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Knowledge pays
the best interest"*
- Ben Franklin

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Representatives Tiberi and Neal Talk about Reforming the Tax Code and Why Bipartisanship will be Essential to Achieving that Goal

WASHINGTON, DC – The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures appeared together at a breakfast discussion yesterday morning to talk about reforming the tax code and why bipartisanship will be essential if Congress is going to achieve that goal.

“I really believe that the only way we’re going to get big things done is for Democrats and Republicans to work together,” stated the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Congressman Pat Tiberi of Ohio. “Some of our colleagues think that you can catch some kind of disease if you work with the other side. So they refuse to talk to the other side, and that’s unfortunate. The fortunate thing is that there are some of us who understand that and understand that this is bigger than us.

“This is bigger than the parties. This is bigger than just this moment in time. You have to work together to get things done.” Pointing to the bipartisan cooperation and collaboration between President Ronald Reagan and then-Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill in the mid-1980s, Tiberi added: “They did some really amazing things that helped those of us here today, and so that is a great model for us to look towards to get tax reform done ... The madness of our current tax system has to end. We have to reform this system.”

Tiberi’s Democratic counterpart on the Ways and Means Subcommittee, Ranking Member Richard Neal of Massachusetts agreed, and offered his own observations as to why working across party lines has become so difficult in Congress in recent years.

“I think the use of excitable language that has been advised by consultants over the years has really transformed the institution,” the Massachusetts Democrat stated. “I think the 24-hour news cycle has not been helpful. I also think there’s not a lot of opportunity to get to know people on the other side. As we’ve tried to sanitize the process in the eyes of the reformers, the difficulty has been that you don’t get to know anybody.”

“I come at this very differently than many Members of the Congress, largely because I served as mayor of a pretty good sized city,” continued Neal, who served as Mayor of Springfield from 1983-1989. “You really don’t wake up every day as the mayor of a city saying this has got to be left or this has got to be right. You wake up every day facing some challenge or crisis that you generally have to manage immediately. So I think trying to find that path of growing the economy, I think it’s fair to say I’m a Clintonite. And boy, Republican or Democrat, it is tough to argue with those numbers.

“When you witness 22 million jobs being created and taking some positions that were difficult for a lot of members of our party ... Clinton figured it out. You want to win this election, you’ve got to move this thing back between the two 45-yard lines, and I think that is the message we need to hear as a party.”

Yesterday’s bipartisan breakfast was hosted by The Ripon Society and The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange. To view Tiberi’s and Neal’s remarks at the breakfast, please click on the link below:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_XWNw_PE4A

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