



# THE ESSENCE OF NO LABELS

No Labels is a national movement of Democrats, Republicans and independents dedicated to a new politics of problem solving.

What exactly is this new politics of problem solving?

It's about an attitude more than anything else.

It's about a willingness to sit down with anyone - conservative, liberal and in between - so long as they are willing to work with you to find solutions. And it's about recognizing that having principled and deeply held political beliefs doesn't require an all-or-nothing approach to governance.

When No Labels began in 2010, we didn't have a definitive idea of what the organization and the movement would become.

We knew there were millions of people across the country who were frustrated by the dysfunction in our government and who felt they did not have a voice in our political process. And we knew somehow we had to organize this feeling into a coherent national movement that could start to fix our government and secure a stronger future for America.

But we'd have to figure out how as we went along - talking to people on Capitol Hill, leaders in state and local government and members of the business and nonprofit communities; and poring through polling data and historical research - to identify the root causes of our government's problems and what No Labels could do about them.

This led us to develop reform plans to fix the dysfunction in our Congress and throughout the federal government and to build a first-of-its-kind bipartisan group of problem solvers on Capitol Hill.

When No Labels started talking to members of Congress, we were shocked to find that many members hardly knew their colleagues from the other party. They barely talked with one another, let alone worked together. So No Labels began building a new problem-solvers group, which eventually featured more than 90 members - including roughly equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans - meeting regularly to build trust across the aisle.

These early trust-building sessions eventually helped to facilitate the writing and bipartisan co-sponsorship of 17 different bills in Congress.

In August 2014, two early members of No Labels problem-solvers group - Democratic Rep. Kurt Schrader and Republican Rep. Reid Ribble - deepened member commitment to what No Labels began by starting and co-chairing the official Problem Solvers Caucus, which is a first-of-its-kind congressional member organization.

In 2013, No Labels also saw No Budget, No Pay - the signature reform idea from our *Make Congress Work!* plan - become law.

No Labels has been working for three years to build the infrastructure for bringing people together from across the political spectrum. Now, we have launched our most ambitious undertaking yet with our campaign for a *National Strategic Agenda*.

This will be an unprecedented effort – one that is essential for the near- and long-term future of our country. We always hear our leaders say they want to unite the country, but no one ever tells us how.

The *National Strategic Agenda* is the how.

No Labels is calling for America's leaders to support a new governing process and build a *National Strategic Agenda* centered on four goals. These goals – chosen with input from a nationwide survey that No Labels conducted last fall – are:

- Create 25 million new jobs over the next 10 years
- Secure Medicare and Social Security for another 75 years
- Balance the federal budget by 2030
- Make America energy secure by 2024

The *National Strategic Agenda* will be created with input from members of Congress, state and local leaders and regular citizens at No Labels sponsored Ideas Meetings in Washington D.C., New Hampshire, Iowa and elsewhere. These meetings will enable No Labels to take the pulse of people nationwide and to ultimately forge agreement on a full policy plan to achieve the goals of the *National Strategic Agenda*.

The completed *National Strategic Agenda* will be unveiled in New Hampshire and Iowa on October 5, 2015 just as the presidential election campaign season is ramping up.

No Labels will work to inject the agenda into the presidential debate by activating its network of citizens, members of Congress, and state and local leaders across America. No Labels' ultimate goal is for the next president and the next Congress to use the *National Strategic Agenda* as a framework for bipartisan action.

When you look at Washington today, it's hard to escape the conclusion that it is defined by all tactics, and no strategy.

Everything is about winning the next news cycle or the next election. What about winning the future for the country?

There needs to be a new paradigm for decision-making in our government. One that begins with agreement on big goals and progresses to agreement on key facts and the principles and policies that will be part of the solution.

That's what the *National Strategic Agenda* is all about.

Although the *National Strategic Agenda* process is certainly a new approach to governance in contemporary Washington, it is a tried-and-true approach to problem solving.

