

GOP Breaks All-Time Record for Closed Rules

A Report from the House Committee on Rules Democratic Staff

Today, House Republicans have broken all records and become the most closed Congress in history.

Just two weeks after Paul Ryan assumed the Speaker's chair with a promise of changing the way the House functions, Republicans have offered yet another closed rule that excludes all Members – Republicans and Democrats alike – from the legislative process. A closed rule is a procedure that blocks all amendments and allows only the Republican leadership's proposal to be considered.

The Facts:

- With the passage of H. Res. 526, House Republicans have approved 181 closed rules since they took control of the House in 2011 (see Appendix A).
- That includes 45 closed rules in this year alone (see Appendix D) – which is more closed rules than any session of Congress in the history of the House of Representatives, a record set by Republicans themselves in 2013.
- Not only have the Republicans broken the record for the absolute number of closed rules, but a greater percentage of rules are closed. When Democrats last controlled the House, 34 percent of rules were closed. Under Republican control, almost half of all rules are closed (see Appendix B). And this year, 52 percent of all rules were entirely closed, meaning there have been more closed rules than all other rules combined (see Appendix C).

While closing down the legislative process has become more common under the leadership of both parties over the last two decades, the current House GOP has broken all previous records. Not only has the House adopted 45 closed rules over the last 11 months, making 2015 the most closed year on record, but astoundingly, the House GOP passed as many closed rules in a single week in October 2013 as during the *entire last year* of Democratic control.

Speaker Ryan began his tenure saying the right words:

"I want the House to work its will. I think that's the way the founders envisioned it to work...The way I am trying to do this job is the way I always thought it should have been done and that is to make this a more open process...So that every citizen of this

country through their elected representatives has the opportunity to make a difference. That is the people's House. This is the branch of government closest to the people...So I wanted to have a process that is more open, more inclusive, more deliberative, more participatory and that's what we're trying to do."

-Speaker Paul Ryan, Politico, November 5, 2015

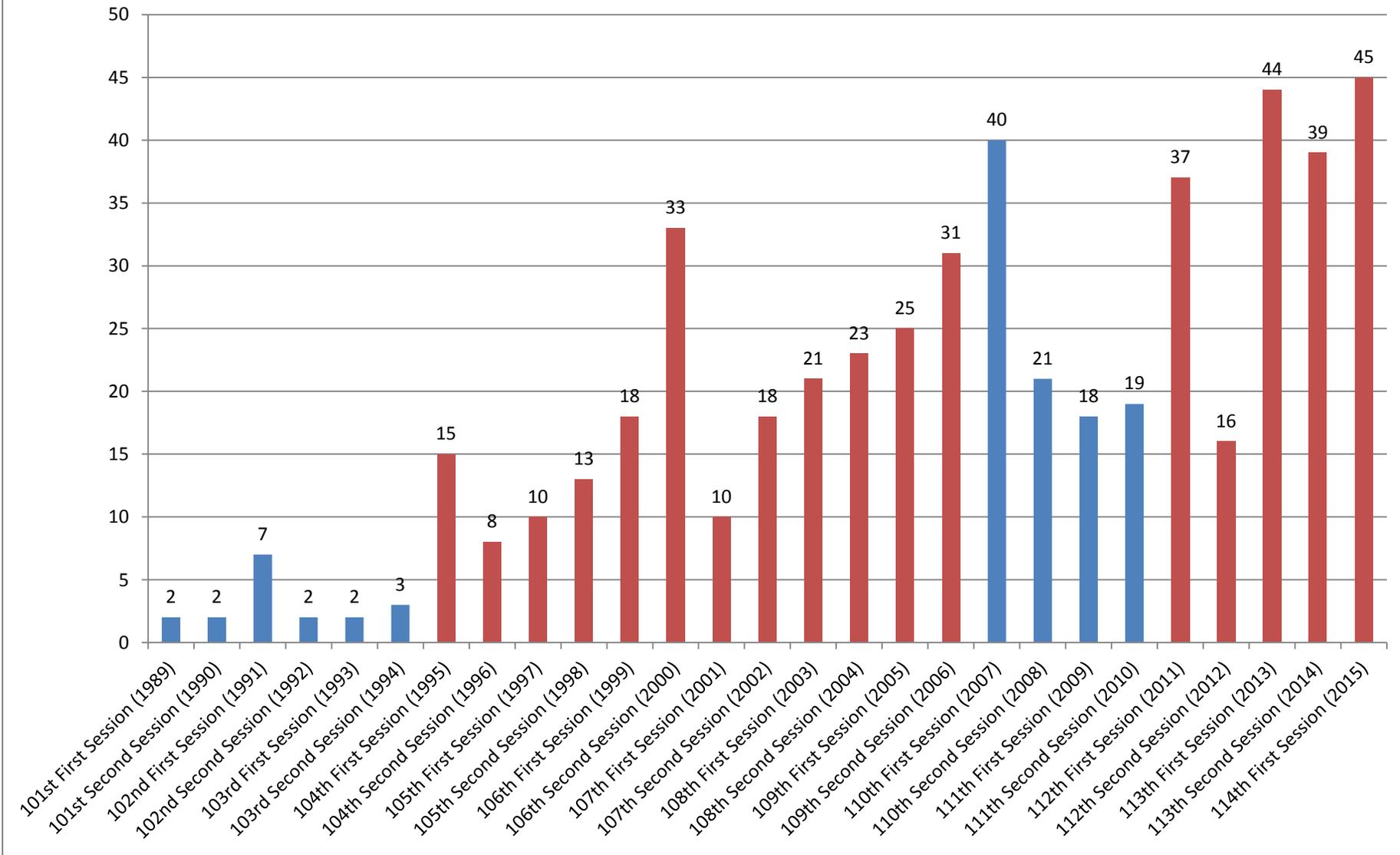
But these words are strikingly familiar. John Boehner – before the extremists in the GOP conference started to overwhelm him, the same extremists who ultimately forced him out after bringing us a government shutdown and national credit rating downgrade, and who are still here in the House making demands – began his speakership with eerily similar words:

