



Boehner takes his retribution

By Scott Wong - 06/16/15 01:37 PM EDT

House GOP leaders booted three members off the whip team for voting against a procedural rule that structured how a critical trade package was brought to the House floor last week.

Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) informed Reps. Cynthia Lummis (Wyo.), Steve Pearce (N.M.) and Trent Franks (Ariz.) on Monday that they were no longer a part of the GOP's vote-counting operation, a source close to the whip team confirmed.

Scalise's decision was based on longstanding whip team rules that stated members must "vote as a team on procedural matters" but are free to vote against leadership on underlying legislation, the source said.

One of those removed said she accepted Scalise's decision. Lummis, a deputy whip, was aware when she cast her vote against leadership that there could be repercussions.

"She understands his decision and departs the Whip organization with nothing but the utmost respect for Mr. Scalise and his entire organization," Lummis spokesman Joe Spiering said in an email. "Mr. Scalise was trying to include a wide variety of voices from the Republican conference on the Whip Team. Cynthia respected that and continues to respect the difficult job he has."

National Journal first reported on Scalise's decision.

It came on the same day Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) chastised nearly three dozen Republicans for voting against the trade rule last Thursday.

"I made it pretty clear to the members today I was not very happy about it," Boehner told reporters after a closed-door meeting with rank-and-file members at the Capitol Hill Club. "You know, we're a team. And we've worked hard to get the majority; we've worked hard to stay in the majority."

"And I expect our team to act like a team, and frankly, I made it pretty clear I wasn't very happy," he added.

In the meeting, Boehner told his fellow Republicans it was "nonsense" that some of them had voted against leadership, according to a GOP lawmaker in the room.

His remarks, which sparked applause, are notable because GOP leaders for days have been highlighting Democrats' stark divisions over trade. Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said Tuesday that Democrats are engaged in a "civil war" with one another.

The large number of GOP defections on Friday's rule vote **nearly scuttled** the trade package before it even reached the floor. Thirty-four Republicans, mostly conservatives, voted no, objecting to the way the package was put together.

It wasn't until a handful of pro-trade Democrats voted yes that the rule narrowly passed, on a 217-212 vote.

The rule split the Senate-passed trade package into parts, including separate votes on a bill to aid workers displaced by trade and another to grant President Obama fast-track authority to complete major trade deals.

The fast-track bill, known as trade promotion authority, narrowly cleared the House on a bipartisan vote. But because of the rule, it will not be sent to Obama's desk because Democrats rallied to defeat the aid bill in order to derail the overall package.

The House will vote on a new rule Tuesday that would allow GOP leaders to bring back the workers aid bill for another vote by July 30.

Rep. Raúl Labrador (R-Idaho), who was among the 34 Republicans to vote against the rule last week, said Boehner hasn't spoken to him about his vote. He accused GOP leaders of catering too much to Democrats at the expense of losing support from conservatives.

"This is the second or third time that they negotiated with Democrats and then Democrats go back on their word. And they still don't come to the conservatives," Labrador said at an event hosted by the Heritage Foundation Tuesday morning. "We can help them with this process."

"Voting against the rule is almost like committing a capital crime here," Labrador said of the leadership's attitude.

—Cristina Marcos contributed to this report.

TAGS: John Boehner, Steve Scalise, Cynthia Lummis, Steve Pearce, Trent Franks, Trade, fast-track, TPA