

It's Official: Jason Chaffetz Is Leaving Congress Next Month

U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) confirmed Thursday night media reports that he was retiring from Congress before the end of his current term.

He explained in a letter to his constituents that after his 50th birthday, he began an introspection and concluded he had spent too much time away from his family. The following is the full text of that letter:

Serving you in the U.S. House of Representatives for nearly nine years has been a rare honor and privilege. When I first ran for Congress in 2008 I promised I would get in, serve, and get out. I told voters I did not believe Congress should be a lifetime career. I knew from day one that my service there would not last forever.

As you know, after careful consideration and long discussion with my wife, Julie, we agree the time has come for us to move on from this part of our life. This week I sent a letter to Governor Herbert indicating my intention to resign from Congress effective June 30, 2017.

My life has undergone some big changes over the last 18 months. Those changes have been good. But as I celebrated my 50th birthday in March, the reality of spending more than 1,500 nights away from my family over eight years hit me harder than it had before.

Julie and I have been married for over 26 years. We have three wonderful children. Two of our children got married over the past 18 months—each having found an amazing spouse. I couldn't be more proud of them. Our oldest son recently

graduated from the University of Utah and his wife from BYU. In August, they will move out of state for law school. Our daughter, who attended UVU, married a great young man who found a terrific job two time zones away. Our youngest daughter remains at home attending high school, but soon she, too, will spread her wings and set off on her life's path. Julie and I are facing the reality of being empty nesters. All of us, it appears, are ready to begin a new chapter.

I've slept on a cot in my office largely to save money for the Chaffetz family, but also to remind myself that my service there was temporary. Though the time away and the travel have been a sacrifice, our family has always been united that public service was the right thing to do. We feel my time in Congress has been well-spent, but it now seems the right time to turn the page.

I have very much enjoyed serving, but never for a moment have I thought that I was indispensable. I know others can and should serve. The House is known as the "People's House" because it is made up of a cross section of ordinary Americans who represent almost every walk of life—as it should be. While remaining true to my principles I have made the effort to "reach across the aisle." I count many Democratic members as my friends. I hope whoever replaces me will do even better.

I would be remiss not to mention the great men and women who have served in my office, both in Washington and here in the District. They have worked hard to serve our constituents and have made me look good too many times to mention. I will miss our association. Their commitment and dedication remind me every day of why this nation will remain the strongest and most free in history.

I recognize that very few people get the opportunity you've given me; I will be forever grateful for the trust and

confidence voters placed in me to serve five terms in the U.S. Congress. I have no doubt you will select a great new representative for Utah's 3rd Congressional District. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Chaffetz has spent a little more than two years as chairman of the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee, an enormously powerful position given he had only been a member of Congress for six years when he was given the gavel. In that role, he had broad authority to investigate literally anything he wanted to investigate.

Some Republicans have urged him to give up that gavel now so that his replacement can immediately get to work on the many and varied scandals still spinning inside the Beltway. Rep. Jimmy Duncan (R-Tenn.) is the vice-chairman of the committee, but hasn't indicated any desire to assume the leadership position.

Other Republicans are already lobbying their fellow conference members about succeeding Chaffetz, but among the leading contenders is Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.). The former prosecutor is well known for his ability to grill witnesses in committee hearings.

The Daily Caller reports:

Gowdy's office has confirmed he hasn't ruled out seeking the position and is going through the process of discussing qualifications with his congressional colleagues.

"Rep. Gowdy is talking to members in the conference about the qualities they believe are most important for the next Chairman to possess," Gonzalez said in a statement to The Post and Courier.

Politico reports House GOP leadership was courting Gowdy in April in an attempt to avoid having Rep. Jim Jordan—the former head of the House Freedom Caucus—lead the committee

if Rep. Jimmy Duncan of Tennessee, the most senior member on the panel next to Chaffetz, opts not to run.

Click [here](#) for that full report.