

MY CONVERSATION WITH REP. LOUIE GOHMERT



If you don't know this Texan yet, you will — a guy I want you to keep an eye on: a truth-teller and firebrand, fighting the good fight in Congress; that rare elected conservative who remains true to principle:

RUSH: Congressman, how are you sir?

GOHMERT: I'm just tickled to death, that's how I'm doing.

RUSH: I'm glad to talk to somebody who's tickled to death.

GOHMERT: It's only because I'm talking to you. When I see what's going on, the smile fades real quickly.

RUSH: That's depressing — especially since you're in the majority. I wanted to ask you, is it frustrating? Is this what you thought it was going to be like after the 2010 elections?

GOHMERT: Yes, because I saw who our leadership would be.

RUSH: So how do you deal with it?

GOHMERT: Ours is not to reason why; ours is just to keep fighting, stand for what's right. I knew also going in that the odds of me having a subcommittee chairmanship, when I was up for it, was not likely. Because, as one committee chairman told me, "You can't talk like you do and not have some consequences." He said, "I know how to play the game because I'm a chairman, but I know integrity when I see it, and I appreciate it in you." This was after a conference where I stood up and spoke rather pointedly. He later told me, "I've been telling our leadership that we really need to bring back the Merchant Marine Committee." He said, "We don't have one, but I know that's the only chance you'll ever have to chair a committee." Because of my candor.

RUSH: I don't want to get you in trouble here, but I am curious. One of the things that people in my audience and I happen to think and conservatives around the country believe, is that the Republican leadership doesn't seem to reflect the energy or the desire to see Obama and the Democrats defeated in securing their core beliefs — and we've got a majority. We could stop him.

GOHMERT: Yes, we could.

RUSH: So people don't understand it, Louie. They think we're all on the same team.

GOHMERT: They have the desire to defeat Obama. I have a profound disagreement with some of them on how we do that. They think that we do it by being nice. In fact, after Nancy Pelosi became Speaker, we were told, "She's the first female Speaker of the House, so whether we like it or not, we've got to handle this with kid gloves. Don't go after Speaker Pelosi. You can go after other people, but you'll be branded as mean and evil if you go after the first female Speaker of the House."

Well, some of us didn't let up. I don't care what gender someone is, or what race they are. Those things don't matter to me. Whether you're President or Speaker, if you're wrong, we need to stand up and point it out. That's what Martin Luther King had talked about, being judged by the content of our character and not the color of our skin. So some of us pounded away on some of the ridiculous policies of Pelosi — and lo and behold, over time, the public began to see.

Now, this is nothing new to you. You do it every business day of the week and you do it better than anybody I've ever seen. But as to the folks in Congress, not everybody was joining in. Some felt they needed to follow instructions and be hands off. The same thing happened after President Obama got elected. We were told behind the scenes, "Look, if you go after the President you're going to be called a racist, you're going to be called everything in the book."

Some of us didn't care what race the President was. It is still being said today that when you oppose someone for President who's black, or a black President, then you must be a racist. When I voted for Alan

Keyes, I had no idea all those Democrats who opposed him were racist, but apparently they were, based on what we've found out since.

In any event, some of us didn't let up. If a man's wrong, I don't care what race he is. We kept pointing out the flaws and the problems, not nearly as efficiently and effectively as you were, but we were making our voices heard. Over time, people figured it out. You have to keep repeating the truth and eventually people realize, "You know what? Those guys are were right."

Rush, I alluded to this when we first met in Houston a few years ago. I had a friend in Tyler, Texas who had also gone to Texas A&M. I was running for judge in 1992, and this friend said, "Have you ever listened to Rush Limbaugh?" I said, "No. I've heard of him. I've seen something on the news about him, and I wasn't sure about him." But he said, "He's got a sense of humor like yours." Hope you're not offended, Rush.

RUSH: Not at all.

GOHMERT: He said, "You would love this guy. He thinks things are funny that you do, and he's just a brilliant guy.



