

**Reforming Congress Project  
Sunwater Institute  
Interview with Matthew Green**

**CHERVENAK:** Professor Green, thank you so much for joining us.

**GREEN:** Thanks for having me.

**CHERVENAK:** Why don't we start with your background, where'd you start off, the arc of your career so far, and what you're doing now?

**GREEN:** Sure, so after I graduated from college, I went to Capitol Hill and worked in House of Representatives as a legislative aide for five years, and during my time there I got very interested in Congress, in congressional politics, so from there I jumped to graduate school. I went to Yale university and got a PhD in political science, the focus on American politics. And since then, I've been teaching at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

**CHERVENAK:** And so, when you were on the Hill, what areas were you covering as a legislative aide?

**GREEN:** Well as was typical, as is typical for Hill aides in the House, I was covering a whole grab bag of issues, defense, foreign policy, taxes, trade, maritime, budget, veterans issues, about maybe half dozen others.

**CHERVENAK:** And you were always on the personal office side as opposed to a committee?

**GREEN:** Correct, I was always working on a personal office. I worked for a former congressman named Sam Farr from the Santa Cruz, Monterey area in California.

**CHERVENAK:** And at Yale, what was your focus when you were doing your thesis, et cetera?

**GREEN:** So, my thesis was about speakers of the House of Representatives, and I was working with Professor David Mayhew as my advisor.

**CHERVENAK:** Excellent. And then you went to Catholic University, and you've been there how long now?

**GREEN:** Oh gosh, what has it been, over 15 years, I guess, yep.

**CHERVENAK:** So, in terms of the broad area of your work, can you kind of just give us an overview, you know, what are the general themes that you're interested in as it relates to political science research generally?

**GREEN:** So, my general interest is American political institutions, and I have a particular focus in Congress, and within that area what I'm interested in is a variety of things. How does leadership work in Congress? How do parties work in Congress? What are the dynamics within parties? How do negotiations get resolved? Getting into the nitty gritty of the legislative process, and as a consequence of course the big question is, does Congress work? Is it able to do what it's supposed to do and legislate?

**CHERVENAK:** So, it's a pretty broad approach, but mainly it sounds like an institutional kind of approach but with some focus on the groups like the parties, et cetera?

**GREEN:** Exactly.

**CHERVENAK:** Great, well why don't we talk, why don't we jump in on your, on some of the specific work you've done? I know you have a book around. Is it The Freedom Caucus, and, you know, facts and generally speaking, can you talk about that area? What questions did you have when you embarked on that research program and what did you find?

**GREEN:** Sure, so I got interested in the House Freedom Caucus when they formed shortly, not long after, not too long after John Boehner became Speaker of the House during Obama's presidency. And I was fascinated by this group because they seem to have considerable leverage over what the Republicans who were then the majority in the House were able to do, and eventually they were credited or blamed depending on your point of view with bringing down Speaker Boehner and having him resign from the House, which is only the second time that it happened certainly in the 20th Century during a term, middle of the term.

So I got interested in this group to try to figure out how they formed, what their goals were, and how they were able to exercise so much influence, particularly because, unlike typical groups, they capped their membership. They did not want more than about 40 or so people in the group. And so that led me to do some research. I talked to members of the Freedom Caucus. I looked at their voting patterns. I looked at cases in which they tried to influence legislative outcomes, and what I argued was that they actually were important and influential primarily in ways that you can't see if you just look at voting because members of the Freedom Caucus pretty much vote with the rest of their party most of the time.

But when they got together as a group and basically bound themselves as a unit and threatened to kill bills, that was when they were able to either kill bills or change the agenda, so bring different kinds of legislation to the floor or force the Republicans to bring certain amendments to the floor. And they didn't always kill things. Sometimes it was about amending things or even trying to bring bills to the floor. There were efforts on their part to bring about positive, sort of, positive influence changing, enacting legislation as opposed to negative agenda control. So that was the kind of the gist of my research on the Freedom Caucus.

**CHERVENAK:** Well it's very interesting, you know, when you have a group like in a caucus. I mean on one side you have a party, which is a kind of faction with its internal kind of

mechanisms of control. I think you have other work on that, but in terms of the caucus,, you know, it's all voluntary. How did these groups get together? How they police themselves? How do they force them all, how does everybody force each other to vote in the same way to get that collective power?

**GREEN:** So one of the most important things about the Freedom Caucus was the fact that they limited their size. And they did that so they could in effect be an exclusive club. And by doing that it allowed them to ensure that those who joined were ones who had a general agreement. Now the important thing here is that it was an agreement on policy. Within the Freedom Caucus, and again I'm talking about their first, you know, several years of existence before Trump was elected President, they had internal divisions on policy. But what they had to agree upon, if you wanted to join you had to agree you'd be willing to vote against leadership, and vote against leadership on the floor, and vote against leadership on procedural motions, which are a very important tool of the majority party to control the agenda.

If you weren't willing to do that, then you could not join the group. And even if you joined, there were times when some members left because they said, this group is way more aggressive and assertive than I counted on, than I anticipated. But they nonetheless could get others to take their place. And so they were one of the important ways that they were able to stay unified was by having basically restrictive membership. The other thing that they did is they met. They met and negotiated and talked with each other quite frequently, and that way they were able to build coalitions internally and build a majority or unanimity over action but also gauge if they weren't. So if they had a discussion and there was division on an issue, then the Freedom Caucus just wouldn't take a position. So they were very strategic about the bills, amendments, and other matters in which they would take a firm position.

**CHERVENAK:** So why did anybody want to join them if it's an exclusive club, you know, what carrots did they have?

**GREEN:** Well initially it was, the big incentive to join, one of the big incentives was that you would have, you would gain some basically social benefits. Some of the members of Freedom Caucus, and one member told me, they felt like outcasts within the Republican Party already. They didn't really have a lot of friends, they didn't get along with members, they didn't agree with the kind of norms of behavior that you have to follow when you're a member of Congress. And so they found like-minded people, and so part of it was just the social benefits of being in a group. But also there was ideological component that a lot of the members were very unhappy with their leadership. They felt that Boehner was not an effective speaker. He wasn't challenging the Obama administration hard enough. He was too ready to, too willing to make deals and compromises, and they found in this group people who agreed with them on that and were willing to actually do something about it.

**CHERVENAK:** And so you say they met often. How often do they meet? Was it every day? Every week? Every two weeks?

**GREEN:** Oh, I don't remember exactly how often. It wasn't every day. I think it was either weekly or monthly, initially, something like that.

