

## ON CAPITOL HILL

### House Leadership Voices Its Support for Gingrich

The 15-member House Republican leadership reaffirmed its support for Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) after three GOP lawmakers expressed reservations about keeping him in that post while an ethics investigation is pending.

"We unequivocally support Newt's reelection as Speaker for the 105th Congress," wrote the lawmakers, who were organized by Rep. Bill Paxon (N.Y.), outgoing head of the GOP's House campaign committee. "He led the most productive Congress in a generation, which dramatically reduced the deficit and enacted important reforms from welfare to health care to telecommunications."

The reservations about Gingrich do not appear to be widespread. Only Reps. Steve Largent (R-Okla.) and Peter T. King (R-N.Y.) have said Gingrich should step aside until the ethics case is resolved and Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) said he would abstain from voting for Gingrich's reelection if the House ethics com-

mittee's outside counsel's report has not been released. Only Gingrich's own wishes would interfere with his reelection as speaker, lawmakers said.

#### Rep. Linder to Head Campaign Panel

Gingrich has appointed fellow Georgian Rep. John Linder to head the GOP House campaign operation, the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Linder, elected to a third term last week, is closely associated with Gingrich. When Democrats intensified their rhetorical sniping over the House ethics committee's prolonged investigation of the speaker this year, Linder parroted the House floor to make sure Democrats stayed within the bounds of House rules.

A 14-year member of the Georgia state House, Linder has proved himself a sharp-edged campaigner. In the 1992 GOP primary, he attacked his toughest opponent for writing a \$103 check to the local county Democratic Party. In the general election, he labeled Democratic state Sen. Cathy Steinberg as being out of the mainstream because she got money from

EMILY's List, a fund-raising group for female candidates.

He succeeds Paxon, who oversaw both the Republicans' 1994 capture of their first House majority in 40 years and last week's first reelection of a GOP majority in nearly 70 years. Paxon will preside over meetings of the House GOP leadership and of the speaker's advisory group, the leadership's inner circle. That job had been held by Rep. Robert S. Walker (Pa.), perhaps Gingrich's closest friend in Congress, who did not seek reelection.

On the Democratic side, Rep. Martin Frost (Tex.) appears likely to remain as head of their House campaign apparatus.

#### Quotable

Gingrich addressing a GOPAC dinner Monday night: "It was 68 years ago the last time a Republican majority was reelected. The speaker was Nicholas Longworth. He got a building named for him. Just a gentle hint. It happened after he was dead, so I'm willing to be patient."

—John E. Yang