



SPOTLIGHT

Graham Platner Is Gone (We Hope), But His Lessons Are Not

By Dale M. Glading

Graham Platner may be out of the Maine Senate race – his meteoric campaign having self-destructed and deservedly so – but he left a gift for the GOP on his way out the door.

No, it's not Susan Collins' re-election chances, which just improved exponentially as the Democrats scramble to replace Mr. Totenkopf Tattoo with a last-minute substitute in a move eerily reminiscent of the Kamala Harris for Joe Biden switcheroo that backfired so badly in 2024.

Actually, I am talking about something that is at risk of being lost in the rubble of Platner's once-ascendent but now imploding campaign – his populist message that attracted voters and energized supporters.

Lest you think I've gone full-blown Commie on you, rest assured that this dyed-in-the-wool Christian conservative capitalist would never entertain such a preposterous idea. That would be akin to buying a steerage class ticket aboard the RMS Titanic and then selling your life jacket to the highest bidder so you had some spending money for the trip home.

Iceberg ahead!

What I am referring to is not

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Just Spit It Out, Congress!

By Dale M. Glading

"It will be of little avail to the people if the laws are so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood." - James Madison, 4th President of the United States and "Father of the U.S. Constitution"

No one likes to hear themselves talk more than politicians. Not even preachers... and that's saying something.

Apparently, the same is true when it comes to the written word. Members of Congress seem incapable of writing bills in concise, simple language that everyday Americans can read and understand.

Maybe that's on purpose, to confuse the common man and keep him in the dark. Or maybe it's because Congressmen and Senators write the way they talk – incessantly and often nonsensically.

Here are a few examples of a growing (and very disturbing) trend...

In the 80th Congress, which met from 1947 to 1949, bills averaged 2.5 pages in length. Today, in the 119th Congress, the average bill length is 17.9 pages. That's more than a 700% increase!

Ironically, combined congressional bills have averaged 4-6 million words for more than three-quarters of a century. That means that fewer bills are being written, but each one is seven times longer than its predecessors.

It's as if today's legislators are being paid by the page.

For instance, the bill that established the IRS and the personal income tax in 1913 was a mere 14 pages and the 1970 bill that created the EPA (the Environmental Protection Agency) was just 4 pages.

Conversely, the Affordable Care Act of 2010 contained more than 2,500 pages and an additional 17,000 pages of regulations. No wonder Nancy Pelosi infamously said, "But we have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it."

Another behemoth of a bill was the Dodd-Frank Act of 2010 that sought to promote financial stability, enhance fiscal transparency, prevent taxpayer-funded bailouts, and protect consumers from abusive financial practices. It weighed in at a voluminous 1,800 pages... and change.

Such excessive verbosity led Rep Tom Garrett (R-VA) to introduce the READ IT (Review Every Act Diligently In Total) Act of 2018. Garrett was angry that he and other members were handed a 2,232-page omnibus bill to fund the government... and then asked to vote on it 18 hours later.

"How fast can you read?" Garrett asked rhetorically. "Can you read 2,232 pages in only 18 hours? That would be 124 pages per hour for 18 hours without a break and with complete comprehension."

Sadly, Garrett's bill failed to gain traction in the House, just like Sen. Rick Scott's "Read the Bill" Act failed in the Senate in 2023. Currently, the House requires 72 hours between a bill's introduction and a final vote, but that rule can be waived in order to pass "urgent" legislation. The Senate has

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Platner's economic message of wealth redistribution based on class envy, but rather the simple fact that there is a growing affordability crisis in America that Republicans seem oblivious to or determined to ignore. Platner recognized it and tapped into it successfully. So did Zohran Mamdani and a number of other Progressive and Democratic Socialist candidates.

The plain truth is that young people in particular are struggling to make ends meet let alone get ahead in life. We mock them for living in their parents' basements but provide no economic lifeline for them to grab onto and no blueprint to follow for future financial success. They are too often stuck behind the economic eight-ball of student loan debt compounded by soaring home prices, high interest rates, and escalating energy costs.

The sad truth is that a college degree doesn't guarantee you anything these days other than decades of loan payments to go along with your high-interest car payments and your exorbitant monthly rental payments on a studio apartment in a not-so-nice part of town.

It's no wonder that younger voters are flocking to candidates who offer them a listening ear and promise them a better way... even if it proves to be fool's gold.

The first Republican candidate who actually takes the time to listen – I mean really listen – to the angst and struggles of Gen Y and Z voters will reap an unprecedented electoral harvest. They just want to be heard; not blown off with some out-of-date platitudes by people two and three times their age who

never had to face the economic headwinds they do now.