**CHERVENAK:** And the only thing they really had to punish someone is to kick them out?

**GREEN:** Correct. They could certainly do that if they felt someone was not a loyal enough member of the caucus. There's very few known instances of them actually kicking people out of the group. The closest you could probably get would have been a more recent example when Justin Amash, who was a libertarian member of the group, was such an outspoken opponent of Trump that they effectively kicked him out. But that was controversial because that's not usually something they did, and in part that was because they were reacting against Boehner and his leadership and his willingness to punish Republicans who were dissenters. So if you form a group in opposition to someone who does that, you wouldn't necessarily want to follow the same path and be the kind of group that punishes folks for not agreeing with you all the time.

**CHERVENAK:** And so ultimately for the Freedom Caucus, what did you find in their effectiveness? Did they get things done? Did they, were they responsible for Boehner? What did you find?

**GREEN:** So in terms of political effectiveness, I argue that they were actually fairly effective. For a non-trivial number of cases when they actually said we have a position on this particular issue or bill, this is what we want, they were, I can't remember the exact percentage, but roughly forty of the time, they were effective in blocking legislation, blocking amendments, changing the agenda of the floor agenda. They were less effective in getting things enacted, which shouldn't be a surprise because they're only forty members. They're not a majority of the Republican conference.

One of the things I do argue, though, is that their influence over Boehner's decision to leave is overstated. They were unhappy with Boehner, and one of their members, Mark Meadows, had filed a, basically a motion to vacate the chair, which is used to remove a speaker if a majority of the House vote for that motion, but it was never brought to the floor. And when members of the Freedom Caucus went to Boehner and said,, you know, we're unhappy with you, we have this motion to vacate the chair out there, we think it's time for you to consider going, they were actually surprised when Boehner said, I'm going to leave.

And he did it as much because he was tired of dealing with the Freedom Caucus, and had been for a long time. In his mind he was getting attacked constantly for doing what he thought was his job, and he ultimately believed, rightly or wrongly, that if he went to the floor for a vote, he would win. The Democrats were not going to vote to remove him as speaker, but it would have forced his members to take a position on whether to keep him. And he was not that popular among Republicans. So I think, what I argue, is that he, it was really more the straw that broke the camel's back as opposed to a forced, successful force, it's a successful effort by the caucus to push him out against his will.

**CHERVENAK:** Yeah, I'm curious about their effectiveness given the Hastert Rule. Was that the main reason they were able to be effective is because Boehner wouldn't bring majority-backed bills to the floor if it excluded them?

**GREEN:** Well, in general speakers don't like to bring bills to the floor that require the other party to pass them. This is, as you said, known as the Hastert Rule, though it's not technically a rule, it's more of a norm of behavior. And that certainly was part of it. Part of it, though, was that these were bills that Democrats weren't going to vote for anyway, and from the Freedom Caucus's perspective, they weren't conservative enough. And this was one of the reasons a lot of Republicans did not like the Freedom Caucus because they said, you're the enemy, you know, the perfect can't be the enemy of the good.

Here's a bill that will limit immigration, let's do it, and the Freedom Caucus would say, this is not really going to do it. This is a joke. This is symbolic. And so if you feel, you know, from their perspective, they felt that really you have to push things to what you truly believe. You should not be compromising with yourself before you pass bills. I will say the other thing that hurt Boehner was that on major bills that could get Democratic votes but that members of his own party didn't like, he was willing to quote unquote violate the Hastert Rule. So bills that would keep the government operating, for example, avoid a shutdown or debt limit legislation. And one could argue that was the right thing for him to do as speaker, but it undercut his position within the party because every time you do that, your party says, huh you're the speaker of the House, fine, but we're the ones who nominated you and voted for you on the floor, why aren't you listening to our policy preferences? So in a way Boehner did hurt himself every time he had to bring a bill to the floor and pass it with Democrats.

**CHERVENAK:** So did you come away with any universal thoughts in looking at the Freedom Caucus. I mean it sounds similar in a way to the Southern Democrats or some other work that people have done that look at groups within party or cross-party. Did you come away with any appreciation of how these kind of factions get together, are effective or not effective?

**GREEN:** I definitely came away with an understanding of how to do this effectively, how to organize effectively, how to use shared, not just shared policy goals, but shared political philosophies, shared sense of what is good politics, to build a coalition and also some of the techniques the Freedom Caucus used. So for example, they developed their own app where they could do whip counts within their members, so if someone in the caucus met with the leadership and they said, oh we're going to bring this bill to the floor and we have the votes, they could look at their app and do a quick whip count and say, you don't have the Freedom Caucus, you don't have 40 members, so how are you going to pass it without Democrats?

So they found these ways to have organizational advantages over leadership. And I think the other thing that I gleaned from this research was how, when we think about factions, we often think about as you said the Southern Democrats, the groups are in the middle of the ideological spectrum. They can plausibly vote for either party, and that gives them leverage. But in the

Freedom Caucus's case I saw how you could do the same thing at the far extreme of the ideological spectrum. Where the traditional model is those people have to vote with Republicans, they certainly won't vote with Democrats, but the Freedom Caucus was willing to vote with Democrats just for totally different reasons. And so it's important to understand that members can quote cross-party lines for reasons other than shared ideological preferences. It can be because, for example, they just genuinely believe a bill is bad or it's not conservative or liberal enough, and they're willing to stick their neck out with leadership to kill a bill.

**CHERVENAK:** Given your perspective on this issue, I mean do you think there are any strategies to unravel those kinds of caucuses? You know, if Boehner had done X or employed one of these three strategies to break the caucus, are there such strategies you came across?

**GREEN:** Well I think the most important thing is to stop it before it forms because once the caucus had been created, now you have this, is one in another context, one member of Congress called a gulag archipelago of descent. They're organized, they're together, and now you have to deal with them as that group. And they've branded themselves and eventually they become almost a public brand because initially being in the Freedom Caucus was something that was private, but now it's something people wear with a point of pride, so that's something you want to avoid.

I think in Boehner's case, I think the mistake he made was not doing a good enough, and I'm not saying this is easy, but not doing a good enough job of realizing he had a lot of conservative young members in his party. This was a problem that's haunted speakers like Newt Gingrich. You have these folks, they're idealistic, they want to change the world, and you have to find a way to give them an outlet so they feel they're actually accomplishing something as opposed to saying, sorry, you're not on the committee, you can't continue, you're not an important committee, sorry you're not part of the conference committee, you're not part of leadership, you're just going to have to sit and wait and vote for what we bring to the floor.

There's too many young members in those cases that are entrepreneurial, they're aggressive, they're go-getters, and you've got to bring them into leadership and leadership decision making early on before it's too late.

