

Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, Donald Trump has fundamentally changed the Republican Party. The Royal Families of the Republican Party have been evicted by a grassroots campaign that became a movement that in turn became a presidency. This is the NEW Republican Party, and if that term sounds vaguely familiar, that was Ronald Reagan's vision. In 1977, he described that vision with these words: "And let me say so there can be no mistakes as to what I mean: The New Republican Party I envision will not be, and cannot, be one limited to the country club-big business image that for reasons both fair and unfair, it is burdened with today. The New Republican Party I am speaking about is going to have room for the man and the woman in the factories, for the farmer, for the cop on the beat and the millions of Americans who may never have thought of joining our party before, but whose interests coincide with those represented by principled Republicanism. If we are to attract more working men and women of this country, we will do so not by simply "making room" for them, but by making certain they have a say in what goes on in the party."

That's the story of the 2016 election. The working men and women of this country had their say, and they spoke clearly and unmistakably.

So let us brace ourselves for the fight ahead, confident that we have come a very long way in convincing the American people of the efficacy and practicality our Republican principles.

What can each of us do? I hate to tell you this, but we can't declare victory and go home. That is the surest path to failure. You notice, the Left hasn't folded its tent. They are doing everything they can to bring down this administration before it even begins. Never has it been more important for us to engage our fellow citizens in every forum we can find. I have often said that the real debate doesn't occur in Congress – it occurs over backyard fences and family dinner tables and coffee at Starbucks. It is upon the outcome of that debate that our nation's future is decided.

The Senate Must Reform Cloture

By Congressman Tom McClintock

The American people have given our 45th President and the 115th Congress a clear mandate and all the necessary means to revive our economy, restore our nation's sovereignty and reinstate our Bill of Rights and the rule of law.

Congress will need to deliberate wisely and in good faith, with all sides participating in the discussion and all voices heard. But ultimately, these deliberations must result in laws that fulfill the people's will. The agenda is daunting and time is fleeting.

Some have set a positive tone for the peaceful transition of power. Yet we have also heard reactionary elements of the Democratic Party pledge to thwart this mandate and destroy this presidency. One need look no farther than Harry Reid's post-election diatribes to realize that these threats are not limited to the lunatic fringe that violently rioted in our streets. They reach directly into the halls of Congress.

The greatest single obstacle to the success of the Trump administration is the 60-vote threshold to invoke cloture in the Senate. Given the record of abuse of this rule in recent years and the avowed intentions of many in that body, nothing will change legislatively while it remains in its current form.

Cloture is rooted in a sound parliamentary principle: that as long as a significant minority of a deliberative body wants to debate an issue, the debate should continue. After all, a minority exists to convince the majority to its way of thinking and often identifies flaws in a proposal. This is the essence of deliberation.

Margaret Thatcher said, first you win the argument; then you win the vote. We have been winning the argument and we have been winning the vote. But the moment we withdraw from the argument, we'll lose the vote and all that we have gained.

I say this again: we didn't save the country on election night. All that happened election night is that the American people gave us all

the tools that we need to save the country. But this principle assumes it is an actual debate, that the debate is germane to the question and that it is not manifestly dilatory. Over the last century, this principle has degenerated in the Senate from a 2/3 vote to close debate into what amounts to a 3/5 vote to start one. Ironically, a procedure designed to protect debate has now deformed into a procedure that very successfully prevents it.

During the last session of Congress, the House sent hundreds of bills to the Senate, including the appropriations bills to fund this government. But instead of amending its ideas into those bills – or sending the House bills of its own – the Senate simply refused to consider them when the minority stubbornly denied cloture.

Some Republicans have said they don't dare reform the cloture rule for fear they may find themselves back in the minority without the ability to effectively stop a leftist steam-roller. Fair enough, but they need to decide whether they prefer to be a successful majority or a successful minority. They cannot be a successful majority as long as cloture exists in its current form – and they may well be on a path toward becoming a successful minority once again.

Voters elected Republican majorities in both houses of Congress and they expect action. They'll get it from the President and from the House. But in order for the Senate to rise to this occasion, it must reform its cloture rule when it organizes in January.