The process of uniting around big goals, and progressing to agreement on key principles and policies worked for leaders like Republican President Ronald Reagan and Democratic House Speaker Tip O'Neill when they brought their parties together to fix the tax code, Social Security and foreign trade issues. And it worked for Democratic President Bill Clinton and Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich when they did the same to balance the budget.

The same process can work for the next president and the next Congress, if they embrace the *National Strategic Agenda*.

It's up to us – the American people – to show our elected leaders the way and to ensure that they hear this call for a *National Strategic Agenda* loud and clear.

Will you join us?



# OVERVIEW OF NO LABELS' NATIONAL STRATEGIC AGENDA

No Labels is calling for America's leaders to support a new governing process to build a National Strategic Agenda centered on four goals. These goals – chosen with input from a nationwide survey that No Labels conducted last fall – are:

- Create 25 million new jobs over the next 10 years;
- Balance the federal budget by 2030;
- Secure Social Security and Medicare for another 75 years; and
- Make America energy secure by 2024.

The National Strategic Agenda is unlike anything that's come before it, and it is informed by the previous failure of other "grand bargains" that could not find the sweet spot where good politics and good policy intersect.

So the National Strategic Agenda doesn't try to get leaders to pledge exactly what they will do to solve problems in advance of the difficult legislating that is to come. But it does aim to forge a realistic path for how to solve problems, by getting our political leaders to agree to four big goals and a bipartisan process for achieving those goals.

In Washington, we endlessly debate specific policies, laws and provisions, but we rarely step back to really think about where we want our nation to go and how we get there.

At No Labels, we believe it's time for America and its leaders to embrace a common purpose and common goals and the National Strategic Agenda provides the perfect vehicle to do so.

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The process of uniting around big goals, and progressing to agreement on key principles and policies worked for leaders like Republican President Ronald Reagan and Democratic House Speaker Tip O'Neill when they brought their parties together to fix the tax code and Social Security. And it worked for Democratic President Bill Clinton and Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich when they did the same to balance the budget.

We believe that the National Strategic Agenda can enable similar cooperation, and invite members of Congress to help build support for it in the year to come.

# PARTY RESPONSIBLY



**FROM MAINE TO MAUI, PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR LEADERS WHO AREN'T AFRAID TO SET THEIR PARTISAN DIFFERENCES ASIDE AND PUT THE COUNTRY FIRST. WELL, GOOD NEWS: THOSE LEADERS ARE OUT THERE.**

## MEET THE PROBLEM SOLVERS

More than 70 members of Congress have been awarded the No Labels Problem Solver seal of approval. To earn the seal, a senator or representative must agree with the simple principle that moving America forward requires legislators to first agree to a specific set of national goals before getting into the weeds of policy-making. Deciding upon an explicit goal and then setting out to achieve it is a basic approach familiar to anyone who's ever collaborated with another to build a block tower, plan a parade or jump start a car.

Still, America has never been governed this way. But those leaders — from both sides of the aisle — who have earned the Problem Solver seal recognize that it's our best chance to get this country moving again. They have agreed to work together to pursue the National Strategic Agenda, a four-point To Do list that includes: create 25 million new jobs over the next 10 years; balance the federal budget by 2030; secure Social Security and Medicare for another 75 years; and make America energy secure by 2024.

## HERE TO WORK, NOT TO PARTY

On the night of Tuesday, January 20th, as President Obama delivers his State of the Union address, these 70-plus public servants will be wearing the Problem Solver pin, declaring their willingness to work with their fellow lawmakers for the good of the country. If you spot your legislators wearing the pin, send them a note of thanks. And if you find only an empty lapel where a Problem Solver pin should be, tell them you want them to earn theirs. Because now is the time for our leaders to come together and get this country back on track. Once that's done, we'll all have a reason to party.

To find out what separates the Problem Solvers from the party animals, learn how you can help get America moving again and to show your support with your own Problem Solver stickers, head to [nolabels.org](http://nolabels.org) or dial it up old school at 202-588-1990.