"As the Chamber closest to the people, the House works best when it is allowed to work its will...I offer a commitment: Openness, once a tradition of this institution but increasingly scarce in recent decades, will be the new standard...you will always have the right to a robust debate in an open process that allows you to represent your constituents, to make your case, offer alternatives, and be heard."

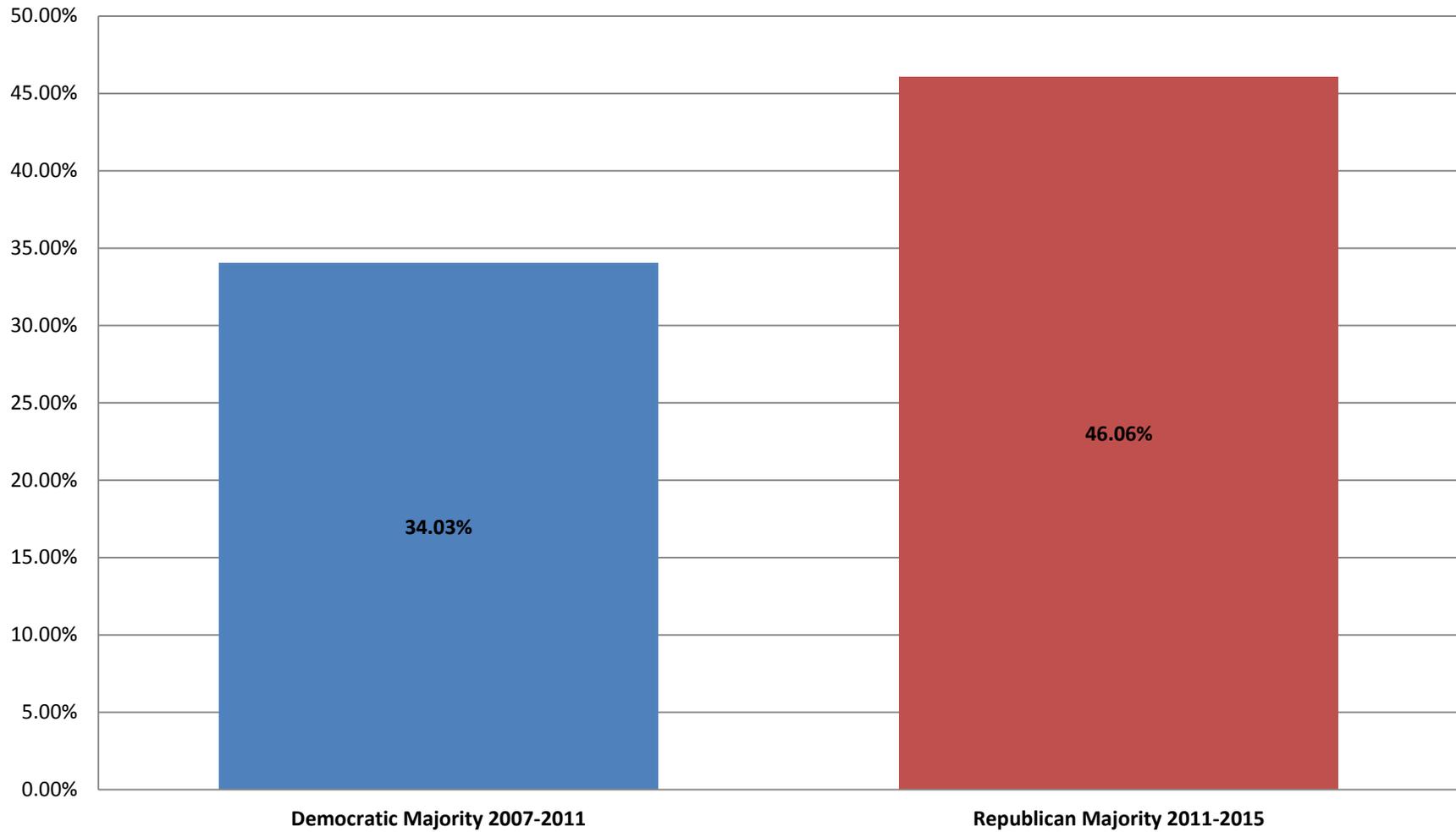
-Speaker John Boehner, House Floor, January 5, 2011

