

BOARD OF VISITORS TO UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 9355(a), and the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following member to the Board of Visitors to the United States Air Force Academy:

Mr. Alfredo A. Sandoval, Indian Wells, California.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the honor to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I have long appreciated the honor to serve the people of western Iowa here in the United States Congress. Each one of us carries this duty with us in a heavy way and also sometimes in a jubilant way depending on the cycles of the day and the cycles of the elections.

I sat here on the floor tonight, and I listened to the presentation of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON). He talked about the situation on the border between Texas and Mexico, Arizona and Mexico, and perhaps also New Mexico versus Mexico, California, and Mexico. There are a whole lot of data points that he rolled out here. And I believe that there is a misunderstanding on the part of the American people of the magnitude of the border problem that we have.

I make a number of trips down to that border. I think it's my obligation to do that. I have served on the Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee now for 8 years. And if all goes well, I will be able to serve on the committee for another cycle. In that period of time, you pick up a significant amount of knowledge about the circumstances that have to do with immigration. And the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) talked about how illegal Mexican drug smuggler gangs are controlling vast areas of the border, some might argue a majority of the border or perhaps even all of the border, with the exception of some ports of entry, and controlling vast parts of the United States itself.

I have been down to visit Oregon Pipe Cactus National Monument. It is a national park right on the border. And a large percentage of Oregon Pipe Cactus has been set aside, and Americans have been locked out and kept out because the illegal border-crossers and the drug smugglers command some of that park. A large share of it, mile after mile of it, is under control of the Mexican drug smugglers and people smugglers.

And we think that a sovereign nation should have no border incursion. If we have a border incursion, and if it's

someone who is lined up next to someone else lined up next to someone else and they are carrying weapons and in uniforms, it is called an invasion. Whether they are wearing uniforms and carrying weapons or whether they are coming across in orderly ranks or whether they are coming across at a rate of perhaps as many as 11,000 a night—and that's some data that came before the House Immigration Subcommittee under sworn testimony—you take the annual illegal border crossings and you divide it by 365, and some of that data under oath calculates out to be 11,000 illegal border crossings in a 24-hour period. A lot of that takes place at night. Think of that: 11,000 a night.

And so I ask the question, what was the size of Santa Anna's army? About half that. That, Mr. Speaker, is the magnitude of the illegal border crossings that we are seeing.

And the price that we have to pay in the form of social services, law enforcement, education, and health services is in the billions of dollars in costs to the American taxpayer. And the price and loss because of the result of crimes that could otherwise have been prevented is awesome beyond our comprehension.

I do have some numbers on that. I'm hopeful that I will be able to produce a fresh report very soon that would better illustrate the numbers of Americans who have lost their lives at the hands of those who came into the United States illegally.

That is a real measure to American society. Every life is precious, every life is sacred, and every one that we can save should be saved. And you do so with an orderly society and the rule of law. You don't do so by allowing for vast areas of the 2,000-mile southern border to become lawless.

I recall approaching a port of entry, and it was in Sasabe, Arizona. As I approached the port of entry and introduced myself to the agents that were there, and leaving aside much of that narrative, I was informed that, yes, there's a legal crossing at Sasabe at that port of entry in a fairly remote location in Arizona. But on other side of the legal port of entry are the illegal crossing areas that are controlled by the drug-smuggling gangs, the cartels. And that means that there's lawlessness on both sides of the border. If there's an entity that controls an illegal border crossing then that means that our side of that border is not under control. Immediately, if they decide who crosses and who doesn't, they're also deciding to allow illegals to come into the United States and illegal contraband to come into the United States.

And I was in fact there on location when there was an illegal drug smuggler that was picked up. He had a white pickup with a false bed in the box. Nice piece of body work. You had to have a practiced eye to see it. But a false floor underneath there that was 7, perhaps 8

inches, and underneath that false floor it was packed full of marijuana. Some would call it bales. They were wrapped up in packages about the size of a cement package, although it's not as heavy, some placed over 200 pounds, some placed 250 pounds of marijuana, underneath the false bed in that pickup. And we took the jaws of life and cut it open and I personally unloaded over 200 pounds of marijuana out from underneath the false bed in that pickup.

Now, the circumstances at that time—and I suspect this individual was prosecuted, partly because I was there—but he appeared to be an MS-13 gang member. He had a 13 tattooed on his arm right here. Full of tattoos. Had all of the look that you would have of an MS-13 drug-smuggling gang member. And the practice down there has been—unwritten, but in practice—that if someone is caught with less than 250 pounds of marijuana, that they're not prosecuted by the Federal Government. And when the loads got higher and more frequent, then the number went up to 500 pounds as the threshold for prosecution.

Now, where I come from, if you have any illegal drugs in your possession, generally you're going to be prosecuted. There are law enforcement officers that may not, but it's not a practice. We think that the law is the law. Well, if the law is not enforced on the southern border for those that come across the border illegally with illegal drugs in their possession to the tune of hundreds of pounds and in fact thousands of pounds, then what do we have left of the law enforcement fabric on our southern border whatsoever? And how can this be a practice, let alone a policy?

