



OCT 2-15 • GREAT DEALS ON PREMIUM AUDIO & VIDEO GEAR



SHOP NOW

Huelskamp Sounds Off on Losing Committee Spots

Janie Lorber (/author/janielorberrollcall-com)

@Janie Lorber (//www.twitter.com/SJLorber)

Menu

Search

Posted Dec 13, 2012 12:52 PM

Rep. Tim Huelskamp of Kansas learned last week that he and three other Republicans were stripped of key committees assignments by the House Steering Committee, which is under the control of Speaker John A. Boehner, R-Ohio.

Huelskamp was removed from the Budget and Agriculture committees. Reps. David Schweikert of Arizona and Walter B. Jones of North Carolina were booted from the Financial Services Committee. And Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan also lost his seat on the Budget Committee.

Apart from Jones, all were rebellious right-wingers. Huelskamp and Amash voted against the budget proposed by Budget Chairman Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin in committee and on the floor, saying it did not cut spending fast enough. They also voted against the continuing resolution that is funding the government through the end of March.

Huelskamp was interviewed by telephone Wednesday by CQ Roll Call reporters Shira Toeplitz and Janie Lorber on the Sirius-XM radio show "Showdown 2012," on the POTUS Politics channel. This transcript of their conversation has been edited and condensed.



Q: Your district is western Kansas, a very rural area.

A: Very rural and it's about two-thirds of the state of Kansas. Probably the best-known town is Dodge City. Everything's small-town, a pretty conservative red state, and Republican. So in our district we test the base of the Republican Party.

Q: This seat became open when Jerry Moran ran for Senate against another member of Congress in 2010, Todd Tiahrt. Moran won, and now he's heading up the Senate Republican campaign arm. So quite the tradition in your district.

A: Well, a long tradition. Sen. Moran, Sen. [Pat] Roberts, both of them currently serving in the Senate. And then Sen. [Bob] Dole. It goes back for quite a few years.

Q: It's been a crazy week for you on Capitol Hill.

Want insight more often? Get Roll Call in your inbox



email address



A: It sure has. And actually pretty disappointing to my constituents in the last week and a half. I actually had a pretty rambunctious town hall with folks last night and they're not happy with Washington. Up to 20,000 people were on and off the telephone town hall last night, and they had plenty to say.

Q: What made your constituents so angry?

A: About a week and a half ago, I received a phone call from a member of the Republican Steering Committee and they informed me, this individual says, 'Hey, just want to let you know you've been kicked off of two committees.' I was quite surprised. No one had approached me at all about that in advance, not a member of leadership, not any of the two chairmen in question.

 Menu  Search
You know, we agree and disagree on a lot of things. But I am a conservative. It's told to me, you've been removed. And I said 'Why?' and they said, 'We can't tell you.' And that's been the story for the last 10 days. We can't tell you why.

But we've learned through other sources that apparently there was some type of secret scorecard, and you were conservative if you voted against the debt deal, for example. And if you voted against a number of the budget bills, you were scored down.

But I haven't found a single member of leadership that's been able to tell me. They won't even visit with me and numerous other folks. There were four of us that were punished and kicked off of preferred committees. It's unprecedented in the modern Congress. It's kind of back to the days in which a speaker ran it with an iron hand.

Q: What was your reaction when you got that phone call?

A: Well, actually, I was sitting in the hospital; my dad had just [moved into] his recovery from a major surgery. So it's probably not a good time to be calling me.

But, again, it's the frustration of trying to explain to constituents exactly why do you kick a fifth-generation farmer off the House Ag Committee. Kansas has had a seat on that committee for over 100 years. We've had two chairmen, including Sen. Roberts, and everybody's speechless, including staff of the committee, including other members.

[Agriculture is] by far the biggest industry in the 1st District of Kansas and we are the biggest producing ag district in the whole country. And so we have quite a right to be on that committee.

