

(Mark) Meadows Raked by the GOP

Only in Congress can *being* a leader cost you a *leadership* job. Unfortunately, that's the risk members take when their votes are driven by their conscience and constituents – not their careers. After a rough few years between Speaker John Boehner, R-OH, and the House's more conservative wing, GOP leaders have decided that some members have rocked the party's boat a little too much. As most Republicans know, there's a price for bucking leadership – and Congressman Mark Meadows, R-NC, is paying it. The popular North Carolina member, a respected member of the House, took it on the chin over the weekend for defying Boehner on last week's rule vote for the trade bill. Like most conservatives, he knew that splitting with leadership would have its consequences. And losing his subcommittee chairmanship a few months into the new session is his. In a purely punitive act, House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz, R-UT, stripped Meadows of his gavel just days after Mark voted "no" on the trade rule. One of 34 Republicans to rebel against Boehner, Meadows is among four people who are feeling the heat. Three others lost their prestigious whip positions – including our good friend Rep. Trent Franks, R-AZ. Although none of the group were surprised, the punishment still stings. For members like Franks and Meadows, who are among the most well-rounded conservatives in the House, the penalty was particularly severe. "I made a tough decision that I believe is in the interest of the committee," Rep. Chaffetz told reporters. "I think highly of Mr. Meadows but a change was needed based on multiple factors." Although Chaffetz insisted the decision was his – and his alone – Mark's choice not to vote for Boehner for Speaker in January almost certainly played a role. "We're a team," Boehner tried to explain, "and we've worked hard to get to the majority, we've worked hard to stay in the majority –

and I expect our team to act like a team.” When *Politico* broke the story, it pointed out that these procedural votes are the most aggravating for the GOP, since they typically fall on party lines. “Republican leadership sees the move as unacceptable – akin to ceding power to Democrats.” Like several conservatives before him, Meadows is being punished for choosing his constituents over party bosses. These type of petty acts (most of which are never reported because they happen behind closed doors on Capitol Hill) are driven by the demand for conformity to a certain party’s agenda rather than an agenda beneficial to the people who elected these members. Ironically, these members were only doing what Americans asked of them: holding the line on conservative principles – the same principles that led to the wave of GOP success last November. It’s not only in America’s best interest, but the leadership’s, to have conservatives in the highest positions – men and women who are unapologetically strong on all three legs of the Republican stool: economic, social, and defense issues. If this is the standard leadership is setting – blind political allegiance – it’s no wonder that only eight percent of Americans have confidence in Congress! Fortunately for Meadows’s district, this Congressman isn’t backing down. “No one should be punished for voting their conscience and representing their constituents,” he said. “I didn’t run for Congress to be a yes vote for House Republican leadership. I came here to represent the people of Western North Carolina. My voting card may have my picture on it, but it belongs to the people of Western North Carolina, and I will continue to listen to their voices regardless of the consequences.”

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