

PELOSI'S TIME IS JUST ABOUT OVER^t

Carl Golden, October 3, 2022

HOUSE DEMOCRATS...



No matter the outcome of the midterm Congressional election, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's run as leader of her party will come to an end.

If, as anticipated, Republicans gain control of the House of Representatives, Pelosi will hand the Speaker's gavel over probably to her California colleague Kevin McCarthy, currently House minority leader.

If, against all odds, Democrats manage an upset and eke out enough contested seats to retain control, it's clear the rank and file membership is in no mood to keep Pelosi, who has hinted at retirement as Speaker.

The discontent bubbling beneath the surface of the Democratic caucus burst into the open when Virginia Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger unleashed a scathing public rebuke of the leadership, calling for their replacement and accusing them of ignoring their members, to “push them aside and look for new ways they could string the media and the public along and evade public criticism.”

Spanberger’s outburst was triggered by Pelosi’s announcement that she would not call for a vote on legislation to prohibit members of Congress from trading on the stock market while in office – a proposal that enjoyed broad bipartisan support and would have been approved handily.

Instead of a simple straightforward prohibition, however, Spanberger said the House Administration Committee – presumably at Pelosi’s direction – expanded the legislation to cover members’ spouses, dependent children, senior staff, the president and vice president, federal judges and Supreme Court justices.

Further, she said, the bill contained loopholes that would have allowed those it covered to easily avoid its provisions.

Spanberger characterized the bill as toothless and meaningless, meant to deceive the public that Congress intended to act decisively when there was no intention by the leadership to do so.

Pelosi, she intimated, sabotaged the proposal by adding requirements and provisions she knew would meet opposition and then announced the proposal lacked the votes to pass. Political cynicism at its finest.

Spanberger was unsparing in her criticism, claiming the package was “designed to fail, create confusion surrounding reform efforts and complicate a straightforward reform priority while creating the appearance the House leadership wanted to take action.”

While stopping short of accusing Pelosi of a conflict of interest, Spanberger’s comments led inevitably to suggestions that the Speaker and her husband – an active stock trader – had profited handsomely from his involvement and by blocking consideration of the prohibition, she acted to protect her personal financial self-interest.

Pelosi initially opposed the prohibition but softened her position later. Maryland Congressman Steny Hoyer, the House majority leader, reportedly remains steadfast in his opposition.

Spanberger and supporters of the original proposal argued that approval of the prohibition would have provided Democratic candidates with a valuable campaign talking point – that Democrats are serious about reforms in congressional operations and implementing significant ethical behavior requirements.

It is not the first time Spanberger has gone public with criticism of party leadership. In the aftermath of the 2020 election, in which Democrats lost a dozen seats despite predictions of padding their majority, Spanberger blamed the defeats on the party’s leftward ideological tilt, particularly the "Defund the Police" movement favored by the progressive wing.

Spanberger’s attack on the party leadership will resonate and fuel speculation it will be Pelosi’s last hurrah.

Her manipulating the process to avoid consideration of the stock trading ban may have hastened the process for her.

Pelosi, Hoyer and majority whip James Clyburn of South Carolina were all born before the U. S. entered World War II – Pelosi and Clyburn in 1940 and Hoyer in 1939. The speaker has served in Congress 35 years, Hoyer 41 years, and Clyburn 30 years.

Should Republicans take control of the House, the pressure on Democrats – newly in the minority – to turn to new and younger leadership will be intense.

Frustrated younger Democrats will question their continued relevance and grumble that the current triumvirate is out of touch with current thinking.

In 1965, Bob Dylan sang “You don’t have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind is blowing.”

For Pelosi, Hoyer and Clyburn, it’s not a gentle breeze. Rather, it likely to be measured by category. Like hurricanes.

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