We have got to find a way to bring down housing and energy costs and to make post-secondary education more affordable. Incentivizing the construction of smaller starter homes or requiring builders to include scaled-down models in order to receive zoning permits would be two steps in the right direction. After all, not everyone needs – or even wants – a 2,500 or 3,000-square foot house. Case in point: My wife and I are flourishing in our 1 BR/1.5 BA house... and we did just fine in our 34-foot trailer, too, where we lived for three years as full-time stationary RVers while we planted a church.

As for reducing college costs, if the federal government would stop subsidizing post-secondary education, I am confident that tuition costs would drop dramatically. As it is now, college administrators simply take Uncle Sam's money and raise tuition costs accordingly. Everyone wins but the students, who are saddled with ever-burdensome loans to repay.

The same thing goes with health-care, another mega industry that represents 18% of the U.S. economy. You would think the bureaucrats inside the Washington Beltway would realize that every time you subsidize something, it winds up costing more. Unfortunately, that takes common sense, something that is in very short supply on Capitol Hill.

The other part of Platner's campaign that I hope the GOP picks up on and runs with is the undercurrent of frustration that lies just below the surface all across America. Frustration with the status quo, frustration with the two-tiered justice system, frustration with the double-standard between the powerful elite and the common man.

Simply put, Americans are angry

because they feel "the system" has conspired against them... and to a large degree, it has.

Yesterday, I shared a meme on Facebook that showed Bernie Sanders juxtaposed with comedian Steve Harvey. Sanders is shown next to a sign that reads, "Nobody working 40 hours a week should be living in poverty." The sign next to Harvey rebuts Sanders' claim with the words, "Then stop giving their money to people working zero hours a week."

I have been posting comments and sharing memes on social media for more than 20 years... and I have rarely seen the reaction I have received to this simple post. As I pen these words, more than 200 people have shared my original post and several thousand have "liked" or commented on it on more than four dozen different group pages. I fully expect those numbers to double, triple or even quadruple by the time this article is published.

Once again, the first GOP candidate who addresses this growing sense of political and economic injustice head-on will become the most popular Republican since Ronald Reagan – and before him, Teddy Roosevelt. Hardworking Americans are sick and tired of having their pockets picked by Uncle Sam... and their hard-earned paychecks distributed to illegal aliens, welfare moms with multiple kids by multiple dads, left-wing political organizations posing as social service providers, and foreign countries who hate our guts.

There... I said it.

Now maybe someone in the Republican ranks can grow a spine and say it too... while at the same time, showing some empathy and compassion for young people who want to experience the American Dream but don't know how or where to begin.

An Abuse of Power and Position

By Dale M. Glading

In April 2013, actress Reese Witherspoon and her husband, talent agent Jim Toth, were pulled over by a Georgia state trooper after the officer observed Toth driving erratically. The trooper described Toth as having “droopy eyelids and watery, bloodshot eyes”, adding that he “smelled strongly of alcohol.”

Sounds like a DUI to me and any other law-abiding citizen, but apparently not to Ms. Witherspoon. Exiting the vehicle against the officer’s instructions, she repeatedly berated him, hollering, “Do you know my name? You’re about to find out who I am... you’re about to be on national news.”

Actually, Reese, the officer never made national news as his identity remained secret, but the tabloids had a field day splashing your calous remarks – and your husband’s mug shot – across their front pages.

Ms. Witherspoon quickly issued a public apology as her PR team went into full damage control mode. Reese said she was “deeply embarrassed” and acknowledged that she had had “one drink too many.” She also admitted that her actions were disrespectful to the officer and claimed that her words did not reflect her true character. Witherspoon also expressed her deep respect and appreciation for law enforcement.

Sure... OK... I guess we all make mistakes. Unfortunately, this “Do you know my name?” defense is being employed by a growing number of celebrities – and now officeholders – to the point where it has become a national (and very nauseating) epidemic.

Actors Alec Baldwin and Shia LaBeouf have tried it and so have

singers Zach Bryan and Justin Timberlake. Shame on them all. Comically, the arresting officers in some of these cases truly didn’t know who these Hollywood has-beens are (or used to be).

This sense of entitlement and privilege has even crept into the world of sports where Tiger Woods allegedly placed a call to President Trump when he was pulled over for his latest DUI, obviously hoping that he could pull some strings.

Not cool, Tiger. In fact, pretty darn lame if you ask me.

The same goes for Bryson DeChambeau, who reportedly threatened to phone President Trump from Royal Birkdale, the site of the 154th Open Championship, when he was assessed a two-stroke penalty during the second round. I guess Bryson was thinking about the phone call President Trump made during the World Cup to get a red card against U.S. men’s national team member Folarin Balogun overturned. Either way, it came across as a completely childish stunt... and the two-stroke penalty for improving his lie stuck.

