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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4306

November 3, 2010

Mr. Steve Pearce
P.O. Box 2696
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Dear Steve:

Congratulations to you, your family, and your staff for winning a well-deserved victory last night.

In a turbulent campaign year, you delivered the message that voters wanted to hear. Republicans who succeeded last night are in touch with America, and I hope they will bring to Washington a perspective and determination that's been absent for too long.

I'm sure the people of your district aren't terribly different from those in mine. I'm told every day that they want less government and more freedom. To me, that means lower taxes, less spending and waste, greater energy security, and enhanced worldwide competitiveness. By electing us, they have taken a big step at a crucial moment toward remaking their Congress into something that represents them.

Over the past four years, as Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, I have led the charge against radical cap-and-trade legislation, fought the new entitlements and mandates that are the rotten core of President Obama's health care law, and consistently applied free market principles to legislative decisions. It's been an uphill battle, and I'm grateful that, thanks to your votes, the cavalry is riding to the rescue.

I want to begin by making it clear that we're here to serve the people who work, pay taxes, and expect us to deliver on our commitments. Government runs on the money taken from taxpayers' pockets, and issue number one is extending the tax cuts, so that working families can spend more of their own money. I've regularly supported the Republican Study Committee's budget plans, but I am also committed to reviving the crusade for a Balanced Budget Amendment.

A fine place to start reducing spending is with real entitlement reform. Entitlement spending amounts to \$1.4 trillion, more than half the federal budget. Even before the Obama spending extravaganza, these programs were costing each American taxpayer \$7,698 a year. I

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believe wage earners need some help, too. If we believe in the sunrise, we must also believe in the sunset. It is time for the sun to set on some government programs.

I've worked hard to earn a reputation for fairness in dealing with policy opponents. But when I am chairman, you won't find many Democrats applauding. To see why, please take a look at the attached piece by Dick Arme, our former majority leader and co-founder of the FreedomWorks organization.

If this sounds like a speech, well, it is. One of the first major decisions waiting for you in Washington is deciding who will be the leaders of the next Congress. I'm supporting John Boehner for speaker. I also hope to participate, myself, as chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee. I'll need the support of people like you who are coming to Washington with change on their minds and determination in their hearts.

It strikes me that this election proved that Americans want real leadership, and that they're fed up with liberal causes and with politicians who quietly trade freedom for bureaucracy, one deal at a time.

When I look toward the 112th Congress, I see what the man who first brought me to Washington, Ronald Reagan, called, "morning in America." We will see morning again if we reinvigorate our policymaking with old values and new thinking.

I also recognize that right now, you're likely thinking more about where your office will be and who will staff it than who will chair committees next year. We've been through that wringer, too, and if my staff or I can be of assistance, please call me at 202-225-2002.

I am eager to start working with you in the new Republican Congress and look forward to seeing you the week of November 15th. Again, please accept my congratulations to you and your team. You won because you deserved to win, and because America wants us to succeed.

Sincerely,



Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Enclosure

Is Joe Barton the last of the red hot Reaganites?

8:38 AM 09/29/2010

ADVERTISEMENT

“Fear God

“Tell the truth

“Make a profit”

So reads the small, black-framed sign at the door of Joe Barton’s office, as if anybody passing that way needs to be reminded of what the Texas Republican is all about.

That includes the likes of U.S. Rep. John Dingell, the Michigan [Democrat](#) who spent half a lifetime running the House Energy and Commerce Committee and served as its ranking member under the markedly different and equally effective Barton chairmanship. Passage of Barton’s 2005 Energy Policy Act found the committee governed “in an open, decent and fair fashion,” Dingell admitted.

“Open, decent and fair” are the hallmarks of Barton’s career, and that signature energy bill serves as a fair introduction to the 60-year-old Ennis, Texas, native. Newly installed as chairman of the oldest committee on the Hill, he’d set out straightaway to reverse the rising dependence on foreign oil by making America’s ample energy available to American consumers. Barton said that his own starting point was as “a strong proponent of any kind of energy resource that can be market-competitive at some point in time.”