**CHERVENAK:** So the Freedom Caucus, was it made up mainly of junior members?

**GREEN:** Largely. Not entirely. There were some senior members in it, but they were more junior members, particularly folks who had been elected in that 2010 election, which brought all those freshmen Republicans to the House and gave Republicans a majority in the House. And those are folks you've got to watch out for especially in their second term. Their first term maybe they're still, you know, getting their sea legs, and they're not sure if they're going to get reelected, but their second term they have more confidence and also might be more disillusioned.

**CHERVENAK:** Let's talk generally about the speaker. I know you have a fair amount of work going on about the Speaker of the House, you know, how the speaker is chosen, what the speaker's responsibilities are, can you talk about your work there? What questions do you have and what have you found?

**GREEN:** Sure, so this is, this was a, this is the research that I was doing as a graduate student, became my dissertation and later in my book, looking at Speakers of the House over time since the 1940s and trying to understand why they do the things that they do. So the conventional wisdom is that speakers are agents of their party. They do what their party wants them to do because it's the party that nominates them and to get elected on the floor they need a majority of the whole House, and usually everyone votes by party line.

But what I argue in the piece is if you look at speakers in a case-by-case basis in times when they've exercised significant legislative leadership, you can see that they consider other things as well, not just their party. So for example, speakers at least in the past look to the presidency both as a party leader, so what the same party president wants, but also as an office in its own right, so, and this is, we don't see this so much anymore, but if the President says, this is a national security issue, I need your help, a speaker would respond to that even if the President was of the opposite party.

And there's other things as well that speakers consider, including their own policy preferences. They have their own agendas, the things that they care about, whether it's human rights or environmental protection or other matters, and so sometimes they'll actually push hard for bills that don't necessarily even have a support of their own party but are important to them personally, and they'll use the leverage that they have to get those bills enacted.

**CHERVENAK:** So for the speaker, let's start with the choosing of the speaker. And you said it's done by party. Well in fact it's actually done by the majority, right, but the parties sort of coalesce around their candidate. You know, for me I always found this kind of a surprising situation since at the founding there's no parties. So how did this come to be, where the parties are selecting basically the speaker and the speaker becoming an agent at least in most of the cases for the party?

**GREEN:** So this is a process that's developed gradually through, up through the late nineteenth century. Not only the process but also the importance of parties staying together and sticking together on the selection of speakers. And there's actually a book by Jeff Jenkins and Charles Stewart about this process and how gradually it became a norm that you must vote as a unit for your nominee. So as you said, the way it works is each party nominates someone to be speaker, and then that nominee is brought to the House floor on the first day that the House meets in a new Congress.

And members can vote any way they want. They can vote for anyone. In theory they can, and people do, cast ballots for people who aren't even in Congress. But the norm is the party must vote as a unit for their nominee because if they don't, the other party's nominee could get

elected, or you can have a deadlock and no one candidate gets an absolute majority. This happened in the 1920s, for example, and it happened much more often in the mid-nineteenth century when the parties were deeply divided on the issue of slavery and region more generally. And there you can have a deadlock that goes on for days and weeks. So it's in no one's real interest to have that happen.

What we have seen increasingly over the last decade is members of Congress willing to violate that norm on the House floor. Now it hasn't yet resulted in a surprise election of somebody else's speaker, but what it means is that if you want to be speaker, you can't just win the nomination of your party. And so folks like Nancy Pelosi, for example, in 2018 had to fight really hard to get elected speaker because she had a majority of her party, but she needed pretty much everybody with maybe losing a half dozen Democrats.

And then again in 2020 with a very tiny majority. She had to keep everybody together, and it's very hard because these votes, as I said, they're becoming, we're seeing more defections for various reasons. People aren't willing to vote for their party's nominee on the floor.

**CHERVENAK:** But they're not defecting to the other party. They're defecting to other members or even people outside of Congress.

**GREEN:** That's right. We don't see folks voting for the other party's candidate. They will vote for their friends in Congress, they'll vote for, you know, Colin Powell has gotten votes to be speaker, you know, we'll see all kinds of random ballots. And we'll also see members who choose not to vote. They will vote present, for example, or choose not to participate.

**CHERVENAK:** So can you talk a little bit about why the speaker is a member typically? You know, I've had others on the program in the past who say it doesn't have to be a member and we should look outside and, you know, get a non-partisan to be to be speaker. What are your thoughts on that on that process, and why hasn't it happened ever in the past?

**GREEN:** Well you can think, I can think of a number of reasons why that hasn't happened. For one, it hasn't always been a job people wanted. So just, you know, saying I want to be speaker, I know there was some talk about Donald Trump being speaker. I said that's not going to happen. That's not a job that he wants. So you have to have someone who wants the job who isn't in Congress, number one. Number two, it's a position that you would get elected to presumably if you have been lobbying your colleagues for votes. And it's much easier to do that if you are a member of Congress than if you are outside of Congress.

In addition I think members of Congress are very cautious about picking somebody who is not one of their own members because the speaker is asked to do a lot of things for members of Congress, sometimes very small things. I need a new carpet for my office. I want to go on this congressional delegation trip. They want someone who understands them and knows their interests and knows their districts, and someone from the outside is not likely to do that, and



it's a big risk. You pick somebody who is from the outside, you have no idea what they'll be like as speaker.

**CHERVENAK:** Can you go through what the speaker responsibilities are and how they've changed over time and originally, you know, they didn't have much of an office, and now they have a tremendous number of staff. So tell us about the speaker role and how it's evolved.

**GREEN:** So briefly, when the speakership was first created and its early occupants took this, took the office, the primary thought was that it was a parliamentary position, kind of like the speaker in the House of Commons in England. Their job was to just neutrally enforce the rules. But it didn't take long as parties were developing and factions were developing for people who took this position to say, actually I could use this to help my party.

One of the most important early speakers in that regard was Henry Clay, who was a much more aggressive and assertive speaker than what the House had seen before. And so gradually the speaker becomes a more partisan position and in the process also begins to acquire and use more formal and informal tools at his or her disposal. And if you fast forward to today and think of the things speakers have to do, it's a far cry from a hundred and fifty, two hundred years ago.

They do press conferences, like Nancy Pelosi just had a press conference on Ukraine, right. You couldn't imagine a speaker two hundred years ago being asked about what's going on in Eastern Europe. So they have to have media skills, they've got a lot of staff who work for leadership, are in communications Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, all this kind of public profiling.

They're responsible for of course the day-to-day meeting of the House that they're really actually presiding over it, but they are technically in charge of presiding over the House of Representatives. Depending on the rules of their party and the House and what their party will accept from them, they play a role in choosing committees, committee members and committee chairs in their party. They, as I said, they do a lot of favors for members. They will often get involved in the legislative process, with negotiations particularly between the House and Senate, or when they involve the President, these sort of high profile negotiations. They help their members raise money for their campaigns. They do a lot of campaign work. The list goes on and on. Speakers have a lot of duties and responsibilities.