But near as we can tell, it had to do with certain votes and they said, 'Hey, if you didn't vote the way John Boehner decided you should vote, and Kevin McCarthy and Eric Cantor, you're removed from that committee.'

We need someone who works for our values in Kansas, and they're significantly different than maybe the values of someone in the speaker's [district] in Ohio or the majority leader's in Virginia or the majority whip in California.

I promised to fight for conservative values. I voted exactly like I said I would and will continue to fight. But to be punished, removed from two committees, is stunning. It's also frightening because other members in a general meeting of the entire conference were warned as well that leadership is watching all of us.

Q: You would have expected to be warned that this might happen. Would there have been any threats?



A: That's probably the biggest surprise and biggest concern from my colleagues, whether they're actually conservative or not. Even Democrats ask, 'You mean they didn't tell you ahead of time?'

You know, you could try to tell other people how to vote. I mean, that's called lobbying and that's fine. But gosh darn, I have a voting card. And I have 700,000 constituents.

Q: Amash said that Speaker Boehner is no longer welcome in his district. Is the speaker welcome in your district?

A: Well, he has driven through the district. I don't believe he's ever stopped in the district. He's done fundraising in Kansas and that's fine, I guess. But I did poll my constituents that were on telephone town hall. A non-scientific poll, but it was resounding. Folks were furious at the speaker. I asked, who believes I should vote for John Boehner as speaker again? It was 12 percent.

Q: Do you think this is about the presidential race?

A: The numbers I'm going to remember for 2012 as a Republican are 8, 2 and 1. And we lost eight House seats, lost two Senate seats and lost the presidency. And that's a pretty poor track record to suggest, hey, trust me; I'm going to go in and  negotiate one-on-one with the president.  Search

And, you know, I'm a big believer in transparency. Tell us what happened behind closed doors, why you kick people off the committee. But also tell us what you're negotiating with the president.

Q: How are you going to keep the channels of communication open, especially now that you don't have these two integral posts?



More videos:



More

Democratic Super PAC Invests in Senate Races (/news/politics/democratic-super-pac-invests-in-senate-races)

Cruz Says He'll Continue to Support Trump (/news/politics/cruz-continues-support-for-trump)

The National Mall Faces Crises of Funding and Identity (/news/policy/national-mall-faces-crises-funding-identity)

Congressional Leadership Fund Hammers Democrats on National Security, Taxes (/news/politics/congressional-leadership-fund-hammers-democrats)

GOP Poll: Darrell Issa Leads Democratic Challenger by 9 Points (/news/politics/gop-poll-darrell-issa-leads-democratic-challenger-9-points)

Menu

THE SOURCE FOR NEWS ON
CAPITOL HILL SINCE 1955
About (/about-cq-rollcall)

Search

Want insight more often?
Get Roll Call in your inbox

email address >

The Staff

RC Jobs

Contact Us

Advertise

RSS Feeds (/rss)

Partner Sites:

<http://www.rollcall.com/about/>

<http://www.rcjobs.com/?pos=fr&src=rc>

<http://www.rollcall.com/content/cq-rollcall>

<http://www.rollcall.com/content/cq-rollcall>

<http://www.economistgroup.com/cqrollcall/>

<http://www.rollcall.com/press-releases>

<http://www.rollcall.com/about/>

<http://www.rcjobs.com/?pos=fr&src=rc>

<http://www.rollcall.com/content/cq-rollcall>

<http://www.rollcall.com/content/cq-rollcall>

<http://www.economistgroup.com/cqrollcall/>

<http://www.rollcall.com/press-releases>

<http://www.rollcall.com/about/>

<http://www.rcjobs.com/?pos=fr&src=rc>

<http://www.rollcall.com/content/cq-rollcall>

<http://www.rollcall.com/content/cq-rollcall>

<http://www.economistgroup.com/cqrollcall/>

<http://www.rollcall.com/press-releases>

Copyright 2016 CQ Roll Call

All rights reserved