And when the bill became law, having turned rigid opponents like Dingell into supporters along the way, *The Dallas Morning News* reported it this way: “It couldn’t be done. It hadn’t been done. In the end, Joe Barton did it. After a year on the job as chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the Ennis Republican delivered a national energy plan — something Republicans have demanded for a decade. Something the president campaigned on, twice, that eluded the last chairman and that the energy industry has worked years to obtain.”

The reliably skeptical *Morning News* wondered how that had happened. “Nobody with any sense picks a fight,” Barton explained. “But nobody with any courage backs down from a fight just because you’re going to have to fight. What was it Davy Crockett said? Make sure you’re right,

then go ahead?’ By the end, lawmakers involved in negotiations praised Mr. Barton for running an unusually open process — no secret deals, no last-minute surprises.”

Joe Linus Barton arrived in [Congress](#) with the fresh face of a teenager and the hard experience of a veteran. He comes from old Texas stock. Bartons have lived and mostly farmed in Texas since it was a republic. He graduated from Texas A&M University with an engineering degree, and then earned a master’s in industrial administration from Purdue University. After a consultancy with Atlantic Richfield Oil & Gas Co. and a year spent learning the reality of Washington’s ways as a White House fellow working at the Energy Department, in 1984 he won the Republican nomination to the 6th District of Texas by 10 votes, then breezed through the general election. Since I won my first [election](#) for the House at the same time, I have been able to work with, watch, and appreciate Joe Barton as a “real deal” conservative Reagan Republican.

In 1985, the Reagan Revolution was just cresting, and in picking a Republican for only the second time in 100 years, voters of his district were picking a bright young man whose promise reflected a shining moment when optimism had supplanting malaise and everything seemed possible. It was morning again in America, and Barton earned quick notice from *National Journal* as one of the “Republicans to Watch.” The magazine dubbed him that again in 2003 when his achievements had prompted radical environmentalists to develop “a website, www.bartonwatch.org, to report on his moves.”

Freshman Rep. Barton came with a promise to his people that he’d work for less government and more freedom, and he was determined to make a mark by introducing real, long-term accountability to Congress’s free-spending ways. After several tries, and in a House led by Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., Barton came closer than any other member to dealing easy tax increases a death blow by requiring a two-thirds vote for approval. While Barton amassed 250 of the 293 votes needed for passage, even the powerful Gingrich was unable to sway those last holdouts.

I remember with fondness how the non-establishment freshman Joe Barton was initially the sole vote for Ronald Reagan’s balanced budget in 1985. The Republican House Leadership had advised [Republican](#) Members to vote “no” on the Reagan balanced budget, saying it was a trap set by Tip O’Neill. After ten minutes in a fifteen-minute vote, the vote was 350 against and 1 in favor — the one in favor was Joe Barton. Republican Leaders told him to change his vote, saying he would be a target of the Democratic Campaign Committee and could lose his seat. Barton said, “I came here to balance the federal budget and support President Reagan. I am voting yes.” With that, several of the Leaders switched their votes to vote with Joe. Later in the day, Barton was invited by [President Reagan](#) to share a private soft drink with himself and the First Lady. The President was grateful for the principled stand.

As a *Washington Post* analysis at the start of his committee chairmanship noted, “Liberal consumer and environmental groups view Barton as an adversary, but their comments reveal some respect for the new chairman. Said Gene Kimmelman, senior director for public policy at Consumers Union: “He’s not just suspicious of the government. He’s suspicious of corporate excess as well.”

In fact, it wasn't long before he called computer giant Hewlett-Packard's top executives to account after they launched a year-long secret campaign to finger someone leaking information on the company board. The excesses demonstrated just how far a determined opponent could go in digging through the private lives of innocent bystanders. Barton's probe showed how H-P had assigned private eyes and company security men to buy and examine the personal telephone records of employees. It also documented instances where the company's hirelings planted spyware on a journalist's computer and planned to place spies in a newsroom.