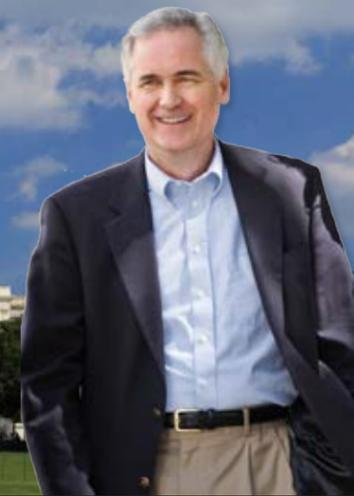
(A longer version will be available soon through Hillsdale College).

The real work is just starting – and it will be harder and more painful than anything we have yet been through. You better believe we're in for a fight – but if we stand our ground and continue to take our message to voters, I believe we will not only save America but save California as well.

Congressman Tom McClintock's

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We did it! In my last Capitol Comments – just before the election – I warned "There are no do-overs of this election. We either recover our founding principles this year or risk losing them for all time."

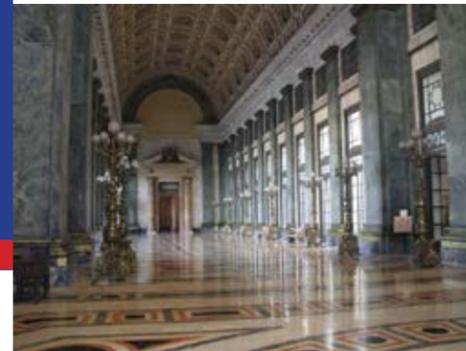
Thank you for all you did to make this crucial victory possible. I believe we saved our country in November – or more precisely, the American people rose up and gave us the tools to save our country. That historic work is still ahead of us, and it will require the faithful fulfillment of all the promises that we made to revive our economy, restore our Constitution, secure our borders and uphold the rule of law.

I must tell you I am more optimistic for our country than I have ever been. And yes, there's even hope for California. I outline the reasons for my optimism in a speech I gave after the election to the Auburn Republican Women's Club.

I also include my thoughts on how we can deliver President Trump's goal of a trillion dollars of new infrastructure without spending a dime of general tax revenues, adapted from a speech I recently gave on the House floor.

It's all for naught if we don't deliver. The greatest threat I see to enacting the Trump legislative agenda is the 60-vote cloture rule in the Senate, and I offer some thoughts on reform as well, excerpted from a recent essay I have written for Hillsdale College.

Again, many thanks for everything that you have done to bring us to this moment in our history. I want you to know that I will do absolutely everything in my power to see that we in Congress rise to the occasion. Your support in this election was more than just an honor – it was a trust. I won't let you down.



Your generous support has made it possible for us to continue producing this newsletter.

Please support the Capitol Comments by using the enclosed remit envelope. Thank you!

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THE NEW REPUBLICAN AGE

(And There's Even Hope for California)

I don't know about you, but I'm not done celebrating election night!

Living in California, it is easy to lose our perspective on what is happening across our country. During the last eight years, we have seen one of the most dramatic and remarkable political realignments in the entire history of our nation.

Here is the scorecard: in just four elections, we have seen a NET SHIFT of 64 U.S. House Seats, 12 U.S. Senate seats, 10 U.S. Governors and 919 state legislative seats from Democrats to Republicans. Not since 1929 have we held the White House and this many congressional seats. Republicans hold more state legislative seats than at any time since 1920. We hold majorities in more state legislative chambers than at any time since the Civil War.

Not to mention the presidency. Oh, and the Supreme Court. President Trump could very likely make four appointments to the Supreme Court, starting with the Scalia vacancy.

In fact, a few months before he died, I had the honor to attend a small private dinner with Antonin Scalia. At one point in the conversation he became very quiet and contemplative. He said, "I've written more dissenting opinions during this term than any time in my nearly 30 years on the court. And if you want to know where the center of the court is today, the justice who has written the fewest dissenting opinions is Stephen Breyer." And that was with Scalia still in the equation.

I often said during the campaign that we were electing the Congress for the next two years and the President for the next four, but we were selecting a Supreme Court for the next generation.

So the magnitude of the victory cannot be overstated, but we also must realize that we didn't save the country on election night. Rather, the American people gave our party all the tools that are necessary to save our country. We still have to save it. And we can be assured that the radical Left – with its penchant for racial division, violence, character assassination and false propaganda – will do everything it can to thwart the mandate the American people just gave us.

