



A New Speaker Conjures

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The new House Speaker was a dark horse in the mad rush to fill the position vacated after Kevin McCarthy's [ouster](#) in a historic political play. But Mike Johnson (R.-La.) appears to be a thoughtful man, known more for his prayers than backstabbing, and sporting an interesting set of principles. They are listed on his congressional web page; he [calls them](#) the seven "core principles" of conservatism:

1. Individual Freedom
2. Limited Government
3. The Rule of Law
4. Peace Through Strength
5. Fiscal Responsibility
6. Free Markets
7. Human Dignity

Inspiring, but the devil can bog us in details — under each rubric his elaborations sound more like fantasied ideals than anything like current practice. And for a man who got ahead by having "[no enemies](#)," any real advancement would hardly conjure up consensus and comity.

Johnson acknowledges current government failure — at least in his fifth principle, which he explains entirely in terms of political fault: "Because government has refused to live within its means, America is facing an unprecedented debt and spending crisis. Federal debt now exceeds \$33.5 trillion, and our current fiscal path is unsustainable and dangerous, jeopardizing our nation's economic growth, stability and the security of future generations." He goes on to express a congressional "duty to resolve the crisis."

Yet, only standard Republican talking points are offered as back-up, with zero acknowledgment of the bipartisan difficulty of reducing spending even a smidgen.

Truth is, each of his principles is honored by the federal government only in the breach. While we may hope and pray that the new Speaker takes all of these serious enough to work to change course, we have to wonder: Does he have a prayer?

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.