The Role of the House Minority Leader: An Overview

Walter J. Oleszek
Senior Specialist in American National Government

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Summary

The House minority leader is head of the "loyal opposition." The party's nominee for Speaker, the minority leader is elected every two years by secret ballot of his or her party caucus or conference. The minority leader's responsibilities involve an array of duties. Fundamentally, the primary goal of the minority leader is to recapture majority control of the House. In addition, the minority leader performs important institutional and party functions.

From an institutional perspective, the rules of the House assign a number of specific responsibilities to the minority leader. For example, Rule XIII, clause 6, grants the minority leader (or his designee) the right to offer a motion to recommit with instructions; and Rule II, clause 6, states that the Inspector General shall be appointed by joint recommendation of the Speaker, majority leader, and minority leader. The minority leader also has other institutional duties, such as appointing individuals to certain federal or congressional entities.

From a party perspective, the minority leader has a wide range of partisan assignments, all geared toward retaking majority control of the House. Five principal party activities direct the work of the minority leader. First, he or she provides campaign assistance to party incumbents and challengers. Second, the minority leader devises strategies, in consultation with other partisan colleagues, that advance party objectives. For example, by stalling action on the majority party's agenda, the minority leader may be able to launch a campaign against a "do-nothing Congress." Third, the minority leader works to promote and publicize the party's agenda. Fourth, the minority leader, if his or her party controls the White House, confers regularly with the President and his aides about issues before Congress, the Administration's agenda, and political events generally. Fifth, the minority leader strives to promote party harmony so as to maximize the chances for legislative and political success.

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Introduction

The minority leader of the modern House is the head of the "loyal opposition." The party's nominee for Speaker at the start of a new Congress, the minority leader traditionally hands the gavel to the Speaker-elect, who is nearly always elected on a straight party-line vote. The speakership election spotlights the main problem that confronts the minority leader: the subordinate status of his or her party in an institution noted for majority rule. The House, said a Democratic leader at a time when his party was in the majority, "operates under the principle that a determined majority should be allowed to work its will while protecting the rights of the minority to be heard."[1] Minority party lawmakers are certain to be heard, but whether they will be heeded is sometimes another matter. Thus, the uppermost goal of any minority leader is to recapture majority control of the House.

The minority leader is elected every two years by secret ballot of his or her party caucus or conference. These party leaders are typically experienced lawmakers when they win election to this position. When Nancy Pelosi, D-CA, became minority leader in the 108th Congress, she had served in the House nearly 20 years and had served as minority whip in the 107th Congress. When her predecessor, Richard Gephardt, D-MO, became minority leader in the 104th House, he had been in the House for almost 20 years, had served as chairman of the Democratic Caucus for four years, had been a 1988 presidential candidate, and had been majority leader from June 1989 until Republicans captured control of the House in the November 1994 elections. Gephardt's predecessor in the minority leadership position was Robert Michel, R-IL, who became GOP leader in 1981 after spending 24 years in the House. Michel's predecessor, Republican John Rhodes of Arizona, was elected minority leader in 1973 after 20 years of House service. The minority leader of today's 111th Congress, John Boehner of Ohio, began his House career after winning his seat in the November 1990 elections.

The roles and responsibilities of the minority leader are not well-defined. To a large extent, the functions of the minority leader are defined by tradition and custom. A minority leader from 1931 to 1939, Representative Bertrand Snell, R-N.Y., provided this "job description": "He is spokesman for his party and enunciates its policies. He is required to be alert and vigilant in defense of the minority's rights. It is his function and duty to criticize constructively the policies and programs of the majority, and to this end employ parliamentary tactics and give close attention to all proposed legislation."[2]

Since Snell's description, other responsibilities have been added to the job. These duties involve an array of institutional and party functions. Before examining the institutional and party assignments of the minority leader, it is worth highlighting the historical origin of this position.

Origin of the Minority Leader's Post

To a large extent, the minority leader's position is a 20th century innovation. Prior to this time congressional parties were often relatively disorganized, so it was not always evident who functioned as the opposition floor leader. Decades went by before anything like our modern two-

[1] *Congressional Record*, Sept. 16, 1982, p. H7097.