The good news is that they don't have a clue how they lost the election. They began by blaming James Comey. When that didn't work they blamed racist neo-nazis who presumably now make up a majority of the electorate in a majority of the states. Then they blamed the press for being biased against Hillary Clinton. When that got laughed off the stage, they blamed "fake news" for a week. Now they're blaming the Russians. Give me a break!

They don't get it. The American people saw the anti-American sentiment that is just beneath the surface of the American Left. They saw the Left coopt the Democratic Party. They saw how these leftist elitists ridiculed their values, their beliefs, and couldn't have cared less about their losing struggle to make ends meet under all the burdens the government was heaping on them.

Before the election, Arthur Laffer often said that "Four years of Jimmy Carter gave us eight years of Ronald Reagan, which means that eight

years of Barack Obama should get us the second coming of Christ." Well, that didn't happen. But the first coming of Trump is looking pretty good right now!

The coming year is going to bring one of the greatest political struggles this country has seen in 150 years. When our party was born, we faced a battle between two irreconcilable principles, freedom and slavery. When our party was reborn this year, we face a new battle between two equally irreconcilable principles: freedom and socialism.

The good news is that we have the moral and political high ground and we have a President whose appointments have been stunningly superb. We now have a clear mandate from the American people and the tools necessary to make America great again – to revive our economy, secure our borders, restore our Constitution and uphold the rule of law.

I believe the contrast will be instructive to an entire generation of Americans who had lost the memory of freedom. They are about to see the principles of our country – individual liberty, constitutionally limited government and personal responsibility – put back to work – and the American people with it.

And I don't think California will be far behind.

First, if President Trump is successful in restoring the integrity of our borders and enforcing our immigration laws, we may soon see a reverse flow of illegals out of California. We know that the Democrats have encouraged them to vote and nobody knows to what extent they are. It may be a few, or it may be a great many. If it's a great many, that's going to make a significant difference in future elections.

Second, if President Trump is successful in reviving the economy, California is going to be left behind in the dust. The disparity between the socialist state of California and the free states of America will become increasingly dramatic – and that in turn will cause a lot of voters to reassess the votes they've been casting.

Third, President Trump is appealing to a great number of traditionally Democratic voters – including a much larger portion of black, Hispanic and white blue collar voters than the establishment candidates like McCain and Romney ever dreamed of. I think that will continue to build along with the economy, once again giving us the ability to appeal across ethnic and partisan lines throughout this state.

Fourth, even in California, there are more Republican local officials than Democrats. Granted, they are outside the major population centers, but it is still an indication that when people look beyond party labels, they tend to agree with us. I was listening to Rush Limbaugh this week, when a recent legal immigrant called in. Struggling to speak English, he told Rush that for many years he had listened to Spanish-speaking radio, and they were always talking about this monster called Rush Limbaugh. So he decided to tune in and listen, just to see how awful that person was. And after listening for a while, he realized he liked what he was hearing, and has been a devoted listener – and devoted conservative -- ever since.

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PAYING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE WITHOUT SOAKING THE TAXPAYER

By Tom McClintock

President-elect Trump has many difficult fiscal tasks ahead. We have to reduce the deficit at a time when the national debt exceeds our entire economy and interest costs alone are eating us alive. We have to reduce taxes that are crushing our economy and sending trillions of dollars of capital overseas. Yet we also have to bolster our nation's dwindling defenses and attend to our long neglected infrastructure.

Many economists believe that the Trump economic policies are sure to produce a rebounding economy – and I fervently believe that. Indeed, economic growth is the only way I see out of the debt spiral we're in. But the problem is, it can't be accurately forecast and we don't know how long our revenues will lag the expansion. The tax cuts will produce revenue growth over time, but we'll need those revenues to beef up our defenses and reduce our deficit. How at the same time do we pay for a trillion dollars of desperately needed infrastructure to support economic growth through the rest of this century?

Some have proposed tax credits to leverage private capital for infrastructure improvements. But tax credits reduce revenue and widen the deficit. Worse, such public-private partnerships have often proven a fertile breeding ground for corruption, crony-capitalism, waste and fraud.

