

House GOP seeks unity, vows close oversight of Obama administration in election year

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BALTIMORE — House Republican leaders pleaded for elusive unity from the disparate factions in their party as they pursue a dual election-year prize of retaining their majority and denying President Barack Obama a second term.

"Unity, unity, unity," Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb., said Friday after hearing his leadership's overriding message at a series of private meetings at the GOP's annual three-day retreat. The fresh appeal to many of the 242 members comes just weeks after rank-and-file opposition to a short-term extension of the payroll tax cut exposed deep divisions among Republicans and ended 2011 on a discordant political note.

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