

Widgets, Principles and Republicans

By: Daniel Webster, 1st Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives in Florida and current Congressman from the 10th District of Florida

If a widget maker produced flawed widgets, the owners could choose to make significant alterations by offering additional colors, new packaging, and special pricing. They also could employ new marketing techniques like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Although well intentioned, none of these improvements will fix the flawed product. It is the process by which the widgets are made that is flawed.

If the process is flawed, the product will be flawed. The only way to improve the product is to fix the process.

By his own admission, the midterm election was a referendum on the President's policies, and those policies received a strong rebuke. The American people have made their voices heard.

Does that mean that, by default, the Republicans are the answer? No; that verdict is still out.

Republican leaders from Washington and across the country have said that our GOP brand is tarnished and must be fixed. Low public approval of Congress speaks clearly of a flawed process.

The only way to improve the GOP brand and make good public policy is to fix the process.

Republicans now own the Congress and must change the way they lead. Not just a change in packaging and marketing, but a different process – one that is focused on principle, not on power. We only have one opportunity to prove we can lead. **Our opportunity is now.**

A pyramid of power in a legislative body always works the same. A few people at the top of the pyramid make most of the decisions with the bulk of the members at the bottom – unless needed. A legislative body that is founded on principle pushes down this pyramid of power and spreads out the base so every elected member becomes a player.

Power and principle cannot coexist.

Power focuses on self-preservation; principle focuses on making ideas successful. Power tends to protect itself merely to maintain its own status and control. Principle gives up power for the sake of the highest good and to create the best public policy.

Power demands to be heard; principle earns the right to be heard.

Power focuses on rights; principles focus on responsibility.

One of the most significant contrasts between power and principle is how it treats policy. Power tends to view an idea based on the position, loyalty, rank, or seniority of the sponsor. Principle focuses solely on the merits of the idea itself.

The Republicans have a choice. This is it. This is our moment. We only have one opportunity to make a first impression.

Flawed widgets or solid principles; which will it be?