

Congressman Pence [gave the following interview](#) to *National Journal* regarding the Republican Party, the Tea Party movement, and the future:

By Siddhartha Mahanta

As a rising star in the Republican Party, Rep. Mike Pence might seem too establishment to appeal to the Tea Party faithful. But the Indiana Republican shares with the movement a zeal for fiscal responsibility and limited government, and has publically aligned himself with the activists. Their alliance could provide the energy and message Republicans need to succeed in this year's midterm elections.

NationalJournal.com asked Pence for his thoughts on the movement's relationship with Republicans and what the party can do to appeal the Tea Party in November.

NJ: What does the Tea Party mean for Republicans?

Pence: **The Tea Party movement is part of an authentic awakening among the American people about the need to restore commonsense fiscal responsibility to the policies here in Washington, D.C.**

NJ: Does trying to take in some of the Tea Party's energy revive the Republican Party going into November?

Pence: **I believe that people that are active in the grassroots, whether they identify themselves as Tea Party activists or not, will find a natural home in the Republican Party so long as we continue to fight for fiscal discipline, take the tough stands and offer a bold vision of fiscal responsibility for the future.**

NJ: Why should anything be different if Republicans take back the House? And if they do, what should the Tea Party expect?

Pence: **House Republicans lost their majority in 2006 mostly because we lost our way. We walked away from the practice of the principles of limited government that really augmented our national governing majority, first in 1980, and then in Congress in 1994.**

Republicans have gotten that message, whether they're Tea Party activists or other grassroots Americans. People who cherish those principles of fiscal restraint are now seeing the Republican Party putting forward a budget that'll put our house in order, opposing big government schemes in energy and health care, taking the tough stands to essentially set our government and our nation back on a pathway toward prosperity and fiscal responsibility.

I really believe that the key for the Republican Party is simply to continue to learn the lessons of 2006 -- take the strong stands on our principle, as we have over the last year. Whether it's Tea Party activists or other Americans or independents concerned about the fiscal future of this country, they'll know what to do.

NJ: Is Sarah Palin the leader of the Tea Party movement?

Pence: **Sarah Palin is a valued leader in the Republican Party. But I think one of the most compelling aspects of the Tea Party movement, and of the awakening you see across the country, is that it has no leader. It is genuinely a bottom-up movement that is simply an expression of I believe the broad mainstream of the American public that wants to see some fiscal sanity, some commonsense return to governance in Washington, D.C., and really has been fed up with runaway federal spending under both political parties.**

NJ: The idea of a leaderless movement -- does that present a problem as the Tea Party tries to consolidate and become an electoral force?

Pence: Well, it didn't present a problem in Massachusetts. It didn't present a problem in New Jersey or Virginia. I hold in high regard many of the organizations that have facilitated Tea Party events around the country and even here in Washington, D.C.

I think what you've really got happening here is an awakening among the American public. It doesn't need organization, because it is percolating up out of the common sense, common values of the American people. I think you'll continue to see that rise up, so long as this administration and Democrats in Congress continue to lead our government down the pathway of more borrowing, more spending, more bailouts and more debt.