



Friday, September 4, 2009

MANAGEMENT

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Centerpiece

This week, GCSIntel sat down with U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Brighton) to talk about the national health care debate, his take on placing Guantanamo Bay detainees in Michigan and a number of other topics. The following are excerpts from that conversation.

**Q. What are you expecting from the fall session on health care?**

A. I think something very, very powerful happened in the United States. The Republicans don't have the votes to stop health care. They could have passed it with nothing more than a whimper from us. We just don't have the votes to stop it -- but the American people stood up and in the face of an overwhelming number of votes in Congress and said 'this is not the right thing for our country.' They won the debate.

This was not a Republican victory. This was a victory for the American people because they stood up and said 'we're not going to let this happen' and that has fundamentally changed the debate on health care.

I think the President is going to try to sell this and provide some salvation for it. I think they're actually going to have to debate with Republicans at this point over it. They talk about Republicans, but Republicans have never been in the room. The only negotiations that have taken place are from moderate Democrats to very liberal Democrats.

**Q. At the end of the day do you expect a health care reform package to be passed?**

A. I think they [Democratic leaders] think that there has to be something. I would like to see something that we can agree on because there are some good bipartisan issues that won't have government running your health care. But you have to give up the notion that the government has to do it in order for it to work.

**Q. So a government option in your opinion is out of the question?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Would reform get any GOP support if it included a public option but the Congress wasn't covered by that new option?**

A. Absolutely, we voted for that. I cosponsored amendments in the debate to do that and I cosponsored amendments to require that what one of the options is what Congress gets and it was voted down along party lines.

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All that rhetoric out there from the Democrats, absolutely, we should have the worst option this thing provides. Fundamentally, you're going to take something away from 85 percent of Americans to try to fix a problem for 15 percent of Americans. When government gets in and steps between you and your doctor then Congress ought to be equally as miserable. I think you'd find far fewer supporters for this if Congress had to live under it.

**Q. Based on your work on the Intelligence Committee and what you know about the War on Terror -- talk about Guantanamo Bay detainees being shipped to Standish, Michigan?**

A. It's an awful idea. You're going to take some of the world's best psychologically trained, and physically trained people to conduct terrorist activity and you're going to bring a concentration of them and you're going to put them in Michigan. Now you don't just have to worry about what happens inside the prison; now you have to worry about someone trying to get into the prison.

**Q. What's your sense about it? Is that going to happen -- will they come to the state?**

A. The money for warehousing the world's worst terrorists is never going to be worth it. The problems that it brings --- you're going to have to retrain guards. Guards are not trained for these individuals. Remember there are individuals who are willing to kill, including themselves, in the name of their religion and are passionately committed to doing that.

You have to retrain the guards on how to handle that. And, somebody told me it may take as much as \$100 million to get the outside ready. Gitmo was a pretty good idea. It's a good prison; it's hard to get to. The prisoners actually do well there, they gain weight -- they average gaining 30 pounds a prisoner, so they're not being mistreated.

**Q. How often does the Michigan delegation meet as a group?**

A. We don't have any regular, scheduled meetings. But we do meet when issues arise such as Cash for Clunkers, location of the Orion plant.

**Q. Did this Gitmo thing come up during one of those meetings?**

A. No, we stay away from conference meetings on those issues. There's some disagreement. [U.S. Sen.] Carl Levin thinks it's a good idea; I'm not sure where [U.S. Sen.] Debbie Stabenow is. [U.S. Rep.] Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) thinks it's a good idea.

That's a bad way to build an economy.

### ***GCSEye On The Capitol***

#### ***Progressive Organizations Push \$2.6B In Tax Increases***

A collection of roughly two-dozen groups ranging from employee unions to consumer advocacy groups announced this week their plan to help resolve the state's roughly \$2.8 billion Fiscal Year 2010 budget deficit.

The collection of groups includes Progress Michigan, the AFL-CIO, Common Cause, AFSCME among others. The coalition dubs itself Better Michigan Future. The group contends that for more than a decade the state has attempted to cut its way out of deficit after deficit and the time has come for a different approach.

"Unless we reform and modernize Michigan's finances now, our families will see deficits as far as the eye can see with no way to pay for critical services that protect people and invest in our future," said Progress Michigan director David Holtz. "If we do nothing now, our kids won't have the tools they need to compete for jobs. Our families won't have the police and fire protection to stay safe. Our parents and grandparents won't get the care they need. That's not the kind of Michigan our families want and deserve."

#### House Dems Go Through Budget Exercise

The House Democratic Caucus met for nearly four hours Wednesday at the Lansing Radisson, where, among other things, they were split up into groups of eight and asked for input on the House majority's offering for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 budget.

The process didn't start at the scheduled noon starting time, but did get moving before 1 p.m.

While the members were given an update on the budget negotiations, they weren't given a detailed explanation about what House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.) was bringing to the negotiating table when he, Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) and Gov. Jennifer Granholm met Thursday on the budget.

Rather, the caucus was asked for input in a style reminiscent of caucus retreats of the past. The 67-member caucus was broken up into smaller groups of seven and eight members and each given a work packet.

#### A New Quadrant?

When Gov. Jennifer Granholm, House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.) and Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) met on Thursday there were some new faces in the room.

Sources indicate new faces were of mediators Bill Rustem of Public Sector Consultants, former House Speaker and DTE Vice President Paul Hillegonds, Matt Cullen of Rock Financial and former Michigan Democratic Party Chair Tom Lewand Sr.

#### **The Week Ahead**

Look for urgency to return to the budget creation process in the post-Labor Day Holiday week. There will be just over two weeks to go before the new fiscal year begins by the time members of the House and Senate return to action on Wednesday of next week.

#### **Michigan Factoid:**

Michigan was once governed by a politician so young he was called the Boy Governor. Stevens T. Mason took over the governorship of the Territory of Michigan in 1831, when he was only 19 years old.

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