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JOHN FASO GIVES CONSTITUENTS THE RUN-AROUND

The Freshman Representative from Congressional District 19, NY,
Remains Elusive and Unresponsive, Says Indivisible CD19 NY

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Hudson, NY, February 9 2017—Numerous attempts by local activist group Indivisible CD19 NY to speak to Representative John Faso (R) have been thwarted by him and his staff in both the Washington, DC and Kinderhook offices, says the group's leadership. Faso's seat in Congress, to which he was elected in November, 2016, was once held by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D).

"Now that Rep. Faso is off in Washington, he may have forgotten why he's there and who put him there," says Gianni Ortiz, founding organizer of the Indivisible CD19 NY (ICD19NY) group. "We would like to remind him that his title — Representative— should make it obvious: his job is to speak, act and vote on behalf of the best and highest interests of everyone in this congressional district. Out of respect for the office, we have given him the benefit of the doubt, as well as plenty of time to settle into his new job," she adds, "but our patience is wearing thin."

That frustration led some 1,200 constituents, organized by ICD19NY, to rally in Kinderhook on January 28, 2017, to picket Rep. Faso's office and march to his house, two blocks away, where he finally came out to talk to the remaining marchers. Demonstrators' signs and chants reflected their determination to compel Faso to meet with and hear from his constituents on key issues. Ortiz also added, "I have been a lifelong activist and community organizer and what I see happening today is amazing. The energy was high, the resistance is strong and it is growing. People who have never done anything in their lives are showing up in tremendous numbers, wanting to get involved and take action against this dangerous agenda. It's terrifically inspiring."

According to Ortiz, ICD19NY, one of the many Indivisible groups springing up around the country, came together shortly after the November, 2016 election, in anticipation of the need for grass-roots efforts to push back against the reversal of basic human and voting rights, our social safety net, environmental and financial regulation in a world filled with racism, war and alternative facts and also to protect and advance a progressive agenda.

In its first attempt to schedule a meeting with Rep. Faso, on January 17, several members of the group went to the Congressman's Kinderhook office where a staffer, explained that scheduling could only be accomplished on the Faso website. She directed them to Hope Costa, in the Washington DC office.

Indivisible did contact Ms. Costa that same day. In response, they received a boilerplate email, acknowledging the request for a meeting and promising that they would be "contacted soon."

"We have heard absolutely nothing," Elizabeth DiPalma, one of the group who went to Faso's office, says. "Not in response to that contact, or subsequent phone calls. After filing a new request to meet, and sending a personal email to Ms. Costa, all we got back was the same boilerplate response. No meeting has yet been scheduled."

"The January 28th demonstration in Kinderhook was really a show of community solidarity and a demand for authentic representation from Faso", Pam Kline, member of the ICD19NY steering committee, explains. "Indivisible CD19-NY believes that we can best advance our cause in face-to-face, civil and respectful conversation and debate. And we will keep trying to meet with Rep. Faso. But given the political climate in Washington, there is growing urgency for our House Representatives and Senators to stand up for and protect our country, New York State, its residents, and our values."

Ortiz adds, "If need be, we will take to the streets again and then again and then - *again*. Stay tuned."

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Indivisible is the umbrella name for a community of 4,500 local groups nationwide, whose objective is “to resist the Trump agenda in nearly every congressional district in the country.” The catalyst for the movement is a down-loadable document, “A practical guide for resisting the Trump agenda,” created by former congressional staffers to “reveal best practices for making Congress listen.”