Update on the Race for House Speaker: Speculation is mounting about who's next to become House speaker. To date, at least seven Republican House members, all solid contenders, have surfaced as possible candidates to take over during the 2015-16 session as House Speaker. Thom Tillis, who is running for the U.S. Senate, at this point is considered the GOP frontrunner in the race to unseat U.S. Sen. Kay Hagan, D-N.C. There's also some speculation that if Tillis does not get the necessary 40 percent plurality vote in the GOP primary in May and faces a runoff, he could change his mind and not preside as speaker in the short session, which begins May 14.

Following, according to The Insider, are the names that legislators and legislative observers have been eyeing in recent weeks. The Insider contacted the seven representatives to gauge their interest and thoughts. Of course, any potential speaker must first get re-elected in 2014, and new candidates could emerge. Here's what the publication found:

Rep. Leo Daughtry, Johnston

- **Key House roles:** Chairman, Justice and Public Safety Appropriations; chairman, Judiciary
- **Are you interested?** "If I was elected by the caucus, then I'd be honored to be the speaker."
- **What would make you a good speaker?** "I've been around for a long time. When I leave the House, I'll be coming back home. I don't have any ambitions other than serving in the House. ...If I have a strong point, it's negotiations. I'm a good negotiator. I've been doing it all my life."
- **Age:** 73
- **Occupation:** Attorney; businessman; owns Mutual Distributing Company, a beer and wine distributorship in Raleigh, and Johnston County Hams, which sells ham products

• **Key House roles:** Senior chairman, Appropriations
• **Are you interested?** "I would have an interest to the extent that the caucus would have an interest when those decisions are made next fall. It’s early, obviously, and it will be up to the caucus to determine who they want to put forward."
• **What would make you a good speaker?** Didn’t answer
• **Age:** 52
• **Occupation:** Media and public relations consultant, J.N. Dollar & Associates

*Rep. Mike Hager, Burke and Rutherford*

• **Key House roles:** Majority whip; chairman, Public Utilities and Energy
• **Are you interested?** "Not now. I think that may change as we move forward. I’m interested in getting our folks elected first."
• **What would make you a good speaker?** "One that understands why we’re here. What’s our end goal? I think a good speaker is in it for the cause, not in it for themselves. ...It’s got to be a team player, a servant leader."
• **Age:** 51
• **Occupation:** Small business owner, working in real estate development

*Rep. David Lewis, Harnett*

• **Key House roles:** Chairman, Finance; chairman, Elections
• **Are you interested?** "I am focused on representing the people of Harnett County, winning re-election to the state House, and helping maintain the Republican majority. Speaker Tillis is the leader of the House through the rest of the year and we have a lot of work to do to help the working families of North Carolina. I’m focused on helping people and being the best representative for my district that I can be. After the November 2014 election, all the members vying for leadership positions will present their qualifications to the caucus."
• **What would make you a good speaker?** Didn’t answer.
• **Age:** 42
• **Occupation:** Farmer and businessman

*Rep. Tim Moffitt, Buncombe*

• **Key House roles:** Chairman, Regulatory Reform; chairman, Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee
• **Are you interested?** "I would certainly consider becoming speaker of the House if my peers felt that I was the best candidate to do so."
• **What would make you a good speaker?** "My professional experience allows me to work with a diverse range of people and industries, managing high-pressure and difficult situations from time to time, which are skill sets necessary to be an effective speaker. I believe in working across the aisle, and all the bills of which I have been a primary sponsor have passed with bipartisan votes."
- **Age:** 49
- **Occupation:** Executive search and management consultant, Moffitt International Inc.

**Rep. Tim Moore, Cleveland**

- **Key House roles:** Chairman, Rules; chairman, Elections
- **Are you interested?** "As far as being elected speaker, should a majority of the caucus want me to do that, I'd be glad to see about serving."
- **What would make you a good speaker?** Didn’t answer.
- **Age:** 43
- **Occupation:** Attorney

**Rep. Edgar Starnes, Caldwell**

- **Key House roles:** Republican majority leader
- **Are you interested?** "Yes, I would be interested in seeing if I have enough support to run for speaker, and if I do, then I'll put my hat in the ring."
- **What would make you a good speaker?** "My goal in being the speaker would be to empower each and every member of our caucus. I believe the true power of the caucus lies with the members and not necessarily with the speaker. ...It would be my goal in formulating legislation to have a bottom-up approach as opposed to a top-down approach where the speaker is dictating the legislation."
- **Age:** 57
- **Occupation:** Self-employed real estate investor

**Quotes of the Week:**

“Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time."

- E.B. White, American writer

“Off the charts. He’s a confident youngster. He’s a tough youngster. He’s a competitive rascal. He’s willing to make plays."

- UNC Men’s Basketball Coach Roy Williams on sophomore guard Marcus Paige, who had a career-high 35 points and made the last bucket as UNC defeated NC State 85-84 Wednesday in overtime.

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