

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Leadership in the US House in Turmoil

October 2015

Public Policy Notes

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With the surprise announcement in September of the resignation of long-time **Representative and House Speaker John Boehner**, a new race has begun to select a replacement. Representative Boehner had been increasingly under pressure from very conservative factions in the Republican party and will leave Congress on October 30, 2015.

With the announcement, candidates for the position began to line-up and, by all accounts, the person favored to win the seat was **Representative Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)**. In an unexpected twist, **Representative McCarthy** withdrew from the race and new names have begun to appear.

Representative Paul Ryan, a

former candidate for Vice-President and currently chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is being urged to seek the seat by many mainline Republicans but, at this point, has not confirmed that he would consider the job.

The Freedom Caucus, the conservative group that essentially forced Boehner out of office in the House, is touting **Representative Daniel Webster of Florida** as their choice. According to *Politico*, Webster is facing the possible loss of his seat in Florida through re-districting, calling into question his long term viability. Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan, a leader of the Freedom Caucus, has stated that Webster is a “*principled representative and he cares most about process.*”

The Freedom Caucus has taken the position that

Kevin McCarthy



Paul Ryan

Daniel Webster



real reform is needed in how the US House of Representatives operates. Rep. Amash stated that “*The problem (with Boehner) is not that he isn’t conservative enough The problem is that he doesn’t follow the process.*” Source: [The Obsession of the House Freedom Caucus](http://www.politico.com), www.politico.com, 10/15/2015

Southern Leadership in the Speaker’s Role

Throughout the history of the institution, Southern leaders have served in that leadership capacity. We’ve had:

4 Speakers from the states of Kentucky & Virginia

3 Speakers from Georgia, Tennessee and Texas

2 Speakers from South Carolina

1 Speaker from Alabama, North Carolina & Oklahoma

The Speaker of the House: Do You Know the History?

“The **Speaker of the House** is presiding officer of the United States House of Representatives. The office was established in 1789 by [Article I, Section 2](#) of the [United States Constitution](#), which states in part, “*The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker...*” The Constitution does not require that the Speaker be an elected House Representative, though every Speaker so far has been an elected Member of Congress.

The Speaker is second in the United States presidential line of succession, after the Vice President and ahead of the President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate.

In the United States, the Speaker of the House is a leadership position and the office-holder actively works to set the majority party's legislative agenda. The Speaker usually does not personally preside over debates, instead delegating the duty to members of the House from the majority party. The Speaker usually does not participate in debate and rarely votes.

Aside from duties relating to heading the House and the majority political party, the Speaker also performs administrative and procedural functions, and represents his or her Congressional district.”

The House of Representatives elects the Speaker of the House on the first day of every new Congress and in the event of the death or resignation of an incumbent Speaker. Departing Speaker Boehner has scheduled the election for October 29, 2015.

There are usually two candidates put forth for election, one from each party. The speaker is elected by majority vote, and the political party that holds a majority in the chamber usually elects the candidate of their choice. When the House was controlled by the Democratic party, Representative Nancy Pelosi served as Speaker. When the election brought a Republican majority to the House, Representative Boehner assumed the position.

The first Speaker of the U.S.



House of Representatives was **Frederick Muhlenberg**, who was elected as a Federalist for the first four Congresses.

The position of Speaker started to gain its partisan role and its power in legislative development under **Henry Clay** who served as speaker in 1811-1814, again in 1815-1820 and for a third time in 1823-1825.

Southerners have played notable

roles as Speaker of the House throughout the history of the institution.

Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas is recognized as being the



longest serving Speaker of the House, serving for a total of 17 years, 53 days. Rep. Rayburn worked with President

Franklin Delano Roosevelt to pass the *New Deal Legislation*.

Henry Clay of Kentucky was one of the persons instrumental in developing the office and its role and elevated the power of the office.



Newt Gingrich of Georgia led a partisan battle with President Bill Clinton, based on his *Contract for America...*a fight

that led to two shutdowns of the federal government as conservative and liberal factions battled for control of domestic policy.