[2] Quoted in Floyd M. Riddick, *Congressional Procedure* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1941), p. 346.

party congressional system emerged on Capitol Hill with official titles for those who were its official leaders. However, from the beginning days of Congress, various House members intermittently assumed the role of "opposition leader." Some scholars suggest that Representative James Madison of Virginia informally functioned as the first "minority leader" because in the First Congress he led the opposition to Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's fiscal policies.[3]

During this early period, it was more usual that neither major party grouping (Federalists and Republicans) had an official leader. In 1813, for instance, a scholar recounts that the Federalist minority of 36 Members needed a committee of 13 "to represent a party comprising a distinct minority" and "to coordinate the actions of men who were already partisans in the same cause."[4] In 1828, a foreign observer of the House offered this perspective on the absence of formal party leadership on Capitol Hill:

> I found there were absolutely no persons holding the stations of what are called, in England, Leaders, on either side of the House.... It is true, that certain members do take charge of administration questions, and certain others of opposition questions; but all this so obviously without concert among themselves, actual or tacit, that nothing can be conceived less systematic or more completely desultory, disjointed.[5]

Internal party disunity compounded the difficulty of identifying lawmakers who might have informally functioned as a minority leader. For instance, "seven of the fourteen speakership elections from 1834 through 1859 had at least twenty different candidates in the field. Thirty-six competed in 1839, ninety-seven in 1849, ninety-one in 1859, and 138 in 1855."[6] With so many candidates competing for the speakership, it is not at all clear that one of the defeated lawmakers then assumed the mantle of "minority leader." The Democratic minority from 1861 to 1875 was so completely disorganized that they did not "nominate a candidate for Speaker in two of these seven Congresses and nominated no man more than once in the other five. The defeated candidates were not automatically looked to for leadership."[7]

In the judgment of a political scientist, since 1883 "the candidate for Speaker nominated by the minority party has clearly been the Minority Leader."[8] However, this assertion is subject to dispute. On December 3, 1883, the House elected Democrat John G. Carlisle of Kentucky as Speaker. Republicans placed in nomination for the speakership J. Warren Keifer of Ohio, who was Speaker the previous Congress.[9] Clearly, Keifer was not the Republicans' minority leader. He was a discredited leader in part because as Speaker he arbitrarily handed out "choice jobs to close relatives ... all at handsome salaries."[10] Keifer received "the empty honor of the minority nomination. But with it came a sting—for while this naturally involves the floor leadership, he was deserted by his [partisan] associates and his career as a national figure terminated

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[3] See Garrison Nelson, "Leadership Position-Holding in the United States House of Representatives," *Capitol Studies*, Fall 1976, p. 17.

[4] James Sterling Young, *The Washington Community, 1800-1828* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966), pp. 135-136.

[5] Ibid., p. 137.

[6] Nelson, "Leadership Position-Holding in the United States House of Representatives," p. 18.

[7] Randall B. Ripley, *Party Leaders in the House of Representatives*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1967), p. 28n.

[8] Ibid., p. 28.

[9] *Congressional Record*, Dec. 3, 1883, pp. 4-5.

[10] Neil McNeil, *Forge of Democracy: The House of Representatives* (New York: David McKay Co., 1963), p. 70.

ingloriously."[11] Representative Thomas Reed, R-ME, who later became Speaker, assumed the *de facto* role of minority floor leader in Keifer's stead. "[A]lthough Keifer was the minority's candidate for Speaker, Reed became its acknowledged leader, and ever after, so long as he served in the House, remained the most conspicuous member of his party."[12]

Another scholar contends that the minority leader position emerged even before 1883. On the Democratic side, "there were serious caucus fights for the minority speakership nomination in 1871 and 1873," indicating that the "nomination carried with it some vestige of leadership."[13] Further, when Republicans were in the minority, the party nominated for Speaker a series of prominent lawmakers, including ex-Speaker James Blaine of Maine in 1875, former Appropriations Chairman James Garfield of Ohio, in 1876, 1877, and 1879, and ex-Speaker Keifer in 1883. "It is hard to believe that House partisans would place a man in the speakership when in the majority, and nominate him for this office when in the minority, and not look to him for legislative guidance."[14] This was not the case, as noted earlier, with respect to ex-Speaker Keifer.

