



Rep. Tom Emmer on ABC News

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****HOST:**

** Congressman Tom Emmer of Minnesota is the Republican whip in the House, just re-elected to that post this week. He's going to be resuming his role as the number three Republican in Congress in charge of whipping those votes in a slim and potentially unruly majority, at least it was last time around. And we're happy he joins us now. So, Congressman, thanks for being with us. I want to ask you about that slim majority, according to FiveThirty, Republicans have so far won 218 seats, eight races left to be decided, so your majority is likely to go up. So, Matt Gaetz has resigned to become President Trump's Attorney General, if convicted, sorry, if confirmed. Trump has already chosen two more members of the House to serve in his administration. Speaker Johnson said he was, quote, begging and pleading Trump to stop choosing more House members. You're the whip. You've got to count those votes. Are you concerned that Trump is stealing the majority at all?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** No, I trust the president and the people around him. They know exactly what they're doing. And look, everybody wants to complain about whether you have 220, 221, 222. That's what we started with in the last Congress was 222, and we've done some historic things, like passing the strongest border bill in 20 years, passing a bill to unleash American energy production and deal with inflation, and the list goes on and on. Now that agenda, which is Trump's agenda, which has been sitting on Chuck Schumer's desk collecting dust for the better part of a year and a half, is going to be back in the House. And we're going to do our part to move the Trump agenda forward so that Donald Trump can make the changes that the American public told him last week. We want what you've got, and we want you to do it.

****HOST:**

** All right, Congressman, let's talk about one of those departing members, Matt Gaetz. You might have heard of him. He's been in the news lately. He's up for Attorney General. He's a lawyer, but he's only practiced law for two years, never as a prosecutor. And most of his experience with the criminal justice system has been to be the subject of an investigation, first by the DOJ, which declined to prosecute, and then later by the Ethics Committee for alleged sexual misconduct and with minors and obstruction claims. He has denied all of that, but you still say he'd make a great AG. Why?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Well, I absolutely do. And by the way, before we get there, let's remember that the Biden Attorney General Merrick Garland literally used the office to prosecute their political opponents, Biden's political opponents, and to go after parents who were peacefully protesting at school board meetings. And I would question that background as well. When it comes to Matt Gaetz, everybody wants to point at this other stuff. Matt's going to make a great Attorney General. He's been fighting for the American people. The American public has watched him do this for several years now. They know that an Attorney General that is under Donald J. Trump is going to work for the American people instead of for the bureaucracy, which it seems like that's what the DOJ has been doing for a while. And as I said earlier, the President Trump's base, that's what they want.



****HOST:**

** But I do want to follow up on Gaetz and the challenges that he faces getting confirmed. Gaetz was the subject of this House ethics investigation before his departure. And Speaker Johnson has urged the Ethics Committee not to release that report on their investigation. I want to listen to what Johnson said just a little while ago. I believe it is very important to maintain the House's position of not issuing ethics reports on people who are no longer members of Congress. I think we're opening the door as far as that. What I am saying is if someone is no longer a member of Congress, we are not in the business of investigating and publishing reports on people who are not part of this system.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Well, first off, I love the fact that you refer to the Trump base. I wish you guys would emphasize the fact that it is almost the entire country. He won the popular vote by an enormous margin. He increased Republican votes, listen to this, in every county in the United States. If this, the base that you're talking about, you guys try to make it sound like the base is this narrow group of people, America, regardless of whether Republicans or Democrats, he's got a congressman.

****HOST:**

** He is Trump. It was an impressive victory. No question. Democrats got thumped. But it is one of the smallest. It is one of the smallest margins in the past 30 years. He's probably not going to end up with 50 percent of the vote. He'll win by a point or two. That's you know, but the verdict was clear. So please, on Gates and the ethics community and Speaker Johnson.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Well, first off, the DOJ, does anybody really believe that the Biden DOJ, which uses the FBI to investigate if they would have found evidence of a crime that Matt Gaetz had committed? Does anyone believe that they would not have prosecuted him? This has been fully vetted. The FBI closed their file because clearly they didn't find a crime to charge Matt Gaetz with. When it comes to the ethics committee, that is a committee that is nonpartisan. It has the same number of Republicans and Democrats on it. They will make that decision. And it doesn't matter what the speaker says or what I say. The ethics committee will make whatever decision. And my understanding is House rules, which they operate under, say that once a member is no longer a member, then they cease to do anything unless that person is released.

****HOST:**

** Why not just release the report then?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** I guess, Kerry, you got to ask the ethics committee that.

****KERRY:**

** Well, I think the pressure is on to get the ethics committee to release that report. And I think if it's not released, it's high probability that it will be leaked. I think at some point we're going to find out what's in that report. Don't you agree, Kira?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**



** Go ahead and go to the FBI. Get their file. I mean, you can do that. I mean, this is all a bunch of distraction. Bottom line is a Biden Department of Justice fully investigated this individual and found no crime. So they closed their file that that's just as accessible, probably more accessible than any ethics committee. And we don't even know if there's a report. Everybody keeps talking about it. Nobody's seen it. Nobody knows that except the ethics committee.

****HOST:**

** All right. ABC has reported that a woman testified to the ethics committee that Gates had sex with her when she was just 17 years old. He said those claims were false. Can our nation's top prosecutor work effectively after those kinds of claims have been made?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Well, we've had the same type of partisan attacks on Justice Kavanaugh, on Donald Trump. I mean, it just doesn't end. This is a new political tool. Matt Gates, first off, Donald Trump was elected to shake up Washington, D.C., and he's going to do that. And you can't fix what's broken here with people who are part of the problem. You've got to go outside. In this case, there couldn't be a bigger outsider that understands this better than anyone else than Matt Gates. I think he'd make an excellent attorney general. And I think he would start to peel back the layers of bureaucracy within the Department of Justice and make sure that it gets back to working for the American people, not for political partisans that are using it for their agenda.

****HOST:**

** All right, Congressman, last question. You're the whip. You're going to have to whip those votes and count them. And it is no secret that Matt Gates isn't hugely popular in the caucus for whatever reason. And some of these other some of these other cabinet selections, that's a big ask. And some of those Republican senators are already talking about it. What's the message that these cabinet selections send to your caucus and to the country in a wider sense?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Well, I think these selections tell not only our caucus, but the country that Donald Trump is going to do exactly what he campaigned on. He is going to go into Washington, D.C. He's going to go back into the White House and he's going to start making sure that we right size government, that we make sure government employees are coming to work, that they're doing their job on behalf of the American people. He's going to get rid of waste, fraud and abuse. And he's going to try and make sure, again, that the government we have is the government that we need. And I think this is why his message played all across this country. It's an overwhelming mandate. And you can play whatever you want with numbers. But he won the popular vote and he also won the Electoral College and he increased Republican votes in every county in this country. If that doesn't give you the biggest statement you've ever had, well, then you're not going to believe anything.

****HOST:**

** It's a mandate for sure. Before we let you go, I want to get you on record, Congressman Tom Emmer, that you're going to come back and talk to us because the former head of the Ethics Committee, Charlie Dent, said that the findings in that investigation into Matt Gaetz will be released at some point and he doesn't think it's going to look good. So once we have all the details, I want you to come back and let's have a conversation. Will you come back?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**



** I'll always come back here. We're always here. Love to love talking with you.

****HOST:**

** See you then. Thank you, Congressman.

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