"When somebody is destroying the country that you're sworn to protect and love with your heart, it's time to stand up no matter who gets offended." — REP. LOUIE GOHMERT

You'd love him." So I tuned in. Holy cow, Rush, it was 19 years ago, my goodness. Anyway, a caller was saying, "This Clinton guy doesn't have a chance." He was in the teens in popularity, there's no way he could win President, it was over for him. Ross Perot was more popular than he was. This is my recollection after 19 years, but you said something like, "Listen, you just watch. Ross Perot is going to stub his toe, something's going to happen, and the media will make Bill Clinton a viable candidate even though he isn't." And lo and behold —

RUSH: It happened.

GOHMERT: Ross Perot got in trouble and backed out.

RUSH: Well, Perot figured out he might win, and that was not his purpose.

GOHMERT: You're right. So he backed off and all of a sudden, just as you predicted, the media started talking about this incredible candidate who was able to get beyond the affairs, get beyond all these problems in his personal life. What an incredible guy because he's the only one to ever get beyond these things, and sure enough, they made him a viable candidate. Just like they did Barack Obama. I just saw all that happen in '92 and I thought, "This Rush Limbaugh really is a smart guy," and I've listened to you ever since. One of the problems in Washington, though, is we're so busy having hearing after hearing.

RUSH: No excuse.

GOHMERT: We need to take breaks so we can listen to Rush

here on Capitol Hill. The country would be better off.

RUSH: [laughter] I want to go back to what you said earlier; this "be-nice" business is serious.

GOHMERT: It is.

RUSH: I want to know what the political roots of this are, because this didn't start in 2010 with Pelosi. It certainly didn't start in 2008 with Obama. I've got my own theories, but where does this come from? Because while we're "being nice," they are savaging us, Louie.

GOHMERT: Absolutely. You're telling me? Some of the things said about me are unbelievable.

I've got a daughter trying to make it in the entertainment business and she doesn't use "Gohmert" because she gets too badly savaged. It's brutal. But there are a lot of things that I think contribute to this. From a political standpoint, there are times when you do need to go easy, where people are not ready for you to get angry. Having tried a lot of cases in court, and having been a judge for years, I've seen over and over the old adage that you never go after a witness until you've got the jury ready for you to do so. You don't all of a sudden start yelling at witnesses; you've got to let the jury see that they're not honest and there are problems, and then they're ready for you.

Some of that applies to the political spectrum. You want to be nice, but when somebody is destroying the country that you're sworn to protect and love with your heart, it's time to stand up no matter who gets offended.

My late mother was a brilliant woman, put herself through college, and I've never forgotten what she used to say — she thought it came from Mark Twain but neither she nor I could ever find it — that "you should never argue with an ass, lest onlookers confuse which is which." So I've carried that with me over the years. Unfortunately, I have not always followed it — because I have gone on CNN.

RUSH: This "be-nice" business has effectively shut us up. My theory is that it stems from the cliché that Republicans are racist-sexist-bigot-homophobe-mean-spirited extremists, and Republicans have been made to believe this is how they're perceived. Every national election is fought for the independents — that mystical 20 percent — and our stupid consultants tell our candidates, "You can't get the independents by being critical of the Democrat opponent. They don't like criticism. They don't like confrontation. So you've got to be respectful." It's a lie. It's a trick. It's something Democrats have set up with that cliché of what we are, and we get timid people in our Party, the leadership, believing that crap, thinking, "Okay, to hell with energizing our base. We can't tick off the independents because if we do that we're going to lose, so we have to be respectful."

The RNC had one of its conference calls where they sought advice

from a GOP pollster, the Tarrance Group, on how to deal with Obama going forward, and it was the same thing. We've discovered this because somebody at the RNC mistakenly sent an invitation to the conference call to some schlub at Yahoo News, of all places, so Yahoo reports that the Tarrance Group told the RNC, "Do not attack Obama personally because people love him, personal opinion polls are high, and some people feel sorry for him. So when you go after Obama you have to do it strictly based on policy." How do you separate the policy from the guy? It's the same thing they told you when Pelosi became Speakerette, "Don't go after her." Louie, we are handcuffing ourselves. We're putting gags in our own mouths.

GOHMERT: You're exactly right.

RUSH: Because these precious independents don't seem to mind when the Democrats savage the hell out of you.

