



## A Call to Action: CSPC Launches the Commission on Civility and Effective Governance

**What:** Inaugural roundtable of the new Commission on Civility and Effective Governance

**When:** April 4, 2018, 12:30pm – 2:00pm

**Who:** Commission Co-Chairs Jason Altmire, former Democratic Representative from Pennsylvania; Tom Davis, former Republican Representative from Virginia. Find a complete list of Commission members [here](#).

**Where:** The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, 601 13<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 1050N, Washington, D.C. 20005

**Media Inquiries:** For media questions, or to arrange an interview with the co-chairs or members of the Commission, contact CSPC Senior Fellow James Kitfield, (202) 872-9800; [james.kitfield@thepresidency.org](mailto:james.kitfield@thepresidency.org)

### Changing the Incentives in a Dysfunctional Political Dynamic

Evidence continues to mount that the American political system's current trajectory towards ever-greater partisanship, zero-sum governing and tribal gridlock is inflicting grave damage on the republic. Computer-assisted gerrymandering is hollowing out the vital center of our body politic where consensus-building traditionally occurs, encouraging lawmakers to play to extremists on the far left and right. Partisan media "echo chambers" promote a political discourse of surpassing crudeness and incivility. The dominant role of money in politics feeds the perception of government corruption and a deep cynicism in the electorate, with overwhelming majorities of Americans now believing that our political system is "rigged" and that Congress is dysfunctional.

The bitter fruits of that dysfunction are impossible to ignore. This year has already witnessed yet another government shutdown, the 13<sup>th</sup> since 1980, and our political representatives continue to struggle to conclude even routine business. For six of the past seven years, Congress has failed to even adopt a formal budget resolution, and for six straight years (2011-2016) not a single spending bill has passed on time. Meanwhile serious problems fester and grow more intractable, whether it's crumbling national infrastructure, ballooning debt, an overstretched military, inadequate health care, or a broken immigration system.

Despite the magnitude of the challenge, the situation is not hopeless. At the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress (CSPC) we have a long tradition of promoting enlightened leadership and effective government reforms, while encouraging leaders to maintain civility in the national dialogue. In that tradition, we are gathering national public service figures, and thought leaders from the private sector, media, and academia, to take part in a new Commission on Civility and Effective Governance. The initiative is being led by CSPC President and former Congressman Glenn Nye, (D-VA) and the bipartisan Commission will be chaired by two former Members of Congress who have literally written the book about these profoundly important issues, Jason Altmire (D-PA) (author of "Dead Center: How Political Polarization Divided America and What We Can Do about It"); and Tom Davis, (R-VA), (co-author of "The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis.").

On April 4, 2018 the Commission will hold its inaugural roundtable discussion to begin crafting a roadmap to reforming the incentives that promote gridlock. We will follow-up with additional roundtables held throughout the country to bring together like-minded reformers and good governance groups operating at the grass roots level. The process will be data-driven, will recognize progress where it is being made, and identify the best ways to advance promising reform ideas. Throughout this effort our focus will be on concrete solutions that realign the incentives in our political system in ways that promote healthy debate, inspire public trust, and encourage the cooperation necessary to move the country forward to higher ground.

###

*The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress is a non-partisan think tank that addresses the key challenges facing our nation through studying the lessons of history, convening decision-makers from government and the private sector, and educating the next generation of leaders.*