I suppose in some ways we can expect actors, singers, and professional athletes to act like a bunch of prima donnas because everyone pampers them – from their fans to their entourages – but I still find it sickening. However, what bothers me even more is when officeholders, who are supposed to be public servants, play the “Do you know my name?” card.

Such was the case recently in New Hampshire when state representative Ellen Read, a Democrat from Newmarket, was cited not once, but twice for excessive speeding. And when I say excessive, I mean excessive. In December 2024, Ms. Read was clocked driving more than 100 miles per hour on Interstate 93 in Windham; and in June

2025, she was accused of driving 92-mph in a 65-mph zone in Londonderry.

Her defense? Ms. Read says that in both instances, she was on her way to or from the state capital and that under an obscure and nearly 250-year-old law, it is illegal for any state legislator to be “arrested, or held to bail” while traveling to, attending, or returning from legislative sessions.

Legislative privilege? Who on earth does this lady think she is? I mean, we fought a revolution to rid ourselves of a monarchy, didn’t we?

Thankfully, a judge rejected Read’s faulty argument and court records show that she was ultimately convicted of negligent driving, ordered to pay a \$1,240 fine with part of the penalty deferred, and required to complete a safe-driving course while avoiding further moving violations. So far, the New Hampshire Supreme Court has declined to take up her appeal.

Unfortunately, Ms. Read’s case is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to politicians and privilege... and if you think things are bad in Concord, New Hampshire, just imagine how much worse they are inside the Washington Beltway.

Franking privileges – basically, the ability to send free mail to your constituents telling them what a great job you are doing – is just one of the countless perks that congressmen and senators enjoy. Then, of course, there is their top-of-the line health care coverage and their lavish federal pensions that they qualify for after just five years of service. Full benefits based on 80% of their three highest salaries are typically available at age 62.

On top of that, all members of Congress are granted free parking at all Washington area airports as well as

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travel reimbursements back to their home districts. They are also reimbursed for international travel "for diplomatic or research purposes."

What a life!

In-house gym, swimming pool, and tennis courts? Check! The list goes on and on... and so does the bill, footed entirely by the American taxpayers.

In 1954, Harry Truman wrote in his diary that, "An honest public servant can't become rich in politics. He can only attain greatness and satisfaction by service." In an ideal world, Harry would be right, but we don't live in an ideal world. And so, politicians who claim to go to Concord or Washington to serve their constituents all too often wind up

serving themselves instead.

Now don't get me wrong. I don't begrudge people like West Virginia Sen. Jim Justice, who came into office with a net worth of \$1.3 billion or Rep. Jefferson Shreve of Indiana, whose net worth soared this year because he sold his storage unit company for \$590 million. However, people like former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, whose personal fortune has increased exponentially since she was elected to Congress in 1986, make me sick. Nancy and her husband Paul had a net worth of \$3 million when she first came to Washington and somehow, they have parlayed that seed money into a nest egg estimated to be as high as \$400 million.

In case you're wondering, that's a 13,000% increase, far outpacing the Dow Jones Industrial Average, the S&P 500, or any other financial metric. In fact, there is now an app

that tracks Nancy Pelosi's investments so you, too, can learn how to use insider information to your advantage.

As if her insatiable greed wasn't enough, add hypocrisy and a large dose of cynicism to Nancy's swan song as she prepares to exit Congress after 40 years in office. The aptly named PELOSI Act that was introduced in the Senate earlier this year would ban members of Congress and their spouses from trading individual stocks. The bill advanced out of committee in July and is currently awaiting a full vote on the Senate floor.

With a wink and a wave, Nancy is actually supporting her namesake bill in a move her critics call "pulling the ladder up behind you." In other words, she got hers, so the heck with the rest of you peasants and other working-class stiff.

Let them eat cake!

Just Spit It Out, Congress!

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no set timeframe.

When I ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010, I recorded a video of me sitting at a desk behind tall stacks of copy paper. I used those optics to say that if elected, I would introduce a bill limiting all federal legislation to 100 pages or less.

If I were running today, I would cut that number in half. After all, if you can't say something in 50 pages, it's probably not worth saying.

Another thing that gets my goat as a transplanted Floridian who has loved living in the Sunshine State since 2011, is the ease with which we amend our state constitution.

The United States Constitution was ratified in 1789 and since then, there have been a total of 27 amendments.

By contrast, the latest version of the Florida State Constitution was adopted in 1968, and since then it has been amended a whopping 144 times.

That's 27 amendments in 237 years versus 144 amendments in just 58 years. Something's glaringly wrong with that equation and we had better fix it sooner rather than later by raising the threshold for a proposed amendment to pass from 60% to at least 67%... or even 70%.

Actually, if our legislators in Tallahassee would do their jobs and pass some tough and proactive laws instead of kicking the proverbial can down the road, a lot of the

proposed constitutional amendments wouldn't need to be introduced in the first place.

One can only hope.



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