**CHERVENAK:** So how about the responsibilities as it relates to time of Congress, you know, whether it's committee time, floor time, how do they control that? Is it absolute control or there's any guidelines about it?

**GREEN:** Well they don't, when it comes to the use of time, at least in the in the whole House, floor time, they don't usually exercise absolute control over that. They work with other leaders, particularly the majority leader to set the agenda and then the majority whip to figure out do we have a majority for a bill? What's the coalitions that we have to deal with in the legislative, on the upcoming agenda? So they'll work with other leaders on that.

And then committees, you know, that's usually something that committee chairs are responsible for primarily, and they may or may not work with the ranking member of their committee depending on the relationship they have with that person. So speakers, their primary sphere is going to be the floor, but even there, they're sharing the decision making on what happens to the floor with other leaders.

**CHERVENAK:** But they decide when Congress is in session, so whether the Congress is working two days a week or five days a week, or two weeks at a stretch in Washington is up to the speaker, correct?

**GREEN:** Yes, but again, I think they usually work with other leaders on that. And I should say also with committee chairs, too, because they need to know if a committee chair's got a bill that's coming up, what's that bill, do you have a majority for it, and then schedule accordingly. But in talk, if you're talking about just the general schedule for each year, the speaker is an important player in setting that schedule, yes.

**CHERVENAK:** And so then when it comes to the bills, deciding what goes on the floor, what's basically vetoed or doesn't come to the floor, and the rules by which it's considered on the floor, that's still under the control the speaker under the current,, you know, rules, et cetera, compared to the past, where it wasn't necessarily in their control, correct?

**GREEN:** Right. So the speaker plays, does play an important role in what comes to the floor and the terms by which they come to the floor, but again this is something that speakers share with other members, they share with members of the Rules Committee. Having said that, members of the Rules Committee are going to check with the speaker before they bring something to the floor to make sure she approves. And then also members of the Rules Committee on the majority side are picked by the speaker, so they are thinking directly about what the speaker wants since they wouldn't be there if she hadn't put them on the committee in the first place.

**CHERVENAK:** Yeah, so ultimately the speaker controls the Rules Committee through this kind of appointments process. So can you talk about what role does the speaker have on who's on what committees, either the chairman of the committees, the ranking members, and the regular members of committees?

**GREEN:** So each party has their own rules for choosing who's on committees, but generally speaking they both have what you could call Committee on Committees, so these are other members whose job is to decide who is on what committee, and that, and so in that way, one might say, well this is really kind of a power that's being spread out, it's not centralized, the speaker doesn't have much of a role.

However, first of all, many, if not a majority, of those people on the Committee on Committees were put there by the speaker, so again they're looking to the speaker as guidance on decision making. And also oftentimes the voting is weighted, so the speaker has more votes than other members on the committee. So it's not the only way by which you can get on a committee, and

in fact it's possible to appeal your decision, in the Democratic party, anyway. You can have a vote by the Democratic Caucus if you're not happy with what the committee decided. You can appeal it to the full party, but rarely does that happen, and even more rarely is the decision of the Committee on Committees overturned. So the speaker does play a very important role.

I would just I would sort of summarize it this way. If I were a freshman member and I really wanted to be on a committee, the first thing I do is reach out to the speaker. That's the first thing I do. Even if she is not the one who makes the decision, you want her on your side because she in turn can influence a lot of other people to help to be on your side as well.

**CHERVENAK:** So for me, I find this whole process kind of incredible because it's outside of the, it's sort of an extra-congressional procedure to decide who's on what committees, rather than a kind of inter-congressional procedure. It's controlled by each individual party rather than a kind of a general vote. So again, even in the committee side, how did that evolve over time? Was it always something that was kind of controlled by parties, you know, even the early days of committees? Or is this something that evolved later?

**GREEN:** So the process has changed over time, and the pattern has changed by chamber. So let me take the Senate, for example. So we're talking about the Speaker in the House, but in the Senate in a number of occasions early in its history, members were picked on committees by a vote of the full Senate. Every member votes on who's going to be on what committee.

But you can see the problem of that, if you're in a chamber that starts to get big and particularly one that has parties, and the House of Representatives, which has always been bigger than the Senate, that's just not a process that could really last for long. It's just not realistic to expect that. And actually I would say, although it might seem that everyone should have a say in who's on what committees, not only is that difficult to do as a practical matter, but in fact I would argue that in Congress it's a more democratically-determined process than in many state legislatures, where the speaker picks everybody on all committees by herself or himself.

And in that case, there's really nothing you can do if the speaker doesn't like, you can't appeal to others, there's no group that that can help you out. It really boils down to one person. So even though power is fairly centralized in Congress and especially the House it's still not as centralized as it could be.

**CHERVENAK:** Well I guess it depends on if the speaker's choosing, it's going to be, and the speaker's political, this could be mainly a politically-driven appointment, right, whereas if there were some other criteria, like competence, for instance, or you know, expertise or whatever, then you might come out with a very different set of people. So I wonder, you know, in your thought process, thinking through the speaker's role, do you think it's a positive influence for the capacity of the institution as a whole, or do you think this is a hindrance to Congress's acting effectively since you're probably not going to get the best people in the best roles, it's going to be driven more for political reasons.

**GREEN:** I think that it's, frankly it's neutral. It can go either way, to be honest with you, because it depends, of course, on who the speaker is and what his or her goals are. But I think the fact that in the House and in the Senate as well, other members are involved, reduces the likelihood that someone is chosen who is not competent or capable. And the reason for that, I say that, is because if a committee has a chair who is incompetent or is making a lot of mistakes, or members who are doing that, that gets media coverage, and that brings negative attention on Congress and on the party that that member is from.

And members of Congress realize that, and we see that even in the highly partisan Congress we have today there are occasionally hot races for chairs for committees, and somebody who is really a showboat saying, oh I've got this million, two million Twitter followers and I'm going to take on the administration and I'm going to—

And then but then you hear members say, okay that's great, but I kind of want somebody who gets bills passed. I want somebody who will consider my legislative interests as opposed to how many Twitter followers I have. So as long as there's enough members of Congress who have that understanding that their role is to legislate and that their reputation is tied with that ability to legislate, then I think if you have a somewhat open or more democratic process, even one that's fairly controlled like it is in the House and Senate, you're less likely to have those mistakes made in appointments than if it's all with just one individual leader.

**CHERVENAK:** Does it matter less now, you know, people talk about how so much power is centralized in the speaker into the current pendulum swing, if you will, that committees matter less and who cares if you're on committee X, Y, or Z because you have your external constituency and everything goes through the speaker anyway. So what are your thoughts on that?

