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## Through Restoration of Core Principles, Freshman Sees Bright Hope for GOP

By **Tim Walberg**  
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Since I began my first term in Congress last month, I've been asked numerous times if I feel the Republican Party has a problem with its "brand."

As I travel across my south-central Michigan district and meet with my constituents, I realize a great amount of uncertainty exists as to what the Republican brand really is.

I agree with my respected House colleague Mike Pence, who often says Republicans lost the majority in Congress last year "because we walked away from the limited government principles that minted the Republican Congress."

Today, our country faces an uncertain future internationally, and while our national economy continues to grow at a slow pace, many areas of the country, like my home state of Michigan, still face high unemployment and serious economic problems.

During these trying times, the American public wants leaders who don't make decisions solely to secure their political futures and maintain the status quo in Washington, D.C.

Instead, our country longs for real leadership and resolve, men and women who share a vision of making America the "shining city upon a hill" President Ronald Reagan so often referred to.

I humbly offer four core principles I feel Republicans must uphold as we seek to restore public confidence in the Republican brand name.

### - Bring fiscal responsibility back to Congress

Just as American families in my district make difficult decisions every day to ensure their budgets are balanced, Congress must operate within its means and reduce federal deficit spending.

The Republican name used to be synonymous with limiting the size and scope of government, and we need to re-establish that reputation. We must work to eliminate government waste, make certain taxpayer dollars go to meaningful programs and leave resources directly with the people.

Congress should immediately make strides to bring long-term entitlement spending under control. By expanding personal investment accounts for retirement savings and allowing people more control over their health care, we will restore financial stability and foster wealth accumulation in our programs.

### - Conduct ourselves with the highest ethical standards

Recent Congressional scandals have diminished the reputation of Congress in the eyes of the American people. In order to restore public trust, we must remember that serving constituents is the primary responsibility of an individual in Congress.



It's been said that members of Congress love receiving pats on the back weekdays in Washington, D.C., but they would benefit greatly from going home regularly to receive valuable slaps on the back of the head in their districts.

Thankfully I have my Harley Davidson helmet, because I plan to spend as much time as the new leadership allows back in my district. Republicans in this Congress need to follow through with our commitments and be accountable to the people we serve.

#### **- Defend America's hard-earned freedoms**

While it is important to acknowledge mistakes have been made in Iraq, we must ensure that the war on terrorism is not fought on American soil.

We cannot shirk from our obligation to protect our families and nation from the enemies of freedom, and we must continue to provide American men and women in combat resources that will enable them to come home safe and victorious.

We also must work to improve our broken immigration system by pursuing policy initiatives that toughen border security and end illegal immigration.

#### **- Pursue effective and innovative solutions to problems we currently face without expanding the size and scope of government**

Despite our minority status, Republicans can play a major role in policy debates during the 110th Congress.

We should take a look at policies that will make health care more accessible. Residents of my district continue to stress to me that they want health care decisions to be made by patients and doctors, not by the government and insurance companies.

One of our greatest national liabilities is our overwhelming dependence on foreign oil. Our country needs to diversify our energy supply through domestic alternative energy sources and bolster our domestic oil production.

A final area Republicans should explore is education reform, where empowering local school districts and families will produce educational excellence.

Ten years ago Republicans were known as the party of Ronald Reagan, but big-government policies supported by the past few sessions of Congress muddled and transformed the American public's perception of our party.

If we can follow the principles listed above in such a way that Americans can discern the difference between our core values and those of the opposing party, Republicans will have an identity to be proud of.

*Tim Walberg is currently in his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives, serving Michigan's Seventh District, which includes Branch, Eaton, Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee counties and parts of Calhoun and Washtenaw counties.*

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