



TOM COLE
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

November 10, 2006

Dear Colleague,

The most important election is not the last one -- its the next one.

We have just come through the fire. While many lessons about Tuesday's elections are worth pondering, one thing is clear. We need to act decisively -- starting right now - to restore our majority. It is obvious that this election was a difficult one, given the environment, but it would be naive to suggest that the next one won't be just as challenging. Everything is on the line in 2008--let's start working together now to illuminate the liberal agenda of a Democrat controlled Congress.

I am writing to ask for your vote to serve as the next NRCC Chairman when our Conference conducts leadership elections next week. If I am fortunate enough to earn your trust and the trust of our colleagues, I will focus relentlessly on winning seats and regaining our majority.

I believe I have the qualifications necessary to be the next NRCC Chairman including the vision, the national campaign experience and the passion to win.

Winning Seats

As Chairman, my focus will be to revise our strategy for the 2008 election, rebuild and reenergize the NRCC as an organization and increase Member involvement in every phase of the committee's activities. We must develop innovative ways to meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities associated with 527s, the internet, new communications technologies and the expanding range of non-party political operatives and actors that confront our Members and challengers.

The 2008 campaign will, by definition, be a national election in which we choose a new president and confront the new Democratic majority in the House for the first time. There will be millions of new voters at the polls that did not participate in the 2006 elections and dozens of Democratic incumbents sitting in districts our party carried in 2000 and 2004. Those incumbents, unlike their predecessors, will have to defend the record of the Democratic Congress and will have to do so in districts that the 2008 GOP nominee is likely to carry. That is a strategic advantage that we have not had since 1992 and 1994 -- years in which we picked up over 60 seats.

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As NRCC Chairman I intend to work aggressively to expand the political playing field. We will not play defense. We will go on offense against the Democrats in every way possible and at every available opportunity.

The idea that there are only three dozen competitive congressional districts in America is a myth. If we accept it, we doom ourselves to playing on a constricted battlefield that will benefit the incumbent majority party. Both parties have made that mistake in recent elections. We will not make it in 2008. The key to solving this problem is to recruit as many qualified candidates as possible. 2008 will be a year to hunt with a shotgun, not a rifle.

Running the NRCC

As a former staffer and consultant, I know that professionalism, technical proficiency and broad campaign experience are indispensable in a good political organization. However, like every other organization associated with our Conference, the NRCC must be a Member driven organization to succeed.

I intend to make it one. I have been a Member, a staffer and a consultant. I know the roles that each should play. Members are more than the front man and the fundraisers for the NRCC. They must set the strategy, recruit the challengers, assist their colleagues and make the final decisions. Each of us is in the arena and all of us care more about our survival and success than anyone beyond our ranks. The NRCC should reflect that reality in its outlook and operation every single day.

My Qualifications

The strategy, philosophy and operating techniques I have outlined are demanding. You have every right to ask whether I have the skill set, the experience and the passion to successfully pursue and implement them. Good intentions are no substitute for proven success. As you make your decision, I would ask you to consider the following in terms of my track record and potential to succeed as your NRCC Chairman.

I have spent my adult life running political organizations and winning political campaigns. In my home state of Oklahoma, I have been the State Chairman and Executive Director of the State GOP. My partners and I built a national consulting firm that has fought and won campaigns in every region of the country and has been regarded as one of the best in the business. Also in Oklahoma, I served as both a State Senator and Oklahoma's first-ever Republican Secretary of State.

I have run three national political organizations -- all of them successfully.

- **NRCC Executive Director, 1991-1993.** We picked up ten seats in a year that our incumbent President lost the White House. That had not been done since 1892.
- **RNC Chief of Staff, 1999-2001.** We won the Presidency, the Senate and the House for the first time in 48 years.
- **Senior Political Adviser to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute of Legal Reform, 2001-2002.** We were successful in 24 of 25 political campaigns that impacted elected officials involved in the judicial system.

In each of these efforts I helped design the strategy, direct the operation, coordinate with allied groups and assemble the resources needed for success. My thirty years of campaign and national political activity has given me a network of political friends, contacts and relationships in virtually every single state in America. I know the national press corps and the pundits. I do not have to prove myself or establish my credentials or contacts with these key players. I can work with them or make our case to them from day one.

Helping the Team

Since I was first elected to Congress I have worked hard on behalf of our team. I have led my class in fundraising for other candidates and for the NRCC every year of my tenure. I've been privileged to serve on the NRCC Executive Committee and, in the last cycle, I coordinated our GOTV efforts with the NRCC.

In terms of fundraising, I raised over \$2 million for our GOP team in the 2006 election cycle. This included direct contributions from my leadership PAC and campaign and money raised from third parties and given to 122 members and 34 challengers and open seat candidates. This is on top of the \$640,000 I raised for our GOP team as a freshman in the 2004 cycle.

But it takes more than money to win campaigns. I produced a series of political strategy memos, distributed publicly available polling data and conducted informational conference calls open to all members and candidates with key GOP operatives. These are the kind of services and activities that I believe ought to be available to Members and candidates on a regular basis. The NRCC must be open, accessible and useful to all Members in multiple ways not just to Members in tough races. If the NRCC is to help our endangered Members and capitalize on our opportunities it must engage all our Members on a regular basis.

I look forward to talking to you in the coming days to learn about what you want to see from the NRCC over the next two years. Our situation demands that we be open to new ideas, a fresh approach and a focused yet flexible attitude to recapture the majority. I intend to be both inclusive and decisive in moving forward

I hope to be fortunate enough to earn your vote and your trust. Regardless of your decision, I want you to know I consider it an honor to serve with you at this historic moment for our country and our party in Congress. I am always available to meet with you and talk with you--and I will be after the election as well, during the course of this campaign.

Thanks for your service, your dedication to our team and for your friendship.

Sincerely,

Tom Cole