**GREEN:** I do think that committees matter less than they used to. In fact it's been shown through social science research in a number of ways the committees don't meet as often, they're not doing as much as they used to. And that goes back to the 1990s, and I think that that I think that's a serious problem. I don't know that I would go back to the days of Rayburn, where committees were these autonomous fiefdoms that could, you know, decide independently whether a good bill came to the floor, but the flip side is that committees are potentially really a valuable source of expertise and policy generation.

And if they can't meet very often, if they're always looking to leadership to tell them whether they ought to meet or what their agenda should be, that's really curtailing the ability of Congress to be innovative and develop new policy solutions to significant social problems.

**CHERVENAK:** Yeah, and talking about the speakers, I mean you've done particular work on Newt Gingrich and, a very colorful speaker, so can you talk about your work on him? What, and did that show like a big change in Congress itself, and obviously he was involved in a lot of the

reform efforts that have repercussions to today, so I'm curious about what you found in your work on Newt.

**GREEN:** So as speaker, Gingrich contributed a number of important things to the House and to the speakership in general. One of them was to accelerate a gradual centralization of power that had started I would say back in the 1970s with changes to the House Rules, changes to the powers of the speaker, changes to how people got elected to committees. You started to see a gradual increase in power with the speakership. Gingrich really just, you know, put that on turbo.

He said, these are people I want to chair committees. They're going to be the chair. I don't care how senior they are. I don't care what anyone says. This is what's going to happen. I want a bill brought to the floor right away. I can't trust a committee. I'm going to form a task force. I'm going to pick everybody on the task force. They're going to come up with the bill. This kind of highly-centralized, top-down directed process was emblematic of a greater centralization of power in the speakership and one that we've more or less had today.

I don't think that we've had speakers act quite the way Gingrich did, especially in his first hundred days of the speakership, but this idea that speakers have this outsized leverage over other members and can control the legislative process is something that a lot is, to a great degree though not entirely, due to Gingrich. I think another thing that Gingrich did is he accelerated this attention to the speaker as sort of emblematic of the House in the public sphere.

So you look to the speaker. So the House is equal to Pelosi, or to John Boehner, or Paul Ryan. Before speakers were prominent, but it wasn't like everyone knew who Tom Foley was, for example, the speaker before Newt Gingrich. So I think that's a second important contribution among many that Gingrich made as speaker of the House.

**CHERVENAK:** What about the legacy of some of the decisions made during Gingrich's time? So for instance, the going back to the district for, you know, not moving the families to DC, you know, reducing the staff? What's your perspective on some of those big changes?

**GREEN:** So again, this was something I think Gingrich accelerated. The process was already beginning where members, with air travel becoming cheaper and increased pressure to raise money and to go to your district to do fundraisers and meet with constituents, you had folks who were members of the so-called Tuesday-to-Thursday club. Now that had originally been something that was seen as a kind of, not a brand of shame, but something that was used as a sort of epithet. So Tip O'Neill was a member of the Tuesday-to-Thursday Club before he became speaker because he was always taking a train to Boston.

He said you're not serious. Why aren't you here five days a week? What's wrong with you? By the time Gingrich had become speaker, you already had a lot of members who were doing that anyway, but what he did as speaker and I would argue before that as minority leader, is he told

Republicans, being in DC is a political liability. So it's not just, you need to be elsewhere to raise money, but being here hurts your reputation, and we want to make Democrats look like they're the party of DC, not the party of the people, so it's important that we not be here.

So then you started to have members who not only didn't want to live in DC but made a point of pride of not living in DC and in some cases even lived in their own offices, so they said, I don't have any, I'm not, I'm literally not living in DC. Of course they are, they're living in their office, and taxpayers are paying for this office, so we're paying for their rent in effect, but the point is it becomes a symbolic electoral tool to say, I am not of DC and I will be in DC as little as possible.

**CHERVENAK:** And do you think that was a positive change?

**GREEN:** No. Absolutely not. You, your job is to legislate, and I think, in fact, the more you are in DC or in the Capital interacting with other members of both parties, the more likely you are to do an effective job and to do smart legislating.

**CHERVENAK:** And how about the staff, you know, there was a reduction in staff at that time as well, and I know there was some controversy around the power of some staff members, and that led to a reaction. What are your thoughts on that?

**GREEN:** So staff, there were staff cuts when, after the 1994 election, and this was a way of Gingrich and Republicans saying, we're going to cut government spending, but I think it was one of the more self-destructive moves of the Republican majority because those staff are very useful to members of both parties. They have expertise. They have connections. They work tireless hours. I'm a little biased because I was a Hill staffer myself, but they work long, long hours for relatively little pay and to help their member on behalf of public service.

And to be cutting staff, whether it's personal or committee or leadership staff or leadership staff grew, but other staff shrunk, is really to take away the expertise that Congress needs. And without that, members of Congress either make bad decisions or they look to folks outside of Congress who may have other agendas, such as folks in the advocacy community who may or may not be giving them good advice. And so I think staff are really important, and I think that to this day Congress has suffered from that decline in the number of staff.

**CHERVENAK:** So what other, you know, discoveries or work did you do related to Gingrich that you think have lasting impact on the functioning of Congress as an institution?

**GREEN:** Well I think that other things that that have happened. I mean I think one of the things that began in 1994 was this greater instability of majorities because we have to remember that Gingrich and the Republicans taking over the House was the first time Republicans controlled the House in 40 years. So from that point, you had a much more competitive environment between the two parties.

And professor Frances Lee at Princeton has written about this. And what that does is it creates an increased focus on short-term politicking. Winning the next election as opposed to legislating. And Gingrich, although, you know, he had an agenda, there was legislating that happened when he was speaker, was really more a political animal. He was thinking more about elections, and I think that what's happened is that idea is now kind of infiltrated throughout Congress, and so even more than ever before members of Congress and parties are thinking, what about the next election, as opposed to, we have two years, what can we do with the two years that we have?

**CHERVENAK:** And what about Gingrich's role in this evolution of the rules and this kind of veto power that a speaker holds, you know, did that change at that time, or was it just a continuation of what happened previously?

**GREEN:** It was not, a little bit of a continuation, but I would say that was much more Gingrich innovation. If you look at previous speakers, you didn't see speakers, certainly not Tom Foley, Jim Wright a little bit, to some extent Tip O'Neill, who are willing to interject themselves in the legislative process and block bills. But Gingrich was especially in his earliness speakership was a much more active participant in developing the legislative agenda and deciding what comes to the floor and what doesn't.

And I would say since then, speakers have generally followed that same pattern. Not so much John Boehner and not so much Paul Ryan, but actually Dennis Hastert to some degree more than people realize was fairly involved in the legislative process. And of course Nancy Pelosi, who is much more willing to exercise power on behalf of bills that she favors and against bills that she disfavors.