GOHMERT: That's right. I can tell you from firsthand experience, sometimes you point out the flaws and problems and, as you well know better than I do, the mainstream comes after you. They don't care about the truth.

RUSH: No.

GOHMERT: But the truth is what you've got to stand on, and if it's somebody doing wrong, you can't just back up and ignore it.

RUSH: That's another thing. Our guys seem to want the love and devotion, the approval of the mainstream media. I don't understand that either. That's never going to happen.

GOHMERT: It isn't, and I've heard you talk about that for the 19 years I've been listening. My first session was 2005-2006. I had been on the bench as a district judge handling felonies and major civil litigation, and what made me start thinking about running — as I listened to you over lunch — was I was seeing more and more single women with children coming before me for welfare fraud.

It was basically the same story. They got bored with high school, somebody would say, "Just drop out, the government will send you a check for a baby. You don't have to work, you don't have to finish school. Just get pregnant and have a baby." And they would. Then they'd find out one baby wouldn't do it, so they'd have another, and another. For the women that appeared before me, they had got deeper and deeper in the rut they couldn't get out of.

And I do believe in holding people accountable for their actions. I would usually max them out or come close on the probation to max them out on the community service hours, then tell them, "Finish your high school education and that'll wipe out most of your hours." I was trying to push them to improve. But it was occurring to me that our government has gotten in the business of luring people into a rut from which they cannot get out. That's not the role of government. So I started thinking, well, if I want to legislate, the best way to do that is to run for the legislature. After finishing a term as Chief Justice, I ran for Congress.

So I get here in January of '05, Rush, it was so exciting. Bush had a new term. We had five more Republicans than we had the year before, so a little bigger majority. We were going to shore up Social Security. That's what we talked about at our January retreat: as

Republican members of Congress, we're going to fix that, and we're going to do it in '05, so people will have a whole year to see how the Democrats were lying about how we wanted to take it away. They'd see we actually fixed it, shored it up. Then in 2006 we were going to do the massive tax reform that we promised everybody we would do.

At the beginning of 2006, we'd just elected a new leader in John Boehner, Dennis Hastert still Speaker, Jim Nussle was Budget Chair. We were told, in essence, "Look guys, there's a chance we might not win the majority next November, so we changed our minds. We're not going to do major tax reform. We want to just try to get through this year as best we can — and when we retain the majority we'll come back January of '07, then we'll do the big stuff."

I was so depressed. I was down. Not as down as I was the week-end after TARP passed. That was about the low point, because it was socialism and I was called names for saying it was socialism.



But I see a lot of hope from some of these freshmen. When they came in they were initially told, "You've got to be a team player. You got to play along." Then some of them saw in March, that when our leadership told them that if we didn't pass the continuing resolution [CR], the military wouldn't get paid. There was no way to pay them. In the meantime, I had a bill I had filed and brought up in conference that would have made sure the military got paid in the event of a shutdown. Anyway, after that they began to see, "Whoa, the military could have gotten paid if we had taken that bill up and passed it."

RUSH: I remember Allen West telling me about this.

GOHMERT: Yup, and we didn't bring the bill up. So people were told, "You've got to pass this CR or the military doesn't get paid and it'll be your fault, your fault." I got pretty upset about that. In fact, without going into what was said in conference, Steve King told me afterwards he didn't think people would be able to go into that room ever again and not hear my words bouncing off the walls. I never meant to get that loud, but you never hold your

military out there as pawns in your game, and that's the thing that got me so upset about this debt ceiling. We put our national security on the table as a *chip*. And not only that, with poor negotiation. Because they thought, "Gee, the Democrats will never allow cuts to Medicare." Hello! They just cut Medicare \$500 billion in Obamacare. But our leadership, the negotiators, thought, "Shoot, we'll get that on the table. They'll never allow cuts to Medicare, and then we'll be able to get the Super Committee to do what it's supposed to" — not realizing that Democrats needed the Super Committee to fail. They needed the cuts to Medicare so there wouldn't be millions of dollars spent blaming the Democrats for Obamacare and the \$500 billion cut to Medicare. They'd blame us.

