

Williams Timeline

January 2007: Kent Williams' first vote as a member of the House is to elect Jimmy Naifeh Speaker.

November 4, 2008: Tennesseans elect Republicans to the majority of both houses for the first time since the Civil War.

November 7, 2008: Williams: "I want to state today, unequivocally, that I pledge to vote for a Republican for Speaker of the House. I have every reason to expect that the Republican nominee will be Leader Jason Mumpower. We are grateful that the people of Tennessee have given us the opportunity to lead. We will make them proud."

November 11, 2008: House Caucus releases letter signed by all 50 members committing to vote for a Republican Speaker and Speaker Pro Tempore.

Thanksgiving 2008: Williams meets with Rep Gary Odom in Elizabethton.

December 15, 2008: Williams commits to vote for Mumpower in a conversation with Chairman Robin Smith in the Legislative Plaza cafeteria.

January 6, 2009: In a radio interview, Williams commits to vote for Jason Mumpower as Speaker.

Question: "Are you on board with Jason Mumpower as Speaker of the House?"

Williams: "Yes, I've committed to Jason and I still plan to honor that commitment. I can't foresee anything happening in the next seven days to change my mind but, um, in politics you never know what's gonna happen."

January 13, 2009: Williams states to a member of Congress that he intends to vote for Mumpower.

Williams caucuses with Republicans during 30 minute recess. He makes no mention of his impending nomination.

Williams elected Speaker with 49 Democrat votes and his own.

Williams' first vote as Speaker violates his pledge to elect a Republican Speaker Pro Tempore.

Before the Speaker Pro Tempore vote, house microphones capture Williams stating: "They asked me if I could vote for any Republican. I told them no."

When asked by a reporter for WSMV TV why he voted for himself with the minority Democrats, Williams replied; "I just wanted to be Speaker."

Chairman Robin Smith is presented with 19 challenges to Williams' bona fide status as required by bylaws of the Tennessee Republican Party.

January 14, 2009: Chairman Smith convenes conference call of State Executive Committee Members. Members reaffirm their support of her authority to rule on challenges to status. Members requesting to be added to the challenge brings the total to 30.

January 26, 2009: Chairman Smith convenes a second call with SEC members and House GOP Leadership. Questions are presented to Leadership. SEC members vote to draft a resolution expressing the will of the Committee.

January 30, 2009: The resolution is presented for the full Committee for vote.

February 2, 2009: The resolution is adopted.

Chairman Smith requests House Caucus members' views on the issue, specifically asking if they can name instances of Williams' support for GOP candidates, the Caucus or the party to counter the challenge to his status. None can.