In brief, there is disagreement among historical analysts as to the exact time period when the minority leadership emerged officially as a party position. Nonetheless, it seems safe to conclude that the position emerged during the latter part of the 19th century, a period of strong party organization and professional politicians. This era was "marked by strong partisan attachments, resilient patronage-based party organizations, and ... high levels of party voting in Congress."[15] Plainly, these were conditions conducive to the establishment of a more highly differentiated House leadership structure.[16] (See **Appendix** for a listing of House minority leaders, 1899-2009.)

Two other points of historical interest merit brief mention. First, until the 61st Congress (1909-1910), "it was the custom to have the minority leader also serve as the ranking minority member on the two most powerful committees, Rules and Ways and Means."[17] Today, the minority leader no longer serves on these committees; however, he or she appoints the minority members of the Rules Committee and influences the assignment of partisan colleagues to the Ways and Means Committee. Second, Democrats have always elevated their minority floor leader to the speakership upon reclaiming majority status. Republicans have not always followed this leadership succession pattern. In 1919, for instance, Republicans bypassed James R. Mann, R-IL, who had been minority leader for eight years, and elected Frederick Gillett, R-MA, to be Speaker. Mann "had angered many Republicans by objecting to their private bills on the floor;" plus, he was a protégé of autocratic Speaker Joseph Cannon, R-IL (1903-1911), and many Members "suspected that he would try to recentralize power in his hands if elected Speaker."[18]

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[11] Herbert Bruce Fuller, *The Speakers of the House* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1909), p. 208.

[12] DeAlva Stanwood Alexander, *History and Procedure of the House of Representatives* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), p. 131.

[13] Nelson, "Leadership Position-Holding in the United States House of Representatives," p. 19.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Randall Strahan, "Thomas Brackett Reed and the Rise of Party Government," in Roger Davidson, et al., eds., *Masters of the House* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), p. 36.

[16] See Nelson Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives," *American Political Science Review*, Sept. 1968, pp. 144-168.

[17] Charles O. Jones, *The Minority Party in Congress* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), p. 31.

[18] Ripley, *Party Leaders in the House of Representatives*, pp. 98-99.

Institutional Functions

The style and role of any minority leader is influenced by a variety of elements, including personality and contextual factors, such as the size and cohesion of the minority party, whether his or her party controls the White House, the general political climate in the House, and the controversy that is sometimes associated with the legislative agenda. Despite the variability of these factors, there are a number of institutional obligations associated with this position. Many of these assignments or roles are spelled out in the House rule book. Others have devolved upon the position in other ways. To be sure, the minority leader is provided with extra staff resources—beyond those accorded him or her as a Representative—to assist in carrying out diverse leadership functions. Worth emphasis is that there are limits on the institutional role of the minority leader, because the majority party exercises disproportionate influence over the agenda, partisan ratios on committees, staff resources, administrative operations, and the day-to-day schedule and management of floor activities.

Under the rules of the House, the minority leader has certain roles and responsibilities. They include, among others, the following:

Drug Testing

Under Rule I, clause 9, the "Speaker, in consultation with the Minority Leader, shall develop through an appropriate entity of the House a system for drug testing in the House."

Inspector General

Rule II, clause 6, states that the "Inspector General shall be appointed for a Congress by the Speaker, the Majority Leader, and the Minority Leader, acting jointly." This rule further states that the minority leader and other specified House leaders shall be notified of any financial irregularity involving the House and receive audit reports of the inspector general.

Questions of Privilege

Under Rule IX, clause 2, a resolution "offered as a question of privilege by the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader ... shall have precedence of all other questions except motions to adjourn." This rule further references the minority leader with respect to the division of time for debate of these resolutions.

Oversight Plans

Under Rule X, clause 2, not later "than March 31 in the first session of a Congress, after consultation with the Speaker, the Majority Leader, and the Minority Leader, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform shall report to the House the oversight plans" of the standing committees along with any recommendations it or the House leaders have proposed to ensure the effective coordination of committees' oversight plans.

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct: Investigative Subcommittees

Rule X, clause 5, stipulates: "At the beginning of a Congress, the Speaker or his designee and the Minority Leader or his designee each shall appoint 10 Members, Delegates, or Resident Commissioners from his respective party who are not members of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to be available to serve on investigative subcommittees of that committee during that Congress."

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

"The Speaker and Minority Leader shall be ex officio members of the select committee but shall have no vote in the select committee and may not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum thereof." In addition, each leader "may designate a member of his leadership staff to assist him in his capacity as ex officio member." (Rule X, clause 11).