**CHERVENAK:** So let's talk a little bit about the notion of the discharge petition. So you've done some work on this because I always find it surprising that a bill that has the majority support regardless of how that factors into party support, right, there's a majority of the Congress support something, and in theory the speaker can block it through the Rules Committee or however and then not only that, there's this informal Hastert Rule, but let's just focus on the discharge position for a second. So what's the mechanism by which that works, and what are the data told you from in the work you did to look at that?

**GREEN:** So the discharge petition is this interesting mechanism, as you say. It allows a majority of the House to bring a bill to the floor, and it requires actually signing a petition, and if a majority of the House of two hundred and eighteen members sign this petition, then a bill, if it has not yet come to the floor, then comes to the floor and is subject to debate and a vote. And it can happen because as you say speakers don't want bills to come to the floor. Traditionally it was used because committee chairs did not want bills to come to the floor.

So they exercised their negative agenda power to prevent these bills from moving forward. And in principle, it is a way for a more democratic process to circumvent a less democratic, one

which power is centralized. But what happens starting in the 1970s is it became more and more a partisan instrument and especially a symbolic one.

Once, and I believe it was in 1993 that the signatures were made public, so once that happened it went from being a sort of, well I don't want to get in trouble with the committee chair but I like this bill, I'll quietly sign this petition, into hey look at me everybody, I've signed this petition. And effectively now, they're really only used by the minority party to say, isn't this a great bill? Why is that horrible majority party keeping it from coming to the floor? They're the minority party, so they don't usually get enough signatures, but they don't care. They're using it basically for symbolic position taking to say, I oppose the majority party, and in that respect they're not really doing what arguably they were intended to do.

**CHERVENAK:** I don't understand the discharge petition in the context of co-sponsorships, right, because you have co-sponsors of a bill. I mean why not just once the co-sponsor raises above the majority, it goes to the floor. It's just an automatic process.

**GREEN:** Well you could do that. That would be interesting if the co-sponsorships had that same effect. I think then you would see the same results, which is that people would not want to co-sponsor a bill if it meant a bill would actually come to the floor. So, you know, a lot of bills would have two hundred seventeen co-sponsors and that would be it. The way members see co-sponsorships is more of a position taking that sends a slightly different signal.

So the discharge petition is saying, I want this bill to be voted on. The other side won't let it come to a vote, aren't they terrible? What a co-sponsorship says is, I like what this bill says, and I support this bill in principle. And that way you're, with that tool you're able to tell voters, the voter says, I want, you know, this is a great bill. You can say, I've co-sponsored it, so I agree with you. It's a great bill, and in fact it can be used for evasive purposes. So you might as a member not want this bill to come to the floor. You actually don't like it, but your constituents do, so when you co-sponsor it, you're signaling that you do like it, but you realize that it has no practical impact on whether you actually have to vote for it.

So I think that's why members would want to keep their co-sponsorship separate because it allows them to send a different signal and one that doesn't have as immediate an impact on the agenda.

**CHERVENAK:** Interesting. So I'm curious, if we move back to parties for a minute, you've done some work on this concept of party discipline. And I'm always amazed that this concept exists because, you know, for me it's more like, you have members of Congress, and you do what you want to do, whereas you're disciplined to be in some group that's external to Congress. So can you talk about what this party discipline really means, how it's achieved, and what happens if you violate it?

**GREEN:** So it's a big question and there's a lot of parts to it. I would say that right off the bat it's important to remember that to get into Congress, you almost always have to affiliate with a



party. You have to win a party primary, you often have to have the support of party elites, you need resources from your party. And chances are if you care enough about being in Congress, you're a pretty partisan person anyway. So there's a kind of filtering process where you're going to get people in Congress who are already inclined towards a party and not many people who are truly quote-unquote independent-minded.

Now once they're in Congress there are ways in which they feel additional pressure to stick with their party and to be loyal to their party. We talked about some of these tools already. You want to be on a good committee? Well it's the majority party that this, it's your party that decides what committee you're going to be on, either the leader of the party or the party committee, the Committee on Committees. You want your bill to come to the floor? Well it's the leadership that makes that decision if you're in the majority and if you're in the minority and you want them to bring it up on the floor and say, this is a great bill. We should be voting on it. You got to go to your leadership.

There's all, in other words, the opportunity structure of Congress is designed to give parties more power and disproportionate power. Then on top of that, there are all kinds of informal tools that are used. Weekly party meetings, party events, party retreats, communication, you're hearing from your party all the time, this is what's coming to the floor, we're a source of information for you, we'll help you raise money, we have a campaign arm that is designed to help you raise money.

So there's all these pressures and incentives to do this. Now there are members of Congress who are in each party who are not particularly loyal. They're rebellious for various reasons. And in some cases it is because they're safe incumbents. In some cases it's because they don't really have the ambitions that would require them to look to the existing opportunity structure. They say, I don't want to be on appropriations. I'm perfectly happy on this committee, in which case, you know, what, you know, leadership isn't going to be able to do too much, and they have one thing going for them, which is that carrots work better than sticks, I would argue, in Congress.

Punishing members for being disloyal doesn't work very well and tends to backfire. So if you're going to be rebellious, I wouldn't say you get away with it, but you don't have to worry about the sticks. You may not get any more benefits, you may not get to go on a nice congressional delegation trip somewhere, but they're not going to stick you in some dark room in the basement of Longworth or, as Joe Cannon, the former speaker did, put people on the Acoustics Committee, you know, it just doesn't happen very often and when it does as I said it usually backfires.

**CHERVENAK:** So for the for the committee assignments, you know, we talked about that as being an important thing, you know, if I'm a first year or second year or a second term congressman, you know, is my primary motivation to vote with the party because of that? Is one of these forces stronger than the others and really dominates, and if you changed that rule or that process it would weaken that kind of forced conformity?

**GREEN:** It would be a great natural experiment to just have a Congress where, as you say, you get on a committee because the majority of people vote for you to be on the committee, and the party doesn't give you any resources, and to see what would happen. We can't do that, obviously, so we have we can only speculate. I don't think that party loyalty would go away for the reasons I gave before, which is that people getting elected to Congress are already likely to be partisan. And when bills come to the floor generally, unless the party doesn't control the agenda, if they do they're bringing things to the floor, especially in the House, that are pre, that members are predisposed to support if they're in the majority party.

You don't see Nancy Pelosi bringing divisive bills to the floor. Absolutely not. So what you're seeing is everyone's already together in part because the agenda is already set. It's being set to make it easy to conform with the party. But having said that, I have interviewed members who have said, you know, if we didn't have this process where you have to look to the party for things, it would be easier to defect. It would be easier to be more of a rebel. There was a, there's a former member of Congress from Ohio who once complained. He said when you get here you have to give up your voting card and your credit card, meaning you've got to vote the way party wants or you're in trouble, and you've got to be raising money for the party.

