

DC is important, but remember where power should reside

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Thursday, Jan. 2

Good morning! And I hope you had a safe, healthy and happy New Year!

We are just weeks away from President Donald J. Trump re-entering the White House and less than two weeks away from the Iowa Legislature opening its 2025 session.

There is a lot of buzz about what is set to happen in Washington D.C. over the next couple of weeks. Obviously there is a lot of anticipation over who will be the Speaker of the House.

While President Donald J. Trump has endorsed Speaker Mike Johnson to continue in the role, many of his closest allies are on record saying Johnson simply isn't fit for the job.

When Johnson took over for Kevin McCarthy, he did so as a relatively untested, unproven leader. His voting record was fine. His rhetoric was fine. Everything about him was fine.

But his tenure as Speaker has been bumpy at best. And here is the thing, it isn't entirely his fault. He had a slim majority, which resulted in relying on Democrat votes to get many consequential things done.

Much of what he has done as Speaker has upset conservatives. But I believe two things can be true at the same time —

First, Johnson has been disappointing as Speaker. Second, it's hard to envision anyone else having any better luck.

There is a lengthy list of votes that Johnson allowed where he had more Democrat support than Republican support. But again, his Republican majority is thin. And if we're honest, I mean, look at the delegation from Iowa — moderate, moderate, moderate, liberal.

Now, one of those moderates — Zach Nunn — has reason to be moderate: his district. However, we have a liberal representative in Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks who nearly lost a district that Trump won by more than eight points because of her liberalism.

You know, it's ironic that every time a conservative underperforms in a district, we're lectured about electing the "most conservative Republican who can win." Yet when a liberal Republican like Miller-Meeks nearly blows a U.S. House seat because she is so liberal, crickets from those same folks.

Here is the thing about the Speaker of the House position — it can literally be anyone. It does not have to be a person elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. And maybe that's what the "system" needs — an outsider who can shake it up and not put politics ahead of policy.

We can hope for that to happen, but if we're being honest, we know it isn't going to.

So, what am I suggesting? Well, Republicans have control of the White House, control of the U.S. House and control of the U.S. Senate. There isn't a whole lot more we can do to give them a reason to push conservatism at the federal level. And while we should definitely pay

attention to what they do at the national level, we should wake up to the realization they should be doing a lot less — and our focus should be much more on the state level.

If we're looking to Washington D.C. for solutions, well, I hope we like the view because solutions from D.C. will be few and far between. Yes, even with Republicans in charge.

I'm not overly optimistic about Republicans at the national level doing what needs to be done. Again, look at the four in the U.S. House from Iowa.

But here in Iowa, we have sizable majorities in the Iowa House and the Iowa Senate. We also obviously have a Republican governor. And it has been this way for eight years. That means ANYTHING you want to see done at the state level that HASN'T happened yet has been stopped not by Democrats, but by Republicans.

And there is a lot to get done yet! A lot.

I want you all to really consider coming to the Capitol for a day this legislative session — especially if you typically do not or never have. You are welcome to tag along with me to get a feel for how things work. I'm willing to help you understand the process and explain what is happening.

I think there's a reason the "mainstream media" focuses so much on national politics — it's because you have the smallest voice at that level. You really can't impact much, if anything, at the national level. But here at the state level, well you have more of a chance. That voice gets louder the closer you get to home — county, city, school board, etc.

Yet few of us actually use that voice because we're so caught up in what's happening in Washington D.C. Why is the federal government so bloated and big? I'd argue because our focus on it is so bloated and big.

We'll keep an eye on Washington. And we should. But that shouldn't preclude us from having a presence in our statehouse. I hope you can make it there this session! Good things should be happening!

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