Motion to Recommit with Instructions

Under Rule XIII, clause 6, the Rules Committee may not (except in certain specified circumstances) issue a "rule" that prevents the minority leader or a designee from offering a motion to recommit with instructions.

In addition, the minority leader has a number of other institutional functions. For instance, the minority leader is sometimes statutorily authorized to appoint individuals to certain federal entities;[19] he or she and the majority leader each name three Members to serve as Private Calendar objectors; he or she is consulted with respect to reconvening the House per the usual formulation of conditional concurrent adjournment resolutions; he or she is a traditional member of the House Office Building Commission; he or she is a member of the United States Capitol Preservation Commission; and he or she may, after consultation with the Speaker, convene an early organizational party caucus or conference. Informally, the minority leader maintains ties with majority party leaders to learn about the schedule and other House matters and forges agreements or understandings with them insofar as feasible.

Party Functions

The minority leader has a number of formal and informal party responsibilities. Formally, the rules of each party specify certain roles and responsibilities for their leader. For example, under Republican Conference rules for the 111th Congress, the minority leader "may designate certain issues as 'Leadership Issues.' Those issues will require early and ongoing cooperation between the relevant committees and the Leadership as those issues evolve." GOP Conference meetings

[19] For example, the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-343) created a "Congressional Oversight Panel" to oversee the administration of the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP)—the $700 billion program to address the nation's financial crisis that began in the housing industry. The minority leader has exclusive authority to name one of the five members to the Panel. Worth mention is that the House, by resolution (H.Res. 895), created an Office of Congressional Ethics on March 11, 2008. The Speaker and minority leader are each authorized to name—subject to the approval of the other party leader—three private citizens (plus an alternate) to the six-member ethics board. The board may initiate investigations or refer ethics matters to the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

"may be called at any time by the chair of the Conference," after consultation with the minority leader. The minority leader, or a designee, "may present any resolution to the Conference for its immediate consideration." The minority leader nominates party members to the Committee on Rules and the House Administration Committee, subject to Conference approval. The GOP leader is a member of the party's Policy Committee and the National Republican Congressional Committee. As a final example, the minority leader exercises "supervisory authority over all Republican employees of the House of Representatives, and direct authority over the Republican Floor Assistants and Republican Conference."

Informally, the minority leader has a wide range of party assignments. Lewis Deschler, the late House Parliamentarian (1928-1974), summarized the diverse duties of a party's floor leader:

> A party's floor leader, in conjunction with other party leaders, plays an influential role in the formulation of party policy and programs. He is instrumental in guiding legislation favored by his party through the House, or in resisting those programs of the other party that are considered undesirable by his own party. He is instrumental in devising and implementing his party's strategy on the floor with respect to promoting or opposing legislation. He is kept constantly informed as to the status of legislative business and as to the sentiment of his party respecting particular legislation under consideration. Such information is derived in part from the floor leader's contacts with his party's members serving on House committees, and with the members of the party's whip organization.[20]

These and several other party roles merit further mention because they influence significantly the leader's overarching objective: retake majority control of the House. "I want to get [my] members elected and win more seats," said Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-MO. "That's what [my partisan colleagues] want to do, and that's what they want me to do."[21] Five activities illustrate how minority leaders seek to accomplish this primary goal.

Provide Campaign Assistance

Minority leaders are typically energetic and aggressive campaigners for partisan incumbents and challengers. There is hardly any major aspect of campaigning that does not engage their attention. For example, they assist in recruiting qualified candidates; they establish "leadership PACs" to raise and distribute funds to House candidates of their party; they try to persuade partisan colleagues not to retire or run for other offices so as to hold down the number of open seats the party would need to defend; they coordinate their campaign activities with congressional and national party campaign committees; they encourage outside groups to back their candidates; they travel around the country to speak on behalf of party candidates; and they encourage incumbent colleagues to make significant financial contributions to the party's campaign committee.

Devise Minority Party Strategies

The minority leader, in consultation with other party colleagues, has a range of strategic options that he or she can employ to advance minority party objectives. The options selected depend on a

[20] Lewis Deschler, *Deschler's Precedents of the United States House of Representatives*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), pp. 211-212.

