The New Congress for the American Association for the Advancement of Science

Conducted By

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The New Congress for the American Association for the Advancement of Science
Agenda

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

8:00 - 8:30 am  Continental Breakfast

8:30 - 9:30 am  The Current Congress
Mark Harkins, Senior Fellow, Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University

9:30 - 9:45 am  Break

9:45 - 10:45 am  Leadership in the United States Senate
Niels Lesniewski, Staff Writer, Roll Call

10:45 - 11:00 am  Break

11:00 - 12:00 pm  The Obama Administration and Congress
Alexis Simendinger, White House Correspondent, RealClearPolitics.com

12:00 - 12:45 pm  Lunch

12:45 - 1:45 pm  Leadership in the 114th Congress
Steve Stombres, Founding Partner, Harbinger Strategies and Former Chief of Staff, Former Majority Leader Eric Cantor

1:45 - 2:00 pm  Break

2:00 - 3:00 pm  The Chairman's Perspective on Issues Before the 111th Congress
The Honorable Robert S. Walker (R), Former Representative State of Pennsylvania - 16th District, U.S. House of Representatives and Chairman, Wexler & Walker

3:00 - 3:15 pm  Break

3:15 - 4:15 pm  The Budget Dilemma
Mark Harkins

4:15 - 4:30 pm  Wrap-up and Evaluation
Speaker Bios

**Mark B. Harkins** joined the Government Affairs Institute as a Senior Fellow in 2013. Prior to joining GAI, Mark was a senior public policy advisor at a number of law firms where he focused on the representation of corporate, nonprofit and government clients before Congress and the Executive Branch. He has extensive experience with the federal appropriations and budgeting process, as well as issues handled by the Financial Services, Science, Ways and Means, and Homeland Security Committees.

Mark came to the Hill in 1989 and worked for two Members of Congress and one Committee before taking the position of Senior Legislative Assistant to Representative David Price (D-NC), where his portfolio included appropriations. His next assignment was as Legislative Director for the Democrats to the House Science Committee. Ultimately, he served as Chief of Staff for Brad Miller (D-NC).

Prior to working on Capitol Hill, he worked as the Sports Information Director at Swarthmore College where he also received his BA Degree in Economics. He was once a co-owner of one of the largest fantasy sports statistics service in the United States.

**Niels Lesniewski** covers the Senate for Roll Call. He joined what is now CQ Roll Call in September 2007, hired by Roll Call for the GalleryWatch legislative tracking service that was integrated into CQ in 2009. He is known for his expertise on the peculiarities of Senate procedure.

Niels began covering the Senate for CQ in January 2010, taking the title of CQ SenateWatch editor in the summer of 2011. He has contributed to coverage of all the biggest policy stories on Capitol Hill in recent years, including the response to the 2008 financial collapse, the health care overhaul and several budget standoffs.

A Connecticut native, Niels graduated from Hamilton College in New York with a dual degree in theatre and government. Before joining CQ Roll Call, he worked for theater productions in D.C. and New England. While in college, he interned for ABC’s "This Week with George Stephanopoulos." Outside of work, Niels is an avid sports fan. He started attending Nationals games back when the team was among the worst in the National League and still playing at RFK Stadium.
Alexis Simendinger, a native of Washington, DC, has been a reporter in the capital since 1986.

She joined RealClearPolitics.com as its White House Correspondent in May 2011, shortly after completing a six-month investigative project with the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission to help write the best-selling official account of the 2008 financial meltdown, published early in 2011. Previously, she was National Journal’s Senate correspondent and also covered national affairs during the 2008 election cycle. Prior to that, she spent 15 years writing about the administrations of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, as White House correspondent for National Journal.

In 2008, Alexis won the White House Correspondents’ Association’s Aldo Beckman journalism award for sustained excellence in White House coverage, for articles she wrote in 2007, including revelations about White House use of RNC e-mails in violation of the law. Congress and the White House eventually engaged in a constitutional face-off over that issue. (President Bush, with a smile and a handshake, handed Alexis her award.)

Alexis joined National Journal—a nonpartisan magazine known for its in-depth coverage of U.S. politics and government in 1997, moving to the respected weekly from news and information publisher BNA (the Bureau of National Affairs Inc.), where she covered the White House, Congress, various executive branch departments, and the Supreme Court. She also spent three years of her early reporting career at The Tampa Tribune in Tampa, Fla.

She earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and her B.A. from New College in Sarasota, Fla. She has discussed national politics, the Bush, Clinton and Obama presidencies, and the White House as a guest on a variety of television and radio outlets, including PBS’ Washington Week program.