Speaker Ryan is not responsible for the five years of dysfunction, mismanagement, and governing by crisis that preceded his election as Speaker – although it is interesting to note that he voted for all the closed rules in this record-breaking session. But he is responsible for the promises he made when he assumed the position. And it appears that right out of the gate, Republicans are returning to the same closed process they have relied on for the last five years.

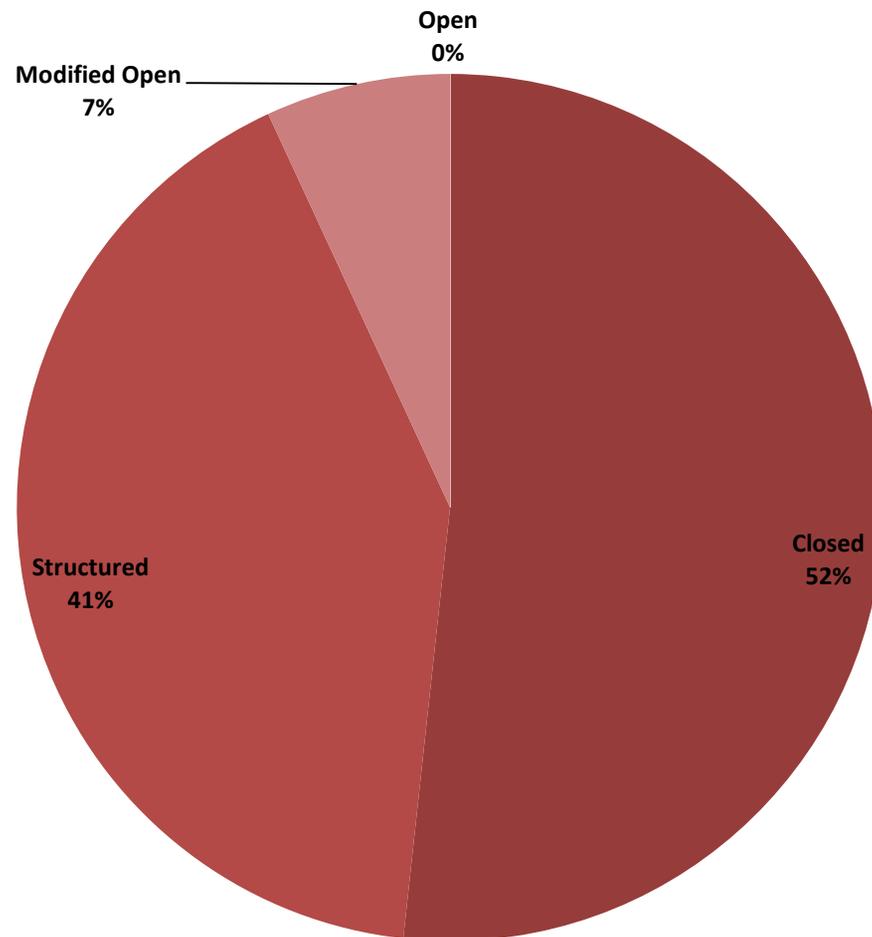
Appendix A: Closed Rules by Session 101st Congress - 114th Congress



