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**June 23, 2017**

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**CHRIS GIBSON, EX-CONGRESSMAN & RETIRED ARMY COLONEL,  
URGES POLITICAL COLLABORATION AT PATTERN FOR PROGRESS LUNCHEON**

*Address part of municipal/nonprofit executives' graduation from leadership program*

**POUGHKEEPSIE** -- Chris Gibson, who led thousands of troops into combat during a distinguished 24-year United States Army career and spent six years in Congress, called for bipartisan collaboration to end political disputes and advocated numerous principles of leadership during a Hudson Valley Pattern For Progress special event June 22 at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel.

Gibson, who commanded 4,500 men and women in the 82nd Airborne Division and retired as a colonel, blended anecdotes from his military and political career with insights on contemporary politics for a crowd of 120. He was the keynote speaker at a graduation for Pattern's Fellows Program, a dynamic training initiative celebrating its 10th anniversary. The program sharpens valley leaders' abilities to address issues from a regional perspective. Participants include corporate managers, academic leaders, government officials and those who hold top positions at nonprofits whose mission is to enhance their communities. The program has had more than 240 graduates.

Gibson outlined several principles of leadership, including "getting it right," "making the right decisions," doing everything you can to get buy-in, building trust within your organization, being transparent and accountable, being effective, and developing future leaders. He also cited the importance of "emotional intelligence."

Making frequent references to his working-class roots, Gibson expressed dismay at today's political incivility that includes ridicule and name-calling. "We're moving in the opposite direction. We're not in a good place right now. There is a way to disagree civilly," he said, stressing the importance of mechanisms to solve problems via collaboration. "When people invest in this, we will begin to heal."

Gibson also called for patience before the United States authorizes military action. "I'm not a pacifist; I'm a realist," he said. "We've been too quick to use force. The best approach is peace through strength. We should lead with our greatest strength: ideas. Peace through strength is not isolationist. It's leadership."

On health care reform pending in Washington, Gibson said he does not see an agreement being forged in the forthcoming 18 months leading up to the next House of Representatives election. "Both parties are really in denial here. We've got to have a bipartisan approach that lowers the cost, expands access and provides quality care... the staunch partisans in both parties will have to give up something," he said. "The partisan leaders have a narrative that is just not sustainable."

Gibson's views were timely and on point, said Pattern President and CEO Jonathan Drapkin. "The focus on bipartisan collaboration to solve problems mirrors Pattern's approaches to help improve quality of life in the Hudson Valley. Mr. Gibson offered sensible principles of leadership. There is deep importance in common ground. Leaders emerge to make that happen."

Gibson, a Republican from Kinderhook in Columbia County, joined Congress in 2011, representing the 20th District until 2013. Due to redistricting, he started serving the 19th District in 2013 and did so until declining to seek another term in 2016. He now is a visiting professor of leadership studies at Williams College in Williamstown, Mass. His

book, "Rally Point: Five Tasks to Unite the Country and Revitalize The American Dream," will be released Oct. 3.

Gibson served in the Army from 1986 to 2010, rising to become a colonel. He served in the N.Y. National Guard from 1981 to 1986 and taught politics at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He earned four Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart and two Legions of Merit awards. His academic credentials include a doctorate degree in government from Cornell University in 1998; a master's degree in public administration from Cornell in 1995; and a bachelor's degree in history from Siena College in 1986.

Sponsors were D.J. Consulting, Inc. and the State University of New York at New Paltz. To apply for the next Fellows leadership program, starting in the fall, call (845) 565-4900. Learn more about the curriculum and view class projects at [Pattern-For-Progress.org](http://Pattern-For-Progress.org).

*Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress is a nonprofit policy/planning organization that promotes smart valley growth. Visit [Pattern-For-Progress.org](http://Pattern-For-Progress.org). Follow us on Twitter at [@HVPattern](https://twitter.com/HVPattern). Like us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/PatternForProgress](https://www.facebook.com/PatternForProgress).*