RUSH: Congressman, seriously now, are you telling me there were members of the leadership who did not realize that the whole Super Committee thing was designed and set up to fail?

GOHMERT: It's my impression. From what's been said, they really thought this was going to work out because, gee, Medicare cuts are on the table, they'll have to come forward and agree with us to work this out; they'll have to.

RUSH: Can't they see that Obama is going to spend a billion dollars on a campaign to run against a "do-nothing Congress"? He can't afford for you guys to do anything.

GOHMERT: And he's half right. With all the stuff we have been passing in the House — good conservative, foundational American bills — the Senate does nothing. They go down there and they sit. So we've got to give Obama credit where credit is due. He's half right.

RUSH: That sounds as if it may qualify as your most disappointing moment this session. Is there something that you would call the House Republicans' single biggest achievement?

GOHMERT: We've passed some good stuff. If the Senate would

needed to get it done. They took me at my word and I saw my name's not on it. But that's fine. It's more important that it get filed and it has been, and I am so pleased.

I'm just thrilled that after all these years — you planted the seed — that we're going to be passing the zero-baseline budget bill. We're going to get that done. And I think it is fantastic because then in an election year we're going to be able to hold that up to the Senate and say, "Eliminate the automatic increases."

Now, CBO [Congressional Budget Office] is something we ought to do away with. It was created in 1974 with the most liberal Congress until Pelosi came along, and they set up the rules so that we get pounded if there's a tax cut. You've preached about this many times. They're not allowed to use historic fact to determine what a bill will do revenue-wise. They've got this static accounting process that always punishes Republicans. And we've got too many guys who keep wanting to play inside the sandbox that was built in 1974. We've got to just knock the boards out, create our own ground rules to work in, and not have these ridiculous liberal rules that have handcuffed Republicans since 1974 where we have to "pay for" tax cuts.

RUSH: Now I know how you guys work. The House does what it does and then the Senate doesn't do anything and all you can do is run for reelection on your accomplishments within the House. Is there ever — and I ask this just as a citizen because I don't know how this works — any lobbying done? Would any Speaker ever go to his counterpart in the Senate and say, "Look, let's work together. Can you move this thing forward here?" Are you guys totally separated and the Senate does what it does regardless? Is there ever any cooperation?

GOHMERT: Rush, that is a great question and the answer is, absolutely. That's how we got that terrible CR back in March. We were told back then, after the agreement got struck, that the House

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take up and pass the energy legislation we've pushed down there, you would see prices come down, you would see energy independence growing from foreign countries. But this Administration, as you know, and Harry Reid, are determined for us not to be independent, so they can throw money at their friends, and places like Solyndra.

But I tell you, there's a great thing going on right now, though it's going to take a lot of pressure on the Senate to get it through next year. Speaker Boehner assured me at the end of July that we would pass the zero-baseline budget bill. I got the idea from you. When I was a judge I'd hear you talking about how insane it was to have automatic increases every year in our budget. When the Republicans took the majority in 1995 you were still talking about it, surprised that we didn't pass a zero-baseline budget bill. As you repeatedly pointed out, Republicans were getting beat up for making "draconian cuts" when they were simply trying to slow the rate of increase. Yet 16 years later, we still haven't done it. Well, Rush, we're finally going to do that.

Fortunately, Paul Ryan is 100 percent on board. I filed a zero-baseline budget bill all four sessions I've been in Congress. Anyway, they have just finished filing the budget committee's zero-baseline budget. I told the Speaker and Paul Ryan and Rob Woodall of the Subcommittee that I didn't care whose name was on it, we just

had to pass that continuing resolution because if we didn't we'd end up with something worse. How do you end up with something worse if you're not willing to pass it as worse? Then we got to the debt ceiling bill at the end of July and we were told, "We have got to pass this because if we don't it'll be worse." I absolutely believe Speaker Boehner; he told us he had negotiated with Harry Reid. He said it publicly. He had negotiated with Harry Reid and he got this deal done, and then here we come into the House with a bill that Reid said he'd agreed to. Reid, on the other hand, once we'd come forward with the bill that he and Boehner negotiated, then had the luxury, if he wanted to be less than completely open and honest, to say, "Gee, that's not really my bill. I didn't agree to that. That's a Republican bill." So we end up passing a Democratic debt-ceiling bill that has been worked out because of the Speaker and Senate Majority Leader working together, and we get blamed for it as a Republican bill.