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## IT'S TIME TO FOCUS ON SHARED GOALS

BY JON HUNTSMAN & JOE LIEBERMAN  
PUBLISHED: 01/19/2015

In his 2010 State of the Union Address, President Obama said he'd "like to begin monthly meetings with both Democratic and Republican leadership." Unfortunately, he did not follow through on that good intention. We appeal to him to do so in 2015, starting with his State of the Union address on January 20.

Imagine how refreshing it would be to hear a State of the Union Address that is a list of shared goals instead of the all-too-typical wish list developed in a White House vacuum. Imagine a State of the Union in the voice not of "I," but of "we" -- meaning we, your elected leaders.

Now imagine the ripple effect of such a speech. We can easily imagine the stock market surging, consumer sentiment rising and small-business optimism ascending from its doldrums. Because having faith in our leaders, and confidence that they are working hard to solve problems instead of just scoring political points, makes Americans feel positive and confident. And when we are feeling good, when we are on our game ... we Americans are unstoppable.

We believe it is never too late to make good on good intentions, and

that it is critical for the president to not just hold one or two meetings or photo opportunities with congressional leaders, but to really lead the problem-solving process in Washington, D.C. with an ongoing dialogue that takes place on a regular basis, face-to-face.

This would be good policy and good politics -- we know the majority of Americans want their national leaders to have a shared set of goals, regardless of party affiliation. A Wall Street Journal/NBC poll recently showed 63 percent of Americans want the 114th Congress to make agreements across the aisle.

Since we come from different points on the political spectrum ourselves, we also know that this is achievable. We disagree on issues, but we also agree on a lot more. Furthermore, we know that establishing goals is the first step toward solving problems.

We are not asking the president and congressional leaders to agree on every aspect of the most contentious issues of the day, but we know that there is broad agreement among our citizens on many things -- like the need for job creation and energy security, and goals like balancing the federal budget and making Social Security and Medicare solvent for future

generations. The president and congressional leaders need simply to pick from a list of goals that are already widely-agreed-upon, then sit down, roll up their sleeves, and negotiate the kinds of compromise agreements that can solve some of America's problems.

There is ample evidence that congressional leaders are ready for this important process to begin. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell recently told The New York Times, "All of us from time to time make a point. But it is time now to make a difference."

The current atmosphere truly could not be better for the president to invite Republican and Democratic congressional leaders to the White House on a regular basis and for them to wholeheartedly commit to those discussions. The start of a new year and a new Congress carry a feeling of possibility and, yes, hope. This is not a partisan feeling. It is an American feeling. The president and congressional leaders of both parties should capitalize on it.

# MEASURE POLITICAL VICTORY BY FIXES, NOT FIGHTS: COLUMN



AL CARDENAS AND  
THOMAS F. "MACK" MCLARTY  
PUBLISHED: 01/12/2015

Four years ago, members of Congress broke with tradition by crossing the aisle and showing that Republicans and Democrats could sit together during President Obama's State of the Union address.

In 2015, the American people want them to do something more difficult: work together.

We think they can. But first, Democrats and Republicans should resolve for the New Year to give up the cycle of destructive politics that made recent Congresses among the least productive in history. They can start by fully adopting the attitude of problem solvers who are charged with making progress on the country's urgent "to do" list.

Since the November midterms, the American public has made clear it is hungry for solutions from Congress. A Wall Street Journal/NBC poll showed 63% of Americans want the 114th Congress to make deals across the aisle. The poll found that only 30% wanted their representatives to rigidly adhere to campaign promises.

As a centrist Democrat and a conservative Republican, we don't agree on every issue. But

we know from long experience that reasonable, workable, even landmark policies are forged out of debate and differences. That's how our system is supposed to work. Many members of Congress know this too. They need to find the space and support to have a louder voice, and greater impact.

