



THIRD WAY

September 29, 2021

Representative Chris Smith
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

When you joined the Problem Solvers Caucus alongside a Democratic counterpart, you pledged to find common ground on important issues and search for bipartisan solutions. We applaud that sentiment and wish more of your congressional colleagues shared it. But recently, we have reason to doubt your commitment to solving problems, as you have yet to declare your support for a bill that should be passed in the House without the slightest controversy: the bipartisan infrastructure legislation.

As the Problem Solvers [caucus website](#) notes, infrastructure spending enjoys overwhelming bipartisan support but still has fallen victim to congressional gridlock for many years. This week, you will likely be offered the opportunity to end that stalemate. If you do not take it, your pledge to solve problems will be proven entirely hollow.

Four of your Republican colleagues have pledged to vote for the bill, and it's imperative that you join them. This is not a close call. There is no doubt that a major investment in our nation's roads, bridges, railways, and other vital infrastructure is long overdue. The infrastructure legislation you will vote on passed the Senate overwhelmingly, with the support of all Democrats and nearly 40% of the chamber's Republicans, including Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. All the Democratic Problem Solvers will be voting yes.

While the House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy will urge his chamber's Republicans to oppose the legislation, this posture is transparently political; he has made no effort to dress it up with substantive rationales. Reportedly, he is instructing you and your colleagues to vote no on the bill unless and until it achieves a majority with only Democratic support, meaning any Republican "yes" votes would be meaningless. Such naked partisanship – choosing gridlock over progress for purely tactical reasons – is exactly what you pledged to fight in becoming a "Problem Solver."

Your time to take up that fight has arrived. You have run for office and raised campaign funds on the promise that you are there to solve the nation's problems and put country over party. Anything other than declaring your support now and voting for the bill, in turn, would signal clearly to your constituents that you support nothing more than faux bipartisanship. This could only be viewed as the crass political game-playing you've promised your voters you would avoid.

On behalf of Third Way, I urge you to declare your support for the bipartisan infrastructure bill before the voting begins on Thursday and to follow that pledge with your vote. Otherwise, you will drain the "Problem Solver" notion of all meaning.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Cowan
President