The thing that I have been standing on, preaching all year long, is that's not how the system is supposed to work. The public cannot really see much difference between the House and Senate. The way it is supposed to work — and it's best for us if we do this — is, we bring before the House and we pass the bills we absolutely believe in. We don't have to get 100 Democratic votes to pass them. You pass our

fundamental core beliefs in the House, and then you stand pat and you demand that the Senate pass something, pass anything, and you don't move until they do. Then it goes to a conference committee, and *then* we come with a compromise out of conference committee. Most of us will not like it, but at least, Rush, we can go to the public and say, "Here's what we believe in, in the House, our majority. Here's what the Senate believed in their majority. If you want what we passed originally in the House, then give us the majority in the Senate. If you want more giveaway programs and going bankrupt, as the Senate's driving us, then give them the majority in the House." That way the public sees a huge difference and they get it; and then I think we get a bigger majority and the majority in the Senate. But this game we've been playing does not allow the public to see that much difference between us. For you to ask the question shows people don't understand that these deals were brokered, there was cooperation between the leaders of the House and the leaders of the Senate.

RUSH: The Democrats haven't presented a budget. It's been over two years without a budget. The President's budget was a joke. Will there be a real budget next year, or are we looking again at a series of continuing resolution deals?



GOHMERT: We're certainly going to pass one in the House, as we did last year. The Senate has not passed a budget in over 900 days. It's against the law for them not to pass a budget. But unfortunately, there are no consequences in the law for them failing to abide by it, so they ignore it. Paul Ryan said he's not only going to push the zero-baseline budget bill through, but he likes the idea of going to a two-year budget so that we're not fighting over the budget every year and not able, as Republicans, to go in and start cleaning up things we need to.

I was just talking to Robert Rector at the Heritage Foundation this morning — he was up on the Hill talking to some of us. That guy does incredible research as to how much is paid in welfare. In January of this year, I said, "Robert, can you get me some printouts of how much was spent in welfare for 2010? You've only got data through 2008." He said, "Louie, do you not understand? It takes me two years to dig all this welfare information out of the different parts of the budget." Rush, this is another area we've got to kick down the boards, we got to change our committee structure. We need a welfare committee, where we pull all the welfare from all the different committees. There's so much duplication, repetition, and it all should come to one committee so we see it all lined up side by side.

RUSH: If people knew about the redundancy in all these

programs it would be easy to refute every time Obama or some Democrat talks about how some group here is being short-changed. All the food that we feed kids at school, breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack, and yet still they level the charge that you guys want to cut food programs and people believe it.

GOHMERT: Some of us have had experience in that area. When I was a judge we had a group that was the Juvenile Board. In our juvenile detention facility, the juveniles hated their food. We were getting \$1 from the federal government for every meal for each juvenile. Every year there were more and more federal requirements, more strings. Finally, they added so many we said to the director, "Go back and figure out how much it would cost us to prepare meals that the kids would like that has all the nutritional requirements that we're doing now." He came back and said something like, "We're paying over \$3 per meal now, and after polling what the kids would like to eat, we had the nutritionist work it out and we're going to save \$2 a meal by refusing to take the \$1 from the federal government — and the kids will like the food now." That's how it works.

RUSH: Do you think Obamacare will be repealed?



GOHMERT: Rush, I've got to believe it's going to happen. Because if it doesn't, the door is open to the GRE, the government running everything. If the government is in charge of your and my health care, when the government pays, then it has every right to start telling you what you can eat, how much exercise you've got to have, how you can live, and I do not want to get there. So it's got to be stopped.

RUSH: Ball game. I know you're right.

GOHMERT: I can't give up on the belief that we're going to stop it.

RUSH: Of all these scandals that the House is investigating under Rep. Issa — Solyndra, Fast and Furious, just to name a couple — which do you think is the most serious? Anything going to come of these?

