



Congressional gridlock topic of bipartisan forum at Palm Beach State College Feb. 18

(Palm Beach Gardens – Feb. 6, 2013) During the recent “fiscal cliff” negotiations between Congress and the White House, public opinion polls showed that only 18 percent of Americans approve of the job Congress is doing. The division of power in the two legislative bodies, partisan infighting, a failure to compromise and the perception of a lack of ethics and civility are all contributing to the negative perception Americans have for their representatives in Washington.

How can the cycle of legislative stagnation be broken?

Two former U.S. House of Representatives members, Bob Walker and Dennis Hertel, will address the issue during a visit to the Palm Beach State College Palm Beach Gardens campus during a bipartisan presentation on Feb. 18. The forum, titled “Congress and Gridlock,” is part of the “Congress to Campus” initiative.

The “Congress to Campus” program is an initiative of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress that brings pairs of former members - one Democrat and one Republican - to college campuses. The goal is to inspire students to consider careers in public service and deepen their understanding of the important role that Congress plays in our democracy.

The venue allows the two former politicians to offer different perspectives on the topic without debate. Their focus will be on explaining how Congress works (or doesn’t work) and what the public can do about it. They will also answer questions from the audience.

Bob Walker represented Pennsylvania’s 16th district as a Republican from 1977 to 1997. During that time he was chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology, chief deputy whip, vice chairman of the Budget Committee, chairman of the Republican leadership, and speaker pro tempore. Walker is currently executive chairman of the Washington lobbying firm, Wexler & Walker Public Policy Associates.

Dennis Hertel is the president of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress and represented Michigan as a Democrat for six terms, from 1981-1993. During his congressional tenure, Hertel served on the Armed Services Committee and was chair of

the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight as well as a ranking member of the Subcommittee on Research and Development. He is currently a partner in the Livingston Group, a Washington lobbying firm.

The 7 p.m. forum will be held in Room SC127 in the Bioscience Technology Complex, 3160 PGA Blvd. This is a free event and is open to the public. The event is sponsored by the Palm Beach State College chapter of the Association of Florida Colleges. For more information call 561-207-5416.

Serving more than 49,000 students annually, Palm Beach State College is the largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, providing the bachelor's degree, associate degrees, professional certificates, career training and lifelong learning. Established in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, it offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.

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