

GETTING TO YES: FINDING CONSENSUS IN A DIVIDED AMERICA

Rep. Charlie Dent
and Rep. Jim Himes

MODERATOR: *Lisa Desjardins*

PBS NEWSHOUR CORRESPONDENT Lisa Desjardins moderated a bipartisan panel with Representatives Charlie Dent (R-PA) and Jim Himes (D-CT) about breaking congressional gridlock and crafting lasting legislative solutions with good ideas from both sides of the aisle.

Dent made the case that any meaningful, durable, and sustainable reform passed by Congress “always ends up being done on a bipartisan level.” Himes agreed, saying that politics only works through compromise, because “that’s the only way you govern the country.”

The Republican and Democratic congressmen identified two specific policy areas that they hope to see bipartisan compromise and agreement on: tax reform and infrastructure.

Himes stated that both parties could agree on the need for corporate tax reform. “Most Democrats

will agree with you that a 35 percent corporate tax rate...is too high. There’s no question that we could agree that the tax code is too complicated.” Dent concurred, calling for an inclusive, rather than one-party, strategy for developing the legislation.

Discussing a bill to rebuild America’s aging infrastructure, Dent said, “There’s a real desire to move

forward. That issue lends itself to some sort of bipartisan collaboration.” Himes agreed that infrastructure legislation has the ability to draw bipartisan support and potentially help heal divisions within Congress.

Looking more broadly, Himes argued that there should also be bipartisan support around solving our long-term national debt. He cautioned that rising interest rates will lead

to accelerated interest costs for the government, crowding out spending on other priorities and hurting the economy—issues that Americans from both parties care about.

Coming to a consensus on our fiscal policy won’t be “as hard as people think,” agreed Dent. “We have an idea of what the policy discussion should be. It’s a matter of political will at this point.”



Representative Jim Himes (D-CT)
Chair, New Democrat Coalition; U.S. House
Committee on Financial Services;
Ranking Member, NSA and Cybersecurity
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