GOHMERT: I think the most serious is what we got into with Secretary Napolitano over the lack of security in our homeland security. Fast and Furious is absolutely insane, and it infuriates some of us who understand what the Bush program was of controlled deliveries. As a judge I sat on such cases; you'd hear the evidence, law enforcement would follow the drugs, and as soon as it the deal was done, they'd arrest everybody involved. That was something that the Bush Administration had looked into and it

was working with Mexico. But this Fast and Furious was just the most insane thing, with one country sending weapons into another country, no controlled delivery, no idea where they were going, and ultimately resulting in the losses of hundreds of lives, and certainly we know Brian Terry is one of those.

That's bad enough. But we had Secretary Napolitano before our



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committee and I asked her, "You set up, Secretary Napolitano, this 'countering violent extremism' advisory group." The reason it's called "countering violent extremism" is because they didn't want to say anything negative about radical Islam. I said, "Do you know how many people on that advisory council are Muslim Brotherhood members?"

She said she didn't know. But I was advised by the Director of the Texas DPS [Department of Public Safety] the night before that she was briefed the day before I questioned her. She had appointed a man to the Homeland Security Advisory Council and given him a secret clearance and it got him into a database that was supposed to be secure, he downloaded sensitive DPS material and was shopping it around. This is a guy who was a designated speaker at the tribute to the Ayatollah Khomeini. But we have an Administration that refused to prosecute over 200 named, unindicted co-conspirators and not only has refused to indict them, has brought them into the inner sanctum.

RUSH: Why?

GOHMERT: They're in the White House. They're in the State Department. They're in the Justice Department. They're

in the Intelligence Department. They are right now going through and purging training materials of any negative reference to radical Islam. And as one intelligence guy told me, "How in the world can we fight a war when they are blinding us so we can't see our enemy?"

RUSH: Why are they doing all this?

GOHMERT: They're getting people on these advisory councils who are involved with the Muslim Brotherhood, if not members outright. People like this guy she put on her advisory council, who has defended the very things that have supported Osama bin Laden saying they ought to kill Americans. They advise people, "If you will just eliminate any negative references to Islam, then all the radicals will see that Americans actually don't hate Islam, and that will stop all the killings."

RUSH: This is back to what we first started talking about: be nice.

GOHMERT: Exactly. This is in regard, however, to our enemies. When Pelosi took over the House, they wouldn't refer to terrorists at all, and they started using the term "alien unprivileged enemy belligerent."

RUSH: Yeah, you couldn't say "enemy combatant" anymore.

GOHMERT: Exactly, and now they've got people in the inner sanctum advising them, "Just be nice, don't say anything negative." If you look at the 9/11 Commission Report, there are 322 references to Islam. But now, in the FBI Counterterrorism Lexicon, there are zero references to Islam. Zero references to jihad. Zero references to Muslim Brotherhood.

RUSH: The White House classifies the Fort Hood massacre as "workplace violence."

GOHMERT: Yes, that just came out. On Pearl Harbor day, I expected they'd go back and say, "Actually Pearl Harbor was another incident of workplace violence."

RUSH: I shouldn't laugh. Look, you're doing a great job. I really hope you get your chairmanship on the Maritime Committee.

GOHMERT: After I didn't end up with any chairmanship,

my chief of staff Connie Hair said, "I have a feeling some of the Republican leadership may wish they had kept you busy with a chairmanship." In fact, I got an email from one of the Tea Party leaders last August when I was very vocal in my disappointment with what was going on. He asked, "Aren't you going to get in trouble?" I said, "Yeah, they might take away my chairmanship or my A Committee — oh, wait, I don't have either one of those. No, never mind." So there's no impediment to just standing up and speaking truth, and as long as my constituents think I'm okay.

RUSH: Well, they obviously do. And so do we. We're on your team here and any time we can help, you let us know.

GOHMERT: We've got a lot of work to do together, Rush, and I'm just glad you're there speaking truth —

RUSH: Ditto.

GOHMERT: — and educating the rest of us on so many things as you do.

RUSH: Thanks so much for your time. ■