For this to happen, reaching across the aisle needs to be seen by both parties as it is by most Americans: as a sign of long-term strength rather than weakness. This flies in face of recent trends in campaign finance and redistricting, which reinforce partisanship. But it can be overcome with effective leadership that focuses on a change in tone, on building relationships and on measuring success by outcomes — by the fix, not the fight.

We shouldn't underestimate the odds for success. As John Spratt, the wise former dean of the South Carolina Congressional delegation, recently told The New York Times, "Democrats are becoming more liberal; Republicans are becoming a lot more conservative and ideological. Instead of converging into a workable relationship, we are diverging, and Lord knows how we will come to a resolution."

A new pragmatism can help sideline the personal rancor that infects politics. A common lament

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about Congress is that regular dinners and social interactions across party lines are relics of a bygone age. Lost with it are the trust, understanding and, yes, friendships that make politics work. In today's climate, bi-partisan interactions should be planned with purpose. This is a crucial step towards building a new platform for cooperation, and breaking free from the tactics of "take it or leave it."

Of course, attitude and good intentions are not enough. Serious discussions should begin on feasible, substantive policy questions. Today's policy agenda is rife with issues where progress can be made if support that already exists within both parties is organized and led. These include energy security, job creation, trade, immigration and tax reform, to name just a few.

We believe that a lot of common ground is really just common sense put into practice. Most elected officials agree that Social Security and Medicare need to be made solvent, and that the federal budget needs to be better balanced than it has been in the past and that the number one priority for the country is creating good-paying middle class jobs. Lawmakers have collaborated across party lines issues ranging from deficit reduction to skills training to cybersecurity.

Incoming Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell recently told The New York Times, "All of us from time to time make a point. But it is time

now to make a difference." We couldn't agree more. McConnell was talking about some of his fellow Republicans. But the same applies to Democrats. In politics, principles alone are a bad excuse for chronic paralysis. Making a difference means moving towards each other, not just to trade seats but to exchange ideas and engage with strategic issues.

A vehicle for such a discussion already exists in No Labels, a bi-partisan group that is drawing up a blueprint for solving some of our biggest problems. We've joined some 90 lawmakers from both parties in moving this effort forward.

Another year of inaction and chaos on Capitol Hill would be ruinous for the country, and for the public's faith in our governing institutions. As for Democrats and Republicans, the looming presidential campaign is an added incentive to demonstrate competence and commitment to producing results.

Our elected leaders should do the right thing for their country and constituents: embrace a new politics of problem solving. The American people are waiting, and watching.

*Al Cardenas is the former chairman of the American Conservative Union. Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty, former White House chief of staff under President Bill Clinton, is chairman of McLarty Associates. They are co-vice chairs of No Labels.*

# CONGRESSIONAL PROBLEM SOLVERS



## 38 Republicans:

Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH)  
Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY-06)  
Rep. Ken Buck (R-CO-04)  
Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN-08)  
Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO-06)  
Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA-08)  
Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA-06)  
Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL-26)  
Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL-13)  
Rep. Jeff Denham (R-CA-10)  
Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA-15)  
Rep. Bob Dold (R-IL-10)  
Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)  
Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick (R-PA-08)  
Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO)  
Rep. Chris Gibson (R-NY-19)  
Rep. Richard Hanna (R-NY-22)  
Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV)  
Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS-02)  
Rep. Bill Johnson (R-OH-06)  
Rep. David Joyce (R-OH-14)  
Rep. John Katko (R-NY-24)  
Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL-16)  
Rep. Leonard Lance (R-NJ-07)  
Rep. David McKinley (R-WV-01)  
Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-04)  
Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY-23)  
Rep. Reid Ribble (R-WI-08)  
Rep. Tom Rice (R-SC-07)  
Rep. Scott Rigell (R-VA-02)  
Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL-15)  
Rep. Matt Salmon (R-AZ-05)  
Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL-15)  
Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH-15)  
Rep. GT Thompson (R-PA-05)  
Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI-06)  
Rep. David Valadao (R-CA-21)  
Rep. Todd Young (R-IN-09)

