House candidates running against party leadership: Golden

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(Photo: Michael Chow/The Republic)

In a growing sign that traditional party identification and loyalty are weakening under the stress of internal ideological and strategic conflict, this yearôs mid-term Congressional candidates are being advised to utilize opposition to their party leadership as a central campaign theme.

The ties that have historically bound Republicans and Democrats to their respective parties have frayed badly and, in some cases, unraveled altogether, replaced by a strategy rooted in personality and style.

The late House Speaker Tip OôNeillôs trenchant observation ð ñAll politics is localòð has morphed into ñAll politics is personal.ò

Republicans are being counseled to avoid close association with President Donald Trump while Democrats see benefit in distancing themselves from their House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

Democrats around the country took notice when one of their own, Conor Lamb

support Pelosi for Speaker should Democrats regain control of the House.

The decision by more than 20 House Republicans to retire rather than seek re-election was interpreted as a warning that Trump had become a serious ð perhaps fatal ð drag on their re-election hopes.

Democrats are also preoccupied by a debilitating struggle over the partyôs future, attempting to mollify its strident progressive wing who argue the party

message to voters.

Even in an occupation in which hyperbole and exaggeration have become the norm, Trump and Pelosi have raised the bar.

The president has spent nearly his entire time in office tweeting demonstrably false over the top commentary while Pelosi has delivered such cringe worthy comments as warning that the tax reform/tax cut legislation would lead to Armageddon and the end of western civilization.

She followed by cementing her reputation as out of touch by characterizing $1,000 bonuses awarded to millions of American workers as ñcrumbs.ò Presumably, the condescension and hypocrisy of her remark never occurred to her.

Her San Francisco-style liberalism grates on Democrats running in suddenly competitive congressional districts and who rightly fear their association with her and her snobbery will sink their chances.

The party was not helped, either, by the recent diatribe from Hillary Clinton who, on a trip to India, attributed her loss to Trump to the backward bigoted people who inhabit that swath of the country between the Northeast and the West Coast.