

The House could use Hoyer's consensus model now to avoid repeated chaos

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The U.S. House could use Steny Hoyer's consensus-building approach, honed as the youngest Maryland State Senate President (1975-1978) and U.S. House Majority Leader (2007-2011, 2019-2023), to avoid repeated chaos. During the Mechanicsville resident's time in Democratic House leadership, he never lost a bill he scheduled or brought to the floor for a vote.

Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) has initiated a motion to remove Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.) as House speaker. Once again there is uncertainty over the speakership, marking another upheaval in less than six months since Kevin McCarthy's 15-ballot win followed by his forced departure last October. This turmoil underscores the deep divisions and lack of discipline within the Republican conference.

Greene and other hardline conservatives are dissatisfied with Johnson's handling of the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2024 due to it passing the House with more Democratic than Republican support. This cooperation with Democrats mirrors the circumstances that ousted former Speaker McCarthy last year. Johnson emerged as the fourth nominee, following unsuccessful bids by Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana, Jim Jordan of Ohio, and Tom Emmer of Minnesota.

In such turbulent times, the House requires a leadership team capable of bridging divides, much like Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) did alongside Nancy Pelosi (D-Ca.) and Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.). Together, the ideologically divergent trio balanced complaints and concerns from any caucus member — liberal, moderate, or progressive — and passed bills.

Hoyer's experience leading the House demonstrated organizational and strategic prowess with vote counting regardless of which party holds power. Hoyer's contribution assured the passage of critical legislation.

The secret to his success? According to Hoyer and his staff: "organization, collaborative meetings, pre-planning and counting" ahead of votes.

In May 2021, the House narrowly passed a \$1.9 billion Capitol Security Bill by one vote (without a single Republican vote), funding costs after the Jan. 6 attack and enhancing Capitol protection. In August 2022, the House (with every Democrat in favor) approved the Inflation Reduction Act, passing 220-207 with unanimous Democrat support. Alongside these victories, Hoyer played a pivotal role in passing the Affordable Care Act, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Hoyer chaired weekly meetings with committee members and issue leaders to gauge party sentiments and anticipate votes, shaping House agendas. At his recent birthday "Bull Roast," Hoyer discussed

"bringing bills to the floor," setting calendars, and securing votes. His foresight — and passionate House floor speeches — consistently assured favorable results.

With only 47 bills passed thus far in the current Congress, frustration has mounted on both sides of the aisle. Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX) demanded on the House floor on Nov. 15, "I want my Republican colleagues to give me one thing — one — that I can go campaign on and say we did!"

Our leaders must prioritize effective governance rather than subjecting the nation to prolonged leadership battles and gridlock on critical issues. Now, more than ever, we need a leader capable of navigating Congress through partisan chaos. The consensus-building leadership that Hoyer could give class lessons on is precisely what the House and the United States urgently need.

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