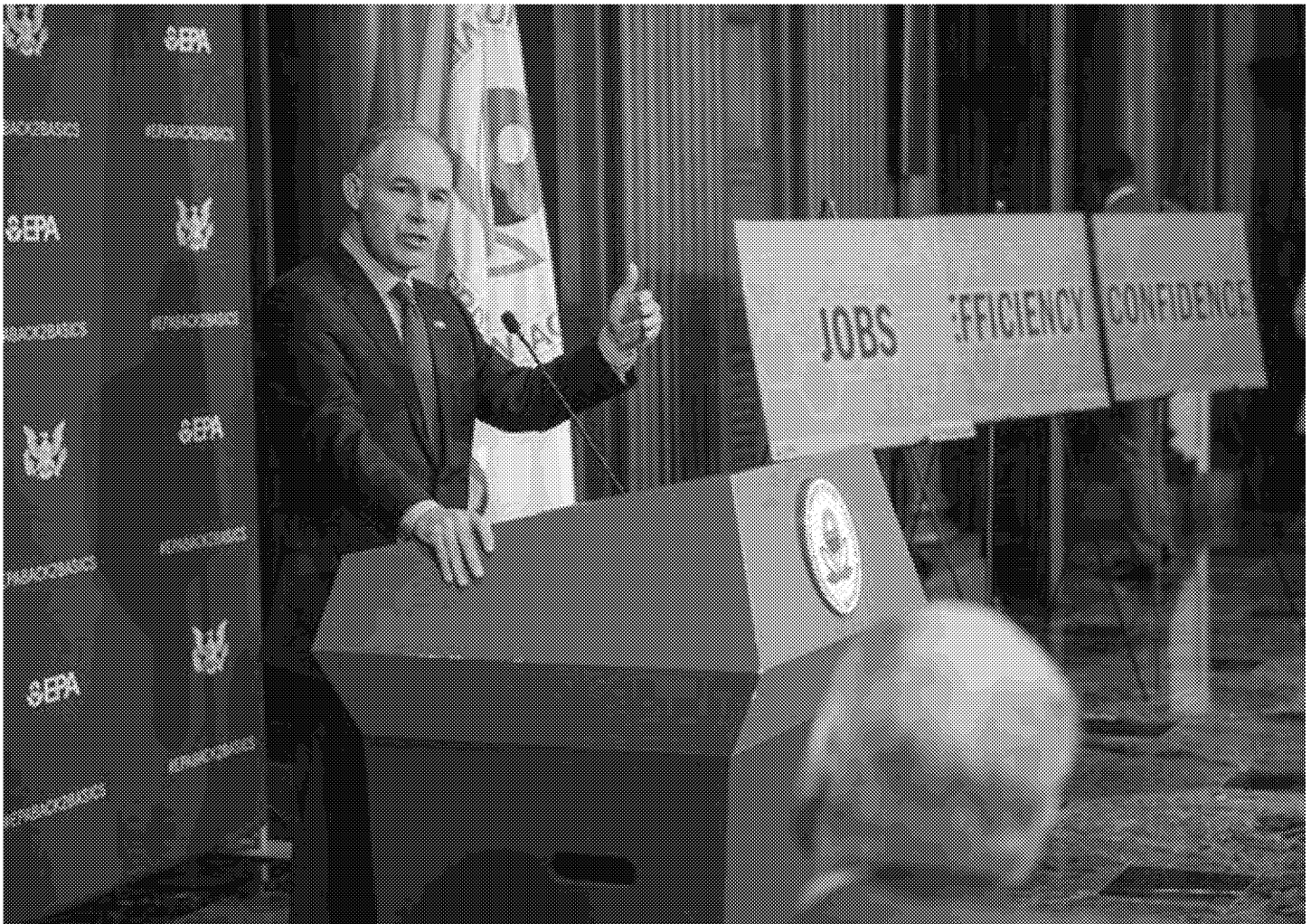
Using key votes on impoundment of funds, which only require a simple majority in the Senate to pass, offers an opportunity to roll back items that remain unpopular. Force votes on rescinding monies for Planned Parenthood and sanctuary cities and states. Make senators defend their votes.

On the September funding bill, the risk is that members led by Ryan will be anxious to avoid “another” shutdown and so will simply pass a stopgap into the lame duck and then after November, pass another stopgap, potentially leaving a Speaker Pelosi to set the agenda in 2019.

Whoever is leading the House this year, if it’s still Ryan, needs to force votes in the Senate on the priorities that got President Trump and Republicans elected in 2016. If Ryan wanted to stand aside and not lead the majority in the House for re-election, he should have done it months ago. But to make the most of it, the one silver lining is that the Republican race for Speaker has now become nationalized, and those who wish to be Speaker can and should campaign nationally to make their case to lead.

Robert Romano is the Vice President of Public Policy at Americans for Limited Government.

Pruitt revises CAFE standards to meet real life, not Obama’s fantasy land



By Printus LeBlanc

On April 2, 2018, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt EPA's Administrator, Scott Pruitt, announced the completion of the Midterm Evaluation (MTE) process for greenhouse gas emission standards. Pruitt concluded the current standards for vehicles in 2022-2025 were unrealistic and needed to be revised. Of course, environmental radicals went crazy, refusing to care how many people might be hurt by government regulations. Thankfully President Trump and Administrator Pruitt are not scared of the big green radicals and have set a course of prosperity for the American people.