Source: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speaker_of_the_United_States_House_of_Representatives, Retrieved 10/15/2015

The House Freedom Caucus

Throughout the history of the United States Congress, interest or philosophically aligned groups have formed to wield power and clout in the work of the House and Senate.

Not too long ago, the *Blue Dog Democrats* formed to provide a conservative counterbalance to a liberal/progressive house. The group was comprised almost completely of Southerners who represented moderate/conservative districts throughout the region.

Now in 2015, a new group has emerged, *The House Freedom Caucus*. Formed in January of 2015, this group was in large part responsible for the resignation and departure of House Speaker John Boehner and they are working hard to elect a new Speaker that will represent their views and positions.

As stated in a [press release](#) from the office of **Representative Mark Meadows of North Carolina**, the mission of The Freedom Caucus is to “*give a voice to countless Americans who feel that Washington does not represent them. We support open, accountable and limited government, the Constitution and the rule of law, and policies that promote the liberty, safety, and prosperity of all Americans.*”

The founding members of The

House Freedom Caucus are Rep. Scott Garrett (R-NJ), Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), **Rep. John Fleming (R-LA)**, Rep. Matt Salmon (R-AZ), Rep. Justin Amash (R-MI), Rep. Raúl Labrador (R-ID), **Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-SC)**, **Rep. Ron DeSantis (R-FL)**, and **Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC)**.

The group is chaired by Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio and includes 40 members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Other Southerners who have signed on to the Caucus include:

Brian Babin/Texas
Dave Brat/Virginia
Jim Bridenstine/Oklahoma
Mo Brooks/Alabama
Curt Clawson/Florida
Scott Desjarlais/Tennessee
Jeff Duncan/South Carolina
John Fleming/Louisiana
Morgan Griffith/Virginia
Jody Hice/Georgia
Barry Loudermilk/Georgia
Mark Meadows/North Carolina
Alex Mooney/West Virginia
Mick Mulvaney/South Carolina
Gary Palmer/Alabama
Ted Poe/Texas
Bill Posey/Florida
Mark Sanford/South Carolina

Two members have recently resigned from the Caucus: Tom McClintock of California and Reid Ribble of Wisconsin.

What the House Freedom Caucus Wants



Mick Mulvaney-SC

According to an article published on the NPR website in which Representative Mick Mulvaney (R-SC) was interviewed, the Caucus “*wants a speaker who isn’t going to tell them what to do—someone who will give the members more control over what bills get a vote, what amendments get added, and who gets assigned to run committees, which have a key role in advancing legislation.*”

Mulvaney said the Freedom Caucus wants more of a say over strategy when it comes to fiscal battles with the White House and Senate. “*In such a fight under Boehner, we’d do nothing, and three days before the debt ceiling limit was reached, Mr. Boehner would walk into a room and say, “Ok, here’s what we’re doing.”*”

If you’d like to know more about the Caucus and the potential impact of their participation in the election of a new Speaker of the House, read the NPR article, [What Kind of Speaker Does the House Freedom Caucus Want?](#), October 10, 2015.

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"A Voice for Southern
Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information

that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php

to receive notice of its availability each month.

News to Note



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning recently released a report, *The Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in Georgia*. This study was a collaborative effort between researchers at the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government and Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

The study found that the industry generated \$4.7 billion dollars of economic activity in the state for 2013 and provided 67,507 jobs in the industry itself and an additional 17,454 jobs in other market segments.



Safe Rooms in Schools

The residents of Moore, Oklahoma approved a five-year, bond issue to add storm shelters and other improvements to schools. The proposal was an outcome of the deadly tornado that struck Moore in 2013 and killed 24 people, including seven children at Plaza

Towers Elementary schools. This funding will allow school administrators to place safe rooms in all Moore schools.

American Academy of Pediatrics



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The *American Academy of Pediatrics* is taking a new look at their 15 year old recommendations concerning screen time and children in light of the changing nature of technology. In an article published in the October issue of *AAP News*, *Beyond "turn it off": How to Advise Families on Media Use*, preliminary results from the *Growing Up Digital: Media Research Symposium* held in May were presented.