

Chamber of Commerce Ready to Unseat Conservatives Who Buck Its Agenda

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is paving the way to unseat “obstructionist” Republicans in the House who have successfully blocked much of the organization’s agenda. The move is spurred by Chamber frustration after the group poured nearly \$70 million into the 2014 election to strengthen the Republican coalition in the Senate, only to have its efforts thwarted in the House, *Politico* reported Friday. The Chamber intends to primary sitting House conservatives who have halted many of its legislative priorities, including immigration reform, the Export-Import Bank’s renewal and a long-term highway bill. Ken Cuccinelli, president of the Senate Conservatives Fund, said the group’s strategy to target conservatives verifies that the lobbying organization is interested solely in “cronyism.” “The Chamber exists to force taxpayers to line the pockets of large corporations and will do whatever it takes to defeat lawmakers who fight for the American people,” he said. Chamber spokeswoman Blair Holmes downplayed the move as a “recommitment” to the organization’s success in last year’s primary and general elections. She told *Politico* the Chamber supports “pro-business” candidates regardless of party affiliation or incumbency status. But *Politico* noted that the move marks a “major shift” for the business community, as the Chamber has traditionally avoided targeting sitting lawmakers. David Bozell, president of ForAmerica, said “preserving” conservative members will be a priority in the upcoming election cycle for both his organization and the entire conservative community. “If the Chamber of Commerce wants to pick a fight, then the conservative movement is going to have to be ready, and I’m sure we will be,” he said. The group has already started

looking into several races, though nothing is official and the targets have yet to be decided, a pocket of Republicans on K Street and Capitol Hill told Politico. "If the Chamber of Commerce wants politicians in Washington that increase spending, shill for corporate welfare, and enact sweeping amnesty, they should support Democrats," said Dan Holler, communications director for Heritage Action. Steve Caldeira, a member of the Chamber's public affairs committee and CEO of the International Franchise Association, defended the plan, predicting that the Chamber will involve itself early to find candidates who will work in a bipartisan manner to "get things done." "The fact that there are still members of the Republican House that are obstructionist, isolationists that would be willing to shut down the government only reinforces that the Chamber and the business community, for that matter, will double down on this winning formula," he told Politico. But efforts will likely face pushback from conservative groups looking to retain influence on Capitol Hill. "Our grassroots members stand ready to fight these corporatists who are destroying our country with massive spending, bailouts and debt," Cuccinelli said. *Reprinted from **The Daily Signal**.*