If the party stopped requiring or enforcing votes on the floor, and if they, if members didn't feel such pressure to raise money for themselves to get elected and to raise money for the party, you might see less party loyalty than you do today.

**CHERVENAK:** And what about the notion of procedural votes versus, you know, substantive votes on bills? I think it's typically said that the procedural votes are highly one hundred percent partisan, and the substantive votes are maybe not so much. What's your thought on that breakdown and what, how the incentives play out there?

**GREEN:** Yeah, that's absolutely right. So a procedural vote is often a vote that is, that basically either enforces what we call the organizational cartel, in which is basically who runs the House of Representatives, so leadership like voting for speaker, for example. Or it is basically a measure of the ability of the majority to control the agenda. So when you bring a bill on the floor, you have an hour of debate, and then you move the previous question, which is to end debate. If that previous question motion, which is a procedural motion, fails, the minority party gets control of the floor for an hour, and they can bring their own bill, or just a bill. So that is a huge, if that loses, that's a huge loss for the majority.

So those kinds of procedural votes are whipped heavily, and discipline is expected because it is about control. But when it comes to substance of bills, there's usually a little bit more leeway. I would argue there's less than there should be. In the old days, 1950s, 60s, 70s, if the majority lost a vote on a bill or an amendment, they lost the bill or vote on an amendment. You just move on. But what's happened is the expectations have grown, and so one loss is considered a potential disaster or a black eye for the party. So even on substantive votes, discipline is highly valued.

But having said that, you can lose three or four votes, or five, or ten on an amendment or a bill and it still passes. That's fine. But when you're voting against leadership on procedural motions, even if they still pass, that's looked upon with great disfavor by the party.

**CHERVENAK:** Got it. Let's talk about last subject before we move on to our common questions, which is on this concept of bargaining and negotiation. So I mean you could always vote with your party, or you can negotiate with the other side and come to some kind of middle ground, I guess whether it's within the party or between the parties. So can you talk about the work you're doing there and what questions are you asking and have you found any interesting answers?

**GREEN:** Sure, so I've been doing this research project looking at cases of bargaining and negotiation in Congress since 1980. And looking at on a case-by-case basis, what were the issues at stake, who were the players, and what was the ultimate outcome? And then trying to glean from that, what explains that outcome? And that that's still a work in progress, but one of the things that I found, for example, is that the President plays a very important role in the bargaining process, as a referee, as someone who can negotiate between, not only within parties but even between parties, depending on the issue at hand.

And a lot of times that's because the President has a veto. The President is required to sign a bill or veto it, and so you want to know where the President stands on something, and that can be helpful if that person is part of the bargaining process. So, you know, things have changed over time. In some ways bargaining is harder than it used to be, but it is not impossible. It still happens both within and across parties. And so there are key factors like the role of the White House that can make it more likely for bargaining to be successful.

**CHERVENAK:** And what are the chips being used? Is it pork? Is it, you know, compromise on the substance of the bill? Is it votes on another bill? What are the what's the currency being used in this negotiation?

**GREEN:** All those are currencies that can be used, so sometimes it's about saying, you know, if you do this on this bill, if you give, if you give up on this particular provision, I'll make sure that gets into another bill, or I'll do something else. If you're President, I'll issue an executive order that has the same effect, something that happens. Sometimes it is just downright persuasion, just saying, look I think this is important, it matters to me as President that you do this the kind of thing.

Presidents can carry that. They have a certain gravitas, whether you like them or not, particular Presidents, they have gravitas. They come into a room and members listen, and they can have some significant persuasion powers as a result.

**CHERVENAK:** And what about between the members, you know, how is that negotiation happening? What, how are the bargains struck?

**GREEN:** Some of the same things are used when members are, when it's a member to member negotiation. So for example it might be, well I want, can you modify this bill in this way to appeal to my constituency or my concerns? Or can we have another bill introduced? Can we, you know, can you give a speech on the floor that clarifies what this bill does? Can, and it can also be completely unrelated, right so, you know, I'm going to need your help with this other thing. Can you help me with this other thing?

And when Presidents aren't involved, oftentimes committee chairs are. So they're playing a very important role as well and saying well, you know, I'm the chair of the committee, I can decide what the committee brings up. I have influence there, so I can help you with what your particular concerns are.

**CHERVENAK:** Right, well with that, maybe we can move on to the questions that I ask all our guests so that ultimately we can compare the answers. Are you ready for the next phase?

**GREEN:** I am.

**CHERVENAK:** All right, first question is, what do you think congressional representation should mean?

**GREEN:** Well generally I think that it means that members are, as Hanna Pitkin put it, literally representing. They are they are acting in a way that their constituency wants them to act. Now within that broad definition, there's a lot of different things that can be represented. The most the classic definition is representing their policy interests, so I want this to pass, I want this to fail, I want this particular policy outcome. And then the members doing that on their behalf.

But it can get complicated because constituencies have different interests, competing interests, and constituencies care about other things as well. So in some cases it is, I want somebody who represents me because they look like me, they have similar background as me, they've just, it's descriptive representation. And I think that's a perfectly legitimate way of representing, and obviously it's going to be combined with other things. But to me representation is acting, serving, or appearing in ways that reflect what your constituency wants.

**CHERVENAK:** So you're not a Burkean judgment person. You really are a, kind of a window to the to the direct beliefs of the constituency versus a member who would exercise their judgment about what they think is in the best interest of the constituency.

**GREEN:** No, I would actually fold that Burkean approach into that as well because a member could act in the way, a member Congress could act in the way they think is best but then as Hanna Pitkin says, they need to go back to the constituency and explain why they did that thing. So it is a dynamic relationship, and if you just do what you want and don't talk to your constituency, you're not representing, but if you do what you think is right and then go to your constituency and explain it, then unless it's wildly off from what constituents want, it's representing, and frankly even if it is, that's what the, that's what electoral accountability is all

about. So you can always remove that person and pick someone else. But I do think that, I do think that that Burkean view of representation can fit into that definition as well.

**CHERVENAK:** And what about who they're representing? So is it the primary voters, is it all the voters, is it all the people who live there, is it five generations down the line, you know, who are they representing when you say they're going back to their constituents?

**GREEN:** They should be representing everyone in their state or district, whether they voted for them or not, whether they even voted or not. They are the representative of the eighth district of California or the second district of New York or fourth district of Iowa. They are not and should not be only representing a subset of those individuals. Now they may do things that some individuals like and some don't, but if they are consistently only representing one group, I would say that is not accurate representation.