[21] Guy Gugliotta, "For Minority Leader, A Matter of Consensus; Inquiry Vote Tests Gephardt's Skills," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 1998, p. A18.

wide range of circumstances, such as the visibility or significance of the issue and the degree of cohesion within the majority party. For instance, a majority party riven by internal dissension, as occurred during the early 1900s when Progressive and "regular" Republicans were at loggerheads, may provide the minority leader with greater opportunities to achieve his or her priorities than if the majority party exhibited high degrees of party cohesion. Among the variable strategies available to the minority party, which can vary from bill to bill and be used in combination or at different stages of the lawmaking process, are the following:

Cooperation. The minority party supports and cooperates with the majority party in building winning coalitions on the floor.

Inconsequential Opposition. The minority party offers opposition, but it is of marginal significance, typically because the minority is so small.

Withdrawal. The minority party chooses not to take a position on an issue, perhaps because of intraparty divisions.

Innovation. The minority party develops alternatives and agendas of its own and attempts to construct winning coalitions on their behalf.

Partisan Opposition. The minority party offers strong opposition to majority party initiatives, but does not counter with policy alternatives of their own.

Constructive Opposition. The minority party opposes initiatives of the majority party, and offers its own proposals as substitutes.

Participation. The minority party is in the position of having to consider the views and proposals of their president and to assess their majority-building role with respect to his priorities.[22]

A look at one minority leadership strategy—partisan opposition—may suggest why it might be employed in specific circumstances. The purposes of obstruction are several, such as frustrating the majority party's ability to govern or attracting press and media attention to the alleged ineffectiveness of the majority party. "We know how to delay," remarked Minority Leader Gephardt.[23] Dilatory motions to adjourn, appeals of the presiding officer's ruling, or numerous requests for roll call votes are standard time-consuming parliamentary tactics. By stalling action on the majority party's agenda, the minority leader may be able to launch a campaign against a "do-nothing Congress" and convince enough voters to put his party back in charge of the House. To be sure, the minority leader recognizes that "going negative" carries risks and may not be a winning strategy if his party fails to offer policy alternatives that appeal to broad segments of the general public.

Promote and Publicize the Party's Agenda

An important aim of the minority leader is to develop an electorally attractive agenda of ideas and proposals that unites his or her own House members and that energizes and appeals to core

[22] These strategic options have been modified to a degree and come from Jones, *The Minority Party in Congress*, p. 20.

[23] Jennifer Babson, "Democrats Refine the Tactics of Minority Party Power," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, July 15, 1995, p. 2037.

electoral supporters as well as independents and swing voters. Despite the minority leader's restricted ability to set the House's agenda, there are still opportunities for him to raise minority priorities. For example, the minority leader may employ, or threaten to use, discharge petitions to try and bring minority priorities to the floor.[24] If he or she is able to attract the required 218 signatures on a discharge petition by attracting majority party supporters, he or she can force minority initiatives to the floor over the opposition of the majority leadership. As a GOP minority leader once said, the challenges he confronted are to "keep our people together, and to look for votes on the other side."[25]

Minority leaders may engage in numerous activities to publicize their party's priorities and to criticize the opposition's. For instance, to keep their party colleagues "on message," they insure that partisan colleagues are sent packets of suggested press releases or "talking points" for constituent meetings in their districts; they help to organize "town meetings" in Members' districts around the country to publicize the party's agenda or a specific priority, such as health care or education; they sponsor party "retreats" to discuss issues and assess the party's public image; they create "theme teams" to craft party messages that might be raised during the one-minute, morning hour, or special order period in the House; they conduct surveys of party colleagues to discern their policy preferences; they establish Web sites that highlight and distribute party images and issues to users; they organize task forces or issue teams to formulate party programs and to develop strategies for communicating these programs to the public; and they appear on various media programs or write newspaper articles to win public support for the party's priorities.

House minority leaders also hold joint news conferences with party colleagues and consult with their counterparts in the Senate. The overall objectives are to develop a coordinated communications strategy, to share ideas and information, and to present a united front on issues. Minority leaders also make floor speeches and close debate on major issues before the House; they deliver addresses in diverse forums across the country; and they write books or articles that highlight minority party goals and achievements. They must also be prepared "to debate on the floor, *ad lib*, no notes, on a moment's notice," remarked Minority Leader Michel.[26] In brief, minority leaders are key strategists in developing and promoting the party's agenda and in outlining ways to neutralize the opposition's arguments and proposals.

