

Do-Nothing 115th GOP Congress

In spite of the fact that Republicans control the House, Senate, and White House, 2017 has been defined by chaos and dysfunction. As the first session of the 115th Congress comes to a close, here's a look at how unproductive and closed the GOP-led Congress has been:

Closed Process: Despite promising open, transparent debate, House Republicans have considered a record number of closed rules, which limit debate and Members' ability to change legislation. In the first session, Republicans have:

- **Considered 58 bills under closed rules**, which surpasses the Republican record of 48 closed rules in the 114th Congress. By comparison, the Democratic-led 111th Congress had just 18 closed rules in the first session of Congress and 19 in the second session, with a total of just 37 closed rules in the entire Congress.
- **Blocked 1,533 Democratic and Republican amendments** from being considered on the House Floor.

No Substance: Only 97 bills have been signed into law, compared to 125 bills signed into law in the first session of the Democratic-led 111th Congress. Of those laws, **only ten would be considered major pieces of legislation.**

Republicans have failed to govern and address the priorities of the American people, including:

- Bringing legislation to the Floor to support job creation;
- Taking action to stabilize the health insurance marketplaces;
- Passing a budget;
- Introducing an infrastructure bill to strengthen America's roads, bridges, ports, and broadband; and
- Putting forward a serious strategy to address national security challenges.

Republicans have wasted the past year on partisan efforts that undermine the well-being and security of the American people:

- Raising taxes on 86 million middle-class families in order to give massive tax cuts to the wealthy and corporations, cutting off access to health care for 13 million Americans, and adding \$1.5 trillion to the deficit over the next 10 years;
- Sabotaging the Affordable Care Act by attempting to repeal it and kick 24 million Americans off health coverage, and by cutting the open enrollment period in half and stopping education and outreach efforts;
- Rolling back protections for workers, consumers, investors, students, teachers, public health, the environment, and civil rights; and
- Delegitimizing the investigations into Russia's attempts to subvert our democracy.

And as Republicans return home for the remainder of the year, they have still not addressed a number of priorities:

- Responsibly funding the government for the remainder of the fiscal year and lifting the spending caps;
- Reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program for 9 million children even as states are running out of funding;
- Reauthorizing expiring Medicare programs and other health extenders, including funding for community health centers that provide access to care for underserved populations;
- Protecting DREAMers as approximately 122 DACA recipients are losing protections every day;
- Reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance program;
- Reauthorizing Section 702 of FISA to protect a critical intelligence tool that keeps Americans safe; and
- Providing funding for Veterans Affairs Choice programs.

The media has taken note of Republicans inability to govern throughout the year:

“You might think that securing the White House, Senate, House of Representatives and a majority of seats on the Supreme Court would enable a party to practically dictate laws and policy. But so far, **unified government hasn’t worked out too well for Republicans.** The GOP has controlled both houses of Congress and the presidency since January but has no major legislative accomplishments to show for it.” [FiveThirtyEight, [5/11/17](#)]

“**Republicans are failing at governance. And they know it...**Legislative results have been in short supply for unified Republican government as first the House and now the Senate have gotten badly bogged down in trying to overhaul the Obama administration’s health care law — a top priority of Republicans since 2010. The stalemate has been ugly, preventing Republicans from moving ahead on long overdue budget, spending and tax priorities and leaving Mr. McConnell and Senate Republicans frustrated and doubting their abilities.” [New York Times [7/12/17](#)]

“The Republican Party’s seven-year quest to undo the Affordable Care Act culminated Friday in a humiliating failure to pass an unpopular bill, sparking questions about how steep the costs will be for its congressional majorities... **They now live in the worst of both worlds — with nothing to show for seven years of campaign promises,** even though dozens of vulnerable lawmakers cast votes that could leave them exposed to attacks from Democrats.” [Washington Post, [7/29/17](#)]

“The failure of Obamacare repeal efforts exposed a harsh reality: Despite controlling the White House, the House and the Senate, **Republicans cannot govern with Republican votes alone.** They can either limit their ambitions to proposals that can attract Democratic votes, and then actively pursue those votes, or they can go down in history as presiding over the least effective Congress in modern history.” [Scher Op-Ed, [7/31/17](#)]

“**The Republican Party has not been able to pass a single important piece of domestic legislation under this philosophic rubric.** Despite all the screaming and campaigns, all the government shutdown fiascos, the G.O.P. hasn’t been able to eliminate a single important program or reform a single important entitlement or agency.” [David Brooks Op-Ed, [7/21/17](#)]

“Republicans rushed through this massive change in policy with cursory vetting and no attempt at bipartisanship. They either do not care about the debt or they are so deluded by wishful thinking and fantasy economics that they should not be running a gas station, let alone the country. Either way, **they just failed Governing 101.**” [Washington Post Editorial, [12/2/17](#)]

“Political desperation is the mother of this legislation. Despite Republican control of both houses of Congress, **the Trump administration has failed in its first year to enact legislation that deals with major problems, such as health care and immigration.** So at year end, we have the spectacle of Trump & Co. bellowing a populist message about lower taxes, even as special-interest lobbyists drive the legislation toward a chaotic conference and final passage.” [David Ignatius Op-Ed, [12/13/17](#)]

“The truth is that Republicans are in fact making choices with this tax plan, just as they made choices on health care. Those choices mean that they’ll accept enormous deficits and worsening inequality if that’s the price of giving the wealthy a big, beautiful tax cut. Needless to say, that’s not exactly a winning message. So they simply come up with creative ways of pretending that these trade-offs don’t exist at all. Which once again proves that **they just don’t take the task of governing seriously.**” [Washington Post, [9/27/17](#)]

“The measure’s passage would mark the first major legislative accomplishment for Trump and GOP leaders **in a year of stumbles, the products of months of negotiations and late adjustments** aimed at winning over the last holdouts.” [Washington Post, [12/17/17](#)]