The Obama administration didn't even try to hide its hatred for the fossil fuel industry. The industry was attacked from every angle. It restricted oil drilling, imposed excess regulations on transportation of oil and gas, and raised Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for the future to unrealistic levels. The increased CAFE standards were a direct attempt to social engineer the population. The administration didn't like the fossil fuel industry, so it imposed regulations it believed would lead to the death of the light truck and SUV.

When the Trump administration took over, one of its priorities was to ensure excessive regulations from the EPA were not putting people out of work. The CAFE standards were one such set of regulations.

The CAFE standards are rules regulating the fuel economy of a given fleet of vehicles. The regulations were part of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, which came about as a result of the 1973 oil embargo. Congress wanted to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, and they believed CAFE standards would help with that. The first year for CAFE coverage was 1978, and it was intended to double fuel economy to 27.5 mpg by 1985.

The Obama administration moved aggressively once in office. On May 19, 2009, Obama proposed new CAFE standards for model year cars 2012 through 2016. The new standards required 39 mpg for cars and 30 mpg for trucks for an average of 35.5 mpg in 2016. This was a massive increase from the from the 2009 average of 25 mpg.

Obama continued the assault in 2011, announcing another astronomical hike in CAFE standards. The administration increased the average for model year 2025 vehicles to 54.5 mpg. A number intended to push all Americans out of light trucks and SUVs and into Prii (plural of Prius). The high threshold for mpg was designed to do one thing and one thing only, put Americans in cars they didn't want to drive.

When the Trump administration took over, it vowed to update or end burdensome regulations, and the CAFE standards were squarely in his crosshairs. The CAFE standards were hurting the automobile industry, and the President wanted a review of the issue conducted.

Scott Pruitt went to work and concluded the previous administration's goals were not only unreasonable but reckless and not based on market conditions.

The original EPA report failed to take into effect basic market principles such as supply and demand. The report released by Pruitt's EPA stated, "the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (Alliance) stated that the level of technology modeled by EPA is insufficient to meet the standards and that the actual level of technology needed is misaligned with market realities. Global automakers similarly charged that "decline in vehicle sales, lower gas prices, an increased preference for light trucks over cars, and sluggish demand for high fuel economy vehicles – are taking place as the stringency of the standards increase at an unprecedented rate."

An issue no one is thinking about is the disabled community. People that need a vehicle with wheelchair access choose SUVs or minivans for a reason. These are the only vehicles that are affordable, spacious, and can handle the stress load. Mechanical wheelchairs can get up to 500 lbs. and when the lift system or ramp is included the added weight can be up to half a ton. The vehicles used for this task do not get the best gas mileage simply because of the additional weight. If automakers were going to be fined for making the vehicles that don't meet the excessively high CAFE standards set by the Obama administration, why would they make them?

The Obama era CAFE standards would have eliminated an entire class of vehicle hundreds of thousands of people depend on for transportation. Thankfully the Trump administration halted this assault against the handicapped community.

President Trump promised action at the EPA and Scot Pruitt is delivering. Despite made up controversies flung at him daily, Pruitt continues to set the EPA on the right path balancing the economy and jobs with protecting the environment for future generations. The CAFE standards are

an important step in restoring sanity to the EPA. President Trump and Administrator Pruitt are to be commended for listening to the American people, something most people in D.C. forgot how to do.

Printus LeBlanc is a contributing editor for Americans for Limited Government.



ALG Editor's Note: In the following piece from Fox News, Catherine Herridge reports on the late breaking news that the FBI finally let Congress view FBI memo that started Russia probe:



Rosenstein lets Nunes, Gowdy review FBI memo that kick-started Russia probe

By Catherine Herridge

Facing legal action, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein allowed House Intelligence Committee chairman Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., and Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., to view the FBI memo that instigated the bureau's counterintelligence investigation of contacts between Russia and the Trump campaign, Nunes confirmed on Wednesday.

The meeting came a day after Nunes threatened to take legal action -- including contempt proceedings and impeachment -- against Rosenstein and FBI Director Christopher Wray for failing to produce a clean copy of the memo, known as an electronic communication or EC, that was responsive to an August 2017 committee subpoena.

"Although the subpoenas issued by this Committee in August 2017 remain in effect, I'd like to thank Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein for his cooperation today," Nunes responded.

When asked on Fox News' "The Ingraham Angle" Tuesday if he would hold the officials in contempt of Congress, Nunes said, "we're not going to just hold in contempt. We will have a plan to hold in contempt and to impeach ... we're not messing around here."

A government source told Fox News that Nunes, Gowdy and committee Republican staff were able to view the two-page memo with relatively few redactions. The source described those redactions as "minimal and justified."

Fox News has previously reported that the memo was either drafted by or had significant input from FBI agent Peter Strzok, who was removed from special counsel Robert Mueller's probe after the discovery of anti-Trump text messages between him and another FBI official, Lisa Page.

Despite Rosenstein making the minimally redacted version of the memo available, the government source said committee Republicans remained concerned about the memo's underlying intelligence and the credibility of the sources which would require further investigation.

A Justice Department official told Fox News that the memo's redactions had been "narrowly tailored to protect the name of a foreign country and the name of a foreign agent... These words must remain

redacted after determining that revealing the words could harm the national security of the American people by undermining the trust we have with this foreign nation."

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