Appendix B: Percent of Rules that are Closed Under Democratic and Republican Majorities



Appendix C: Rule Types Under the Current Republican Congress (114th)



Appendix D: Closed Rules Under Current Republican Congress (114th Congress)

Number	Rule	Bill	Title
1	H. Res. 19	H.R. 3	Keystone XL Pipeline Act
2	H. Res. 19	H.R. 30	Save American Workers Act
3	H. Res. 27	H.R. 37	Promoting Job Creation and Reducing Small Business Burdens Act
4	H. Res. 38	H.R. 161	Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act
5	H. Res. 38	H.R. 36	Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act
6	H. Res. 42	H.R. 7	No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2015
7	H. Res. 48	H.R. 351	LNG Permitting Certainty and Transparency Act
8	H. Res. 70	H.R. 596	To repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and health care-related provisions in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, and for other purposes.
9	H. Res. 100	S. 1	Keystone XL Pipeline Approval Act
10	H. Res. 101	H.R. 636	America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2015
11	H. Res. 101	H.R. 644	Fighting Hunger Incentive Act of 2015
12	H. Res. 121	H.R. 529	To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans.
13	H. Res. 129	H. J. Res. 35	Making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes
14	H. Res. 152	H. Res. 132	Providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.
15	H. Res. 152	S. J. Res. 8	A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.
16	H. Res. 173	H.R. 2	Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015
17	H. Res. 189	H.R. 650	Preserving Access to Manufactured Housing Act of 2015

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Number	Rule	Bill	Title
18	H. Res. 189	H.R. 685	Mortgage Choice Act of 2015
19	H. Res. 200	H.R. 622	State and Local Sales Tax Deduction Fairness Act of 2015
20	H. Res. 200	H.R. 1105	Death Tax Repeal Act of 2015
21	H. Res. 231	H. J. Res. 43	Disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2014
22	H. Res. 255	H.R. 36	Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act
23	H. Res. 255	H.R. 2048	USA FREEDOM Act of 2015
24	H. Res. 271	H.R. 2353	Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015
25	H. Res. 273	H.R. 880	American Research and Competitiveness Act of 2015
26	H. Res. 303	H.R. 2393	Country of Origin Labeling Amendments Act of 2015
27	H. Res. 319	H.R. 160	Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015
28	H. Res. 319	H.R. 1190	Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015
29	H. Res. 362	H.R. 3038	Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015, Part II
30	H. Res. 370	H.R. 3009	Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act
31	H. Res. 388	H.R. 3236	Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015
32	H. Res. 408	H. J. Res. 64	Disapproving of the agreement transmitted to Congress by the President on July 19, 2015, relating to the nuclear program of Iran
33	H. Res. 412	H. Res. 411	Finding that the President has not complied with section 2 of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015
34	H. Res. 412	H.R. 3640	To suspend until January 21, 2017, the authority of the President to waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions pursuant to an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran

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Number	Rule	Bill	Title
35	H. Res. 412	H.R. 3641	To approve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed at Vienna on July 14, 2015, relating to the nuclear program of Iran
36	H. Res. 420	H.R. 758	Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2015
37	H. Res. 421	H.R. 3134	Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015
38	H. Res. 421	H.R. 3504	Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act
39	H. Res. 444	H.R. 3495	Women's Public Health and Safety Act
40	H. Res. 448	H. Con. Res. 79	Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 719 (Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015)
41	H. Res. 449	H.R. 3457	Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act
42	H. Res. 462	H.R. 3192	Homebuyers Assistance Act
43	H. Res. 480	H.R. 692	Default Prevention Act
44	H. Res. 483	H.R. 3762	Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act of 2015
45	H.Res. 526	H.R. 511	Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2015