**CHERVENAK:** And what about future generations? Do they represent future generations, or do they only represent the current constituents, and those current constituents embody those in future generations?

**GREEN:** Well it's difficult to represent future generations, but I would think of it this way, that part of representing the interests of your constituents is to recognize that their interests are also forward thinking. So the common good is about the common good here now and in the future. So it's perfectly acceptable to say I'm doing this for the next generation. The challenge, of course, is if your constituents disagree with you and think, yeah, but that's hurting me now. So again that's where the, you know, Burke's view representation fits in. You can say, look I know you don't want us to raise gas prices tenfold, but we have to get some, to do something about global warming for the future, and this is in our all this is in everyone's interest including those of us who aren't here, haven't been born yet.

**CHERVENAK:** Right. Next question is, how would your ideal Congress allocate its time, you know, would you go pre-Newt, would you go, you know, fifty years ago how many days should they spend in DC versus home? How should they be allocated time when they're here?

**GREEN:** I would do an amalgamation of the 1950s and today. So in the 1950s you had members who were living in DC. They were spending a lot more time in the city and able to legislate, interact with others, and a lot less time traveling and a lot less time fundraising. However, they were also spending a good amount of time doing things other than legislating, you know, gallivanting about, frankly, to put it, to be to be polite about it, and so it's sort of a lack of seriousness of purpose.

And so to me a member of, to me they should be allocating most of their time legislating, meeting with constituents in DC, sitting on their committees, debating, discussing issues, interacting with members of both parties, voting, debating on the floor, like five days a week, and not spending six to eight hours every day fundraising as they do today.

**CHERVENAK:** Right. Next question is how should debate, deliberation, or dialogue occur or be structured in Congress? And, you know, should be on the floor, in the committees, should it be in back rooms, should be transparent? What are your thoughts on how that should happen?

**GREEN:** I, you know, I don't have a, it's not popular to say that debate should be private. I actually don't have a problem with discussions that are behind closed doors. I think a lot gets done behind closed doors. Where I think the biggest reform, and I think a lot of it does happen behind closed doors. Where I think the biggest reform is necessary is the way the debate is structured on the floor of the House of Representatives especially, which is basically a kind of adversarial tit-for-tat process where people get up, they give their speech, then they sit down. The other side gives their speech.

No one's, people, it's not enough, there's not enough dialogue between members. And a lot of it is about trying to get that that sound bite that you can post on YouTube. I would prefer to see something along the lines of what the House experimented with I believe in the 103rd Congress, 1993-94, where they tried a series of Oxford style debates during special orders, where two members got up and basically they took opposite sides of a question, right, should taxes be raised or lowered, does the government have a role in regulating welfare or providing welfare. And each side would present their case and then they would actually debate. They'd say, well in response to what you said, I would say this one response to your point.

I would say this and you learn from that. The public learns from that. And then members learn from that. They learn about why other people in Congress of the opposite party have the views that they do. I don't think it would persuade, I don't think it would change people's minds necessarily, but it would be a much more constructive and educational process for all involved.

**CHERVENAK:** And for the committee side, do you have any thoughts about how that discussion should happen? You know, whether it should be open or closed and what process it should take place?

**GREEN:** Well, you know, committees can also be that way, the same way I described the House floor. Not always that way because they're smaller, and so you can see often more dialogue back and forth between members. I do think that dialogue in general is something that should be encouraged in committees. The extent it doesn't happen already. But I think also that a good amount of committee work would be done behind closed doors, hopefully by both parties. I have seen committees at work, not in Congress but in other legislatures, where the majority gets together behind closed doors, they say this is what we're going to do, and then they come to the committee and the minority's like, we don't understand. Well that's too bad, we've already made that decision. That is not what I would encourage, but rather both parties sitting down and negotiating, talking, and I, in that regard I think the biggest reform could really be done with the hearing process because too many hearings are again about grandstanding. Turnout is often low, you know, the questions are being asked or gotcha questions. I would prefer to see hearing, more hearings that were really about substantive debates and gathering facts on problems and issues.

**CHERVENAK:** Next question is, what fundamental institutional improvement should Congress make within a fifty-year time frame?

**GREEN:** Less fundraising. The most, quite frankly the first thing that comes to mind, find a way, and I'm not saying it's easy, but find a way to cut the amount of time that's spent raising money because that is sucking money, sucking time away from members of Congress when they could be legislating, getting to know each other, interacting with others. It's demoralizing to the members. They don't usually like it. It creates a weird dynamic where you're electing people who then spend a third of their time trying to get reelected as opposed to legislating as a means of getting reelected. So I think that is one of the, if not the most important, one of the most important ways that Congress could reform itself.

**CHERVENAK:** All right, next one is what book or article most shaped your thinking with respect to congressional reform?

**GREEN:** Well, there's a number of books that have done that. I mean I mentioned, I'll mention two. I would mention first my dissertation advisor David Mayhew, his book about Congress, Congress: the Electoral Connection, which is not about reform, but it is about the incentives that members face to act in certain ways that are often counter to what we would expect from Congress. So taking positions on things, taking credit for things as opposed to actually legislating, and I think in that book he really nails the problem of incentive structures. You've got to deal with the incentives that members have if you want to, you have to change those if you want to reform the institution.

The other would be Julian Zelizer's book on reform about On Capitol Hill, I think it's called, about reform, the reform period of the 1970s. I think he does a really good job of explaining that reform process, why it happened, how it happened, how it unfolded. And I think it's a really useful roadmap for those who are interested in reforming Congress again.

**CHERVENAK:** Great, well next question is really about your future. What plans do you have, you know, what new books do you have on tap, and what's the long range for your research?

**GREEN:** So I have a this book forthcoming on Newt Gingrich and his time in Congress, so I have that in the works. I have this project on negotiation in Congress and collecting these cases of negotiation over time, which I'm excited about as that moves forward. I have been looking at the impact of the January 6 assault on the US Capitol on the way Congress operates, and one of the things I've been looking at is the way in which it changed relationships between members detrimentally and how that personal impact that members had of that event might shape the way they legislate. I have also been doing some research on the Freedom Caucus and how it changed under Donald Trump and moved from, I would argue, a more, you know, legislatively-oriented conservative group to one that was focused more on power and developing relationships with the White House. And then I've also been looking at state legislatures to kind of get some inspiration, some ideas of ways Congress could be structured, could reform itself,

and I've learned a great deal about the ways in which Congress is actually in some ways a stronger institution, a more effective institution than state legislatures, but also I've seen some things that states do that could be useful for Congress to look at if they're thinking about reform.

**CHERVENAK:** Professor Green, thank you so much for your time, and best of luck with your future work.

**GREEN:** Thank you very much.