And as we learned during the Obama stimulus fiasco, massive government spending might stimulate government, but it does little to stimulate the economy when it is squandered for boondoggles like subsidizing Solyndra and paying cash for clunkers. So how do we avoid the mistakes of the past, control the deficit, protect taxpayers and yet add a trillion dollars of new infrastructure in a way that helps the economy and not merely lines the pockets of politically well-connected interests?

Here are a few modest suggestions:

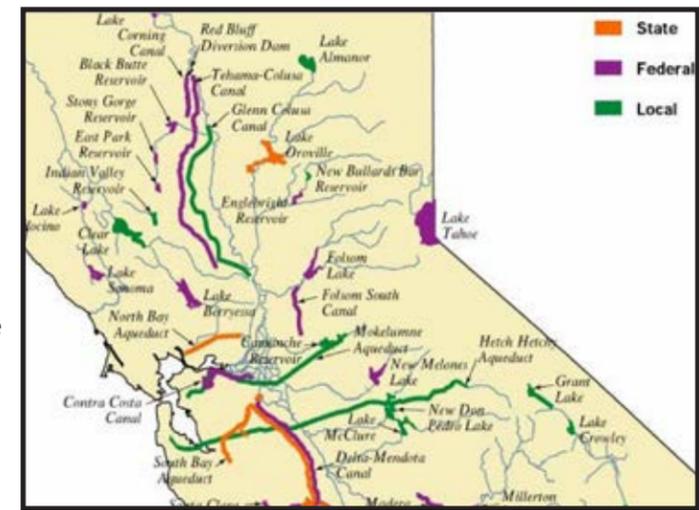
FIRST: Get government out of the way! Stop obstructing major infrastructure projects like the Keystone Pipeline. Keystone, and many other projects like it across the country, already have private capital ready to finance them. Keystone by itself would unleash an estimated \$8 billion of privately financed infrastructure construction and would deliver a half million barrels a day of Canadian crude oil to U.S. markets.

In my district alone, one abusive official at the Sacramento office of the Army Corps of Engineers single-handedly blocked tens of millions of dollars of critical infrastructure construction desperately sought by local governments in the region. Multiply that across the country, and you can see how much infrastructure is ALREADY financed but cannot move forward because of federal obstructionism.

SECOND: Streamline radical regulations that have made many infrastructure projects cost-prohibitive.

In my district, the little town of Foresthill gets its water from the Sugar Pine Reservoir, formed by a dam that has an 18-foot spillway, but no spillway gate. The town is trying to increase the reservoir's capacity by adding the missing gate. The gate will cost \$2 million. But environmental studies, environmental mitigation and U.S. Forest Service Fees have inflated that cost to at least \$11 million – so this project has stalled. Multi-billion dollar expansion of Shasta Dam is stalled for the same reason. Once again, multiply this across the rest of the country.

THIRD: Use revenue bonds to finance capital-intensive projects like dams and bridges. California built its iconic Golden Gate and Bay Bridges with loans from private investors – repaid by tolls charged only to the users of the bridges. The taxpayers were never on the hook for a dime, and the loans were paid back ahead of schedule.



The famous California Water Project constructed 21 dams and more than 700 miles of canals. The revenue bonds and self-liquidating general obligation bonds that financed it were paid back not by general taxpayers, but by the users of the water and power.

FOURTH: Restore the integrity of our highway trust fund. We built the modern Interstate system with the federal excise tax paid only by highway users at the gas pump. The more you drove, the more you paid for the roads you were using. But over the decades, much of these funds was bled away to subsidize mass transit and other purposes unrelated to highway construction. Restoring highway taxes for highways would go a long way toward addressing the maintenance and construction backlog.

FIFTH: Repeal the outdated Davis-Bacon Act that requires federal projects to pay grossly inflated wages. Think tanks like the Heritage Foundation and the Competitive Enterprise Institute estimate that Davis-Bacon inflates total construction costs by roughly 10 percent. Just repealing this act alone would add one new project for every ten existing ones at no additional cost.

These are just a few ways that massive infrastructure projects can be financed at zero cost to general taxpayers. And because these reforms are actually directed at projects for which there is a demonstrated economic need, political favoritism and corruption inherent in government-directed programs can be greatly reduced.

Freedom works. And it is time we put it – and America – back to work.