Confer With the White House

If his or her party controls the White House, the minority leader confers regularly with the President and his aides about issues before the Congress, the Administration's agenda, and political events generally. Strategically, the role of the minority leader will vary depending on whether the President is of the same party or the other party. In general, minority leaders will often work to advance the goals and aspirations of their party's President in Congress. When Robert Michel, R-IL, was minority leader (1981-1995), he typically functioned as the "point man" for Republican presidents.[27] President Ronald Reagan's 1981 policy successes in the Democratic controlled House was due in no small measure to Minority Leader Michel's

[24] Ethan Wallison, "Gephardt Plans Petition Strategy," *Roll Call*, May 17, 1999, p. 1.

[25] Irwin Arieff, "Inside Congress," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, Feb. 28, 1981, p. 379.

[26] *Congressional Record*, Sept. 12, 1989, p. E3000.

[27] William F. Connelly, Jr. and John J. Pitney, Jr., *Congress' Permanent Minority? Republicans in the U.S. House* (Lanham, Maryland: Littlefield Adams, 1994), p. 15.

effectiveness in wooing so-called "Reagan Democrats" to support, for instance, the Administration's landmark budget reconciliation bill. There are occasions, of course, when minority leaders will fault the legislative initiatives of their President. On an administration proposal that could adversely affect his district, Michel stated that he might "abdicate my leadership role [on this issue] since I can't harmonize my own views with the administration's."[28] Minority Leader Gephardt, as another example, has publicly opposed a number of President Clinton's legislative initiatives from "fast track" trade authority to various budget issues.[29]

When the President and House majority are of the same party, then the House minority leader assumes a larger role in formulating alternatives to executive branch initiatives and in acting as a national spokesperson for his or her party. "As Minority Leader during [President Lyndon Johnson's] Democratic administration, my responsibility has been to propose Republican alternatives," said Minority Leader Gerald Ford, R-MI.[30] Greatly outnumbered in the House, Minority Leader Ford devised a political strategy that allowed Republicans to offer their alternatives in a manner that provided them political protection. As Ford explained:

> "We used a technique of laying our program out in general debate," he said. When we got to the amendment phase, we would offer our program as a substitute for the Johnson proposal. If we lost in the Committee of the Whole, then we would usually offer it as a motion to recommit and get a vote on that. And if we lost on the motion to recommit, our Republican members had a choice: They could vote against the Johnson program and say we did our best to come up with a better alternative. Or they could vote for it and make the same argument. Usually we lost; but when you're only 140 out of 435, you don't expect to win many.[31]

Ford also teamed with Senate Minority Leader Everett McKinley Dirksen, R-IL, to act as national spokesmen for their party. They met with the press every Thursday following the weekly joint leadership meeting. Ford's predecessor as minority leader, Charles Halleck, R-IN, probably received more visibility in this role, because the press and media dubbed it the "Ev and Charlie Show." In fact, the "Republican National Committee budgeted $30,000 annually to produce the weekly news conference."[32]

Foster Party Harmony

Minority status, by itself, is often an important inducement for minority party members to stay together, to accommodate different interests, and to submerge intraparty factional disagreements. To hold a diverse membership together often requires extensive consultations and discussions with rank-and-file Members and with different factional groupings. As Minority Leader Gephardt said:

> We have weekly caucus meetings. We have daily leadership meetings. We have weekly ranking Member meetings. We have party effectiveness meetings. There's a lot more communication. I believe leadership is bottom up, not top down. I think you have to build

[28] Dorothy Collin, "Michel Plays to Peoria—and U.S.," *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 16, 1982, p. 2.

[29] See Jim Vande Hei, "White House Sidesteps Gephardt's Leadership," *Roll Call*, July 7, 1997, p. 1.

[30] James M. Cannon, "Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, 1965-1973," in *Masters of the House*, p. 275.

[31] Ibid., p. 271.

[32] Burdette Loomis, "The Consummate Minority Leader: Everette M. Dirksen," in Richard Baker and Roger Davidson, eds., *First Among Equals* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1991), p. 250.