## 1 Independent:

Sen. Angus King (I-ME)

## 34 Democrats:

Rep. Brad Ashford (D-NE-02)  
Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA-07)  
Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-GA-02)  
Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA-13)  
Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA-26)  
Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-IL-17)  
Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA-29)  
Sen. Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-PA)  
Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN-05)  
Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA-16)  
Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI-01)  
Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-CT-05)  
Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA-02)  
Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI-02)  
Rep. Gwen Graham (D-FL-02)  
Rep. Jim Himes (D-CT-04)  
Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA-02)  
Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06)  
Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ-01)  
Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH-02)  
Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL-03)  
Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA-02)  
Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA-47)  
Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY-18)  
Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)  
Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-FL-18)  
Rep. Rick Nolan (D-MN-08)  
Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA-52)  
Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL-05)  
Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA-36)  
Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH-13)  
Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR-05)  
Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ-09)  
Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT-AL)

# MAKE GOVERNMENT WORK!



## 1. NO BUDGET, NO PAY **S. 39, H.R. 187 (INTRODUCED IN THE 114TH CONGRESS)**

If Congress cannot pass a budget and all annual spending bills on time, members should not get paid.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV) and Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN)

## 2. TAKE THE TIME, SAVE THE DIME

**S. 150 H.R. 1869 (INTRODUCED IN THE 114TH SENATE; PENDING IN THE HOUSE)**

Move to a two-year budgeting process. (H.R. 1869)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Angus King (I-ME) and Rep. Reid Ribble (R-WI)

Lead Co-Sponsors: Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR)

## 3. DON'T DUPLICATE, CONSOLIDATE

**S. 236, H.R. 484 (INTRODUCED IN THE 114TH CONGRESS)**

Get rid of duplicate agencies and programs identified in 2013 by the Government Accountability Office.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA)

Lead Co-Sponsor: Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-FL)

## 4. BUY SMARTER AND SAVE **S. 1304, H.R. 2694 (PENDING IN THE 114TH CONGRESS)**

Enforce strategic sourcing so that separate divisions within a single federal agency do not make independent contracts for common items.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK) and Rep. Tim Griffin (R-AR)

Lead Co-Sponsors: Reps. Dan Maffei (D-NY), Tom Reed (R-NY), Todd Young (R-IN)

## 5. NO ADDING, NO PADDING **S. 1321, H.R. 2686 (PENDING IN THE 114TH CONGRESS)**

Stop assuming automatic year-to-year spending increases in agency budgets.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR)

Lead Co-Sponsor: Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY)

## 6. STAY IN PLACE, CUT THE WASTE **H.R. 2643 (PENDING IN THE 114TH CONGRESS)**

Cut 50 percent of agency travel and replace it with video conferencing.

Lead Sponsor: Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

Lead Co-Sponsor: Rep. John Barrow (D-GA)

## 7. WASTED ENERGY, WASTED DOLLARS

**S. 1308, H.R. 2689 (PENDING IN THE 114TH CONGRESS)**

Reduce energy waste in federal buildings by incentivizing private companies to identify energy savings. The contractors would be paid with the dollars saved instead of with taxpayer dollars.

Lead Sponsors: Reps. Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Peter Welch (D-VT)

## 8. PLAN FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

**S. 1297, H.R. 2675 (PENDING IN THE 114TH CONGRESS)**

Create a new Commission for Government Transformation to oversee and effect the transformation of various federal government programs so they will be more economical, efficient and effective.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-IL)

Lead Co-Sponsors: Reps. Sean Duffy (R-WI), David Cicilline (D-RI) and Mike Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

## PASSED

## 21ST CENTURY HEALTHCARE FOR HEROES **S. 1296, H.R. 2590**

Merge the electronic health records of the Department of Defense with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Rep. Chris Gibson (R-NY)

Lead Co-Sponsors: Reps. Ami Bera (D-CA), Paul Cook (R-CA), Raul Ruiz (D-CA)