



Rep. Tom Emmer on SPECIAL REPORT WITH BRETT BAIER

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BRETT BAIER:

House Majority Whip Tom Emmer. Congressman, thanks for the time. You know, you're the only other person who received a vote besides those two men, Mike Johnson and Hakeem Jeffries. Thomas Massie, Congressman, voted for you for Speaker. He and two others caused quite a stir, a little bit of drama on Capitol Hill. Well, what's your take about what happened there today and what the message was from them?

REP. TOM EMMER:

I think the message is from the Republican conference, Brett. Again, thanks for having me, but the message is Republicans are unified behind Donald Trump and the incoming administration, and we're ready to get to work right now on enacting the Trump agenda, which is exactly what the American people voted for on November 5th. Were there people that wanted to be heard? Were there people who had things that they wanted our Speaker to know were important to them? Yes. That's just the way this process works. But it happened on the first ballot. And if you'll recall, two years ago, it took 15 and almost a week to get it done. Today, it was one ballot, we're one and done, and we're ready to get moving immediately.

BRETT BAIER:

Oh, it's definitely a much different situation, but, you know, if you look at the breakdown and that majority and how it sits right now, 219 to 215, and then you're going to lose two more Republicans with Mike Waltz becoming national security advisor and Stefanik, Representative Stefanik eventually, if she gets confirmed to UN ambassador, that's 217 to 215. With that slim majority, how do you get through the big ticket items that President-elect Trump wants to get through?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, nothing's going to be easy, but Brett, everybody talks about this narrow margin that we have. Does nobody remember that for the last two years, we started out with 222 with a five vote advantage, which went down to a four vote, and then at times was 220. And we passed things that nobody thought we could pass, including a debt ceiling increase, including the Parental Bill of Rights, including the strongest energy bill in, well, in the last 30 years, in a border bill that's the strongest in 20 years. We did all that with such a narrow majority, and yet nobody knows because all of it sat on Chuck Schumer's desk. We're going to do it again, Brett. We will be able to perform. The biggest thing that we're going to have to be careful of is member health and making sure that they can be here. Attendance is going to be a very important thing.

BRETT BAIER:

Yes. Yeah. They have to be there. Otherwise, you lose the numbers. What about this back and forth about whether there's one package, one bite at the apple for budget reconciliation, or there's two this year to kind of



break up immigration and taxes? How do you see that right now?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, that's that's Donald Trump's call. He's going to make a call soon and say, this is what I want. And as soon as he does, Brett, we're ready to take it either way. If he wants to do two bills with one in February, and that's where the speaker goes, we'll get it done. And I imagine that will be a much slimmer one. That's why you could do it in a shorter period of time. And the second one would be sometime probably before Memorial Day. We could get it out of the House pretty early. But then the Senate would have to do its work if it's one big bill. Well, then the thought is, if that's what the president decides to do, we could probably have that out of the House by the end of March. And the Senate does its work. We could have that to the president's desk by Memorial Day.

BRETT BAIER:

Listen, you're a tough guy. You talk straight to people whenever you do interviews. But House Majority Whip, when you're counting these votes with that slim majority, that could be a tough job trying to herd Republicans. It seems easier for Democrats year after year. Why is that?

REP. TOM EMMER:

Well, I don't know. I just told you we had a lot of success. I don't know why it seems easier for Democrats. Let's just make it clear, and you know this, Brett, it's much easier to be in the minority. You're not going to see the divisions within that group because they don't govern when they're in the minority. They can work with Republicans, and we'll see if they're going to show an ability to do that. Hakeem suggested today that they would. But for us, yeah, nothing's ever going to be easy, Brett. Nothing here is easy when we had 247 members. We could not pass the strongest border bill. We did that with 222. So I just don't underestimate what we can do. You just got to have the numbers here, and we got to do our job. Our job is to make sure that the members and the public know exactly what it is that Donald Trump is moving, why it's important, and how it's going to benefit their lives. We do that, and their constituents. We do that, and we'll be able to pass things that you wouldn't expect we could do.

BRETT BAIER:

Congressman, we appreciate the time. We'll be following it all. Thanks.

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