> policy and strategy and vision from the bottom up, and involve people in figuring out what that is.[33]

Gephardt added that "inclusion and empowerment of the people on the line have to be done to get the best performance" from the minority party.[34] Other techniques for fostering party harmony include the appointment of task forces composed of partisan colleagues with conflicting views to reach consensus on issues; the creation of new leadership positions as a way to reach out and involve a greater diversity of partisans in the leadership structure; and daily meetings in the Leader's office (or at breakfast, lunch, or dinner) to lay out floor strategy or political objectives for the minority party.

Concluding Observations

Given the concentration of agenda control and other institutional resources in the majority leadership, the minority leader has his work cut out for him in promoting and publicizing his or her party's priorities, serving the interests of his rank-and-file Members, managing intraparty conflict, and forging party unity. The ultimate goal of the minority leader is to lead his or her party to majority control. Yet there is no set formula on how this is to be done. "If the history of elections is any guide, it seems apparent that the congressional record of the minority party is only one of many factors that may result in majority status. Most of the other factors *cannot be controlled by the minority party and its leaders*."[35]

[33] Eliza Newlin Carney, "Don't Count Us Out," *National Journal*, Apr. 29, 1995, p. 1024.

[34] Davidson, et al., *Masters of the House*, p. 323.

[35] Jones, *The Minority Party in Congress*, p. 23. Emphasis in the original statement.

Appendix. House Minority Leaders, 1899-2009

Minority Leader	Congress
James D. Richardson, D-TN	56th (1899-1901)
Richardson	57th (1901-1903)
John Sharp Williams, D-MS	58th (1903-1905)
Williams	59th (1905-1907)
Williams/Champ Clark, D-MO[a]	60th (1907-1909)
Clark	61st (1909-1911)
James R. Mann, R-IL	62nd (1911-1913)
Mann	63rd (1913-1915)
Mann	64th (1915-1917)
Mann	65th (1917-1919)
Clark	66th (1919-1921)
Claude Kitchin, D-NC	67th (1921-1923)
Finis J. Garrett, D-TN	68th (1923-1925)
Garrett	69th (1925-1927)
Garrett	70th (1927-1929)
John N. Garner, D-TX	71st (1929-1931)
Betrand H. Snell, R-NY	72nd (1931-1933)
Snell	73rd (1933-1935)
Snell	74th (1935-1937)
Snell	75th (1937-1939)
Joseph W. Martin Jr., R-MA	76th (1939-1941)
Martin	77th (1941-1943)
Martin	78th (1943-1945)
Martin	79th (1945-1947)
Sam Rayburn, D-TX	80th (1947-1949)
Martin	81st (1949-1951)
Martin	82nd (1951-1953)
Rayburn	83rd (1953-1955)
Martin	84th (1955-1957)
Charles A. Halleck, R-IN	86th (1959-1961)
Halleck	87th (1961-1963)
Halleck	88th (1963-1965)
Gerald R. Ford, R-MI	89th (1965-1967)
Ford	90th (1967-1969)
Ford	91st (1969-1971)

Minority Leader	Congress
Ford	92nd (1971-1973)
Ford/John J. Rhodes, R-AZ[b]	93rd (1973-1975)
Rhodes	94th (1975-1977)
Rhodes	95th (1977-1979)
Rhodes	96th (1979-1981)
Robert H. Michel, R-IL	97th (1981-1983)
Michel	98th (1983-1985)
Michel	99th (1985-1987)
Michel	100th (1987-1989)
Michel	101st (1989-1991)
Michel	102nd (1991-1993)
Michel	103rd (1993-1995)
Richard A. Gephardt, D-MO	104th (1995-1997)
Gephardt	105th (1997-1999)
Gephardt	106th (1999-2001)
Gephardt	107th (2001-2003)
Nancy Pelosi, D-CA	108th (2003-2005)
Pelosi	109th (2005-2006)
John Boehner, R-OH	110th (2007-2009)
Boehner	111th (2009-2011)

Source: *Guide to Congress*, Fifth Edition, Vol. II, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2000, pp. 1102-1103.

a. Clark became minority leader in 1908.

b. Rhodes became minority leader on Dec. 7, 1973, filling the vacancy caused by the resignation of Ford on Dec. 6, 1973, to become vice president.

Author Contact Information

(name redacted)
Senior Specialist in American National Government
[redacted]@crs.loc.gov, 7-....