Steve Stombres was previously the second highest ranking staff member in the House of Representatives with a diverse career of service on Capitol Hill, in the military, and as an elected official. He has extensive relationships with Members of Congress, White House staff, senior Congressional aides, and key private sector leaders.

During his tenure as Chief of Staff to House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Mr. Stombres successfully executed a multi-faceted legislative, communications, coalitions, and grass roots plan for the passage of every major bill including the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, the JOBS Act, the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act, the STOCK ACT, the Skills Act, and the Working Families Flexibility Act.

He also negotiated a compromise with the White House, Senate leadership, and House Republicans to resolve the “Debt Limit Stand-off” of 2011, settle the “Fiscal Cliff Crisis” of 2012, and end the “Government Shutdown” of 2013. Mr. Stombres’ role in the 2011 debt limit discussions were described in detail in Bob Woodward’s best-selling book, The Price of Politics. During the 111th Congress, Mr. Stombres served as Chief of Staff for the Office of the
Republican Whip and led the effort to develop and execute a strategy to regain the majority in the House of Representatives by offering substantive alternatives to major White House initiatives including the Affordable Care Act and the Economic Stimulus plan. He oversaw the creation of the House Republican Economic Recovery Working Group, which produced pro-growth tax and economic policies to combat the recession and create jobs.

Mr. Stombres previously served as Chief of Staff for the Chief Deputy Whip. He played a critical role in the passage of important legislation such as the American Jobs Creation Act, the Medicare Modernization Act, and the Central American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. Mr. Stombres also served as the Legislative Director for National Security Affairs for Congressman Herbert H. Bateman and as the Chairman’s designee to the Subcommittee on Readiness of the House Armed Services Committee. Stombres has also worked as a Legislative Assistant for Congressman Robert S. Walker and Congressman Elton Gallegly where he was responsible for defense, foreign affairs, financial services, taxes, trade, and intellectual property protection. He began his career in the House of Representatives working as a Staff Assistant for the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Mr. Stombres has appeared on Roll Call’s “Fabulous Fifty” list of the most influential staffers on the Hill for over ten years. He was described by the New York Times as “one of the most powerful Republican aides on Capitol Hill” and was listed as one of 10 staffers to watch by the Washington Post. Mr. Stombres was also included on the list of the 35 most influential aides on Capitol Hill by The Hill newspaper. He has a specific expertise on taxes, trade, financial services, and national security issues.

Mr. Stombres enlisted in the United States Army Reserve in 1987 and is a 1995 graduate of Officer Candidate School. Upon receiving his commission, he served as an intelligence officer and was assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency. In 2003, Mr. Stombres was mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff as an Iraq Analyst for the Iraq Intelligence Task Force. He retired from the Army Reserve in 2009 after a twenty-one year career in military intelligence.

Mr. Stombres was elected to the Fairfax City Council in 2008 and retired from the City Council in 2014 after three terms in office. Mr. Stombres graduated in 1993 from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and holds a B.A. in History. He and his wife Kristen, and their children Katherine, Elaine, and James currently reside in Fairfax, Virginia.
Wexler | Walker Executive Chairman, **Bob Walker**, brings nearly five decades of legislative and executive experience to client relationships. In his thirty years on Capitol Hill he served as a congressional aide, as Pennsylvania’s 16th District Congressman, as a committee chairman, as a legislative strategist and parliamentarian and as a key member of the Republican leadership.

After retiring from Congress and joining Wexler | Walker, he was chosen to participate on three Presidential commissions, heading one as its Chairman. It is Bob’s insight gained from that wide-ranging background that gives his clients a unique asset.

Wexler | Walker clients have direct access to Bob’s depth of experience. While he specializes in issues that stem from his chairmanship of the Science, Space and Technology Committee, his leadership and parliamentary expertise help guide all of the firm’s clients toward successful outcomes. Walker knows how the process works and can help develop strategies and policies that are especially tailored for success. Moreover, he then is willing to implement those strategies and policies by making the case on Capitol Hill and in the executive departments and agencies. A major space publication, Space News, attested to his effectiveness saying, “One of Washington’s most influential lobbyists” whose “stature and influence have only grown since leaving Congress.”

Frequently, Walker is invited to speak to national and global forums. He is a regular media commentator on national and international affairs and lectures at prominent educational venues such as the Brookings Institution and the Government Affairs Institute. Walker is a trusted advisor to several of the key leaders on Capitol Hill and is frequently invited to private meetings where policy and strategy are discussed and determined.

Congressman Walker holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from Millersville University where the Walker Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership is located. He also has a Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Delaware and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Franklin and Marshall College.

He remains a resident of the 16th District in Pennsylvania where he resides in Lititz with his wife Barbara.