Barton made privacy a priority and when he called a hearing on spyware, as *National Journal* reported, "When lobbyists took their seats ... they thought they were in for a few hours of routine discussion. But the [lobbyists](#) soon realized they could toss out their scripts." Barton "came out with guns blazing. Barton vowed to pass tough legislation aimed at stopping the online collection of consumers' private information. And Barton chided Federal Trade Commission officials for not doing more..."

"We don't let people into our homes without permission," Barton told the hearing. "We don't let strangers come up to us and tell us what to buy. And when guests have overstayed their welcome, we tell them to leave. But none of those are things that we can do with spyware."

Telling truths, knowing what's right and going ahead, however, come at a price in Washington.

Barton paid it in spades in 2006 when then-NBC Chairman Bob Wright unleashed the now-disgraced New York shock jock Don Imus to wage war on Barton in an attempt to shake loose more taxpayer money for his personal cause, autism. Because Barton insisted on letting scientists instead of politicians decide which research projects deserved funding, he spent weeks hearing himself derided daily by Imus as a "dirtbag," "Republican dirtbag," "congressional dirtbag," "skunk," "dishonest skunk," "lyin' skunk," "lyin' weasel," "lyin' creep," "creep," "son of a bitch," "no good son of a bitch," "awful son of a bitch," "awful human being," "fat," "gutless," "jerk," "punk," "prick," "bastard," "sissyboy" and "a-hole."

The routine of a regular morning mugging on a wildly popular national radio program would wilt a lesser man. But Barton didn't collapse and, in the end, Wright departed NBC, Imus famously turned his insults on the Rutgers University women's basketball team, and the National Institutes of Health got to make its research decisions free of lobbyists, activists and politics.

It was also an effort in truth-telling that led Barton into the front rank of the opposition to the Bush administration's bailout for banks, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac with \$780 billion in taxpayers' money. After shooting down the plan on its first pass through the House, Barton explained that "it was so open-ended and we put so little accountability into it, they can basically do whatever they want to with the money."

The pressure had been on to do something — anything, really — so congressmen could head home on a Friday, but that ran into a Barton objection, too. "Just because God created the world in seven days doesn't mean we have to pass this bill in seven days," he said.

After the blank-check bill was rejected despite support by both Republican and Democratic leaders, backers added \$120 billion in “sweeteners” like mental health coverage and hurricane relief to buy more votes. But Barton’s wasn’t for sale. “The bill they are going to send back is the same bill that I voted against two days ago,” Barton predicted. “Why would I turn around and vote for it?”

The Troubled Asset Relief Program eventually passed in a fury of lobbying, sweetening and panicking, but over the adamant opposition of Barton and his corps of conservative stalwarts.

Barton seems to look ahead to the day when he and his corps of conservatives won’t be a minority within a minority in the House, and the Tea Party movement hasn’t gone unnoticed. “I’m a big-tent Republican, and the more people that come into our tent, even to browse, I say welcome. They are not Republican partisans; they are everyday people who are upset about the direction of their country. They don’t need to pick a party, but they need to take sides.” “I was Tea Party before it was cool,” Barton told a Texas town meeting in August.

If the Democratic juggernaut driven by President Obama continues to alienate Americans, conservatives like Barton may soon find themselves picked to be leaders in the majority of the majority in both the House and the nation. If that happens, they could all take a lesson from Barton’s innocuous little sign and his years of consistently loyal service to the foundation principles of constitutionally limited government.

You are a stubborn man, Joe Barton. But stubbornness in the cause of liberty is a virtue.

Dick Armey is a former House Majority Leader.

Read more: <http://dailycaller.com/2010/09/29/is-joe-barton-the-last-of-the-red-hot-reaganites/print/#ixzz14EJp46Kb>