I saw it with my own eyes on that day and handled with my own hands. And as I talked to Border Patrol officers and the other law enforcement officers along the border, they confirmed that in some sectors that's the practice. They set the threshold because they didn't have enough prosecutors, they didn't have enough judges, and they didn't have enough prison beds to prosecute all the drug smugglers that they're picking up across the border, let alone 11,000 a night on average, a lot of them some might say just illegal aliens, just people coming into the United States committing the crime of unlawful entry into the United States.

But among them are drug smugglers. And among the drug smugglers are violent criminals of other stripes. Part of that goes with the package. But to think that they could come into the United States illegally with a load of 235 pounds of marijuana and weigh it up and put it underneath the bed of the pickup and think, Well, fine, I'm not going to go to prison for this. If they catch me, they will just impound the pickup, which likely is stolen anyway, and impound the marijuana, which I saw warehouses full. And I say "warehouses." More than the size of garages,

not the size of something you would see down at Boeing, to put it correct. So, vast amounts. More than a semi load of marijuana that had been confiscated altogether in one particular warehousing location. There are others.

But to think that we're not prosecuting with the full vigor of the law with someone who's coming through with a load of marijuana that is 200, 300, 499 pounds of marijuana. That's the America that we have on the southern border. And the people that don't live there and go like I do down to visit and get informed just accept the idea that their America is the same America in, let's say, South Dakota or northern Iowa as it happens to be on the southern border. And it's not true. It is a war zone there.

We have seen the numbers of the casualties and the drug wars in Mexico mount. And I remember sitting in Mexico City with some of the members of the cabinet and some of the members of the Mexican Congress who would tell me kind of off on the side that they had 2,000 federal officers, agents, troops that were killed in the drug wars trying to bring order and trying to bring the drug cartels underneath the enforcement of law, to break them up. This would be 3 to 4 years ago. They would say, we have lost 2,000 Federal officers. Now what numbers do we hear? Twenty-eight thousand. Twenty-eight thousand, mostly civilian, but not all civilian casualties, in the drug wars in Mexico. Twenty-eight thousand. Can you imagine the carnage? That's the size of one of the larger cities in my State, the number of like 28,000.

So here we are with Border Patrol officers, sending the National Guard down there. Thankfully, there are some Guard troops that are showing up. It does help. Every pair of boots on the ground helps and every bit of equipment we can put down there helps, and every bit of barrier that we build on the border helps. And I do want to build a fence, a wall and a fence. And I don't suggest that we build 2,000 miles right away next week, finish it by the end of next year. We could do that. We're a great Nation. We could do that without breaking a sweat if we had the will.

But I do suggest that we build a fence, a wall and a fence where they are crossing it, where they have a path beat down, and just keep extending the fence, the wall and the fence, until such time as they stop going around the end. If it takes 2,000 miles of fence, wall and fence, then so be it. If we can do it with a hundred miles or 200 miles, so be that.

But let's have enforcement of our border. Let's take our Nation back. Let's take our national parks and our national monuments back like Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Put that back in the hands of the American people.

The America that I envision is the America that I grew up in that said

you can walk anywhere in America, pick up a newspaper and read it in English, and you don't have to carry a gun. You can't do that everywhere in America today. The law enforcement is not such—the rule of law is not so established that you can go anywhere in America in that way and safely think that you can travel. You can't go to Organ Pipe Cactus down along the border, you can't take the jet ski on the lake in Texas. The Mexicans are controlling too much of that. And the retribution/restitution is almost nonexistent.

And so I would add also that there's another factor that I didn't hear the gentleman from Indiana mention and that's the factor called the spotters' locations on top of the mountains, primarily in Arizona. And as I traveled down there, I began to learn about these spotters' location from some of our law enforcement officers. And that would include the Shadow Wolves down at the Tihono O'odham Reservation. Shadow Wolves are one of the unique aspects of our border enforcement. They are the Native Americans that serve together and train down there and enforce the law on the reservation and on that area that spans the border. Actually, Tihono O'odham is on both sides, in Mexico to some degree. Most of it is in the United States.

And as I reviewed the border with them, they began to tell me, There's a spotter up on that mountain. He's watching us now. And I would look up there and of course I couldn't see him. I didn't know where to look, and he was too far away and I didn't have the glasses. And then we'd travel on down another few miles and they'd say, There's a spotter on that mountaintop and he's watching us. And as I began to put this together and traveled along the border and went to the Cabeza Prieta and some of the other locations along the border and talked to our officers, they began to tell me, Well, yes, we know where a lot of these locations are. I had a map there. Well, why don't you just put an X where you know where they are. So he'd put an X here, X there. I had him fill that in.

□ 1510

Along the way, we came up with a map that showed the location of at least 100 mountaintops that are controlled by Mexican drug smugglers who sit up on top of the mountain. They will take the stones that are up there and stack them up like sandbags around a gun emplacement. Well, it is a gun emplacement. It's a high-quality optics observatory location where they spot the travel of our law enforcement officers, primarily Border Patrol, all along the highways. If you go down in any area from Phoenix, going south towards the Mexican border, especially where you see an intersection where there is a highway going north and south and another one east and west, look up on one of those corners, and you will see a small mountain there in

a perfect location to be able to watch the traffic coming from all four directions. You can presume that that mountaintop is manned—it's a lookout mountaintop. It's a spotter mountaintop, and they're using that so they can tell the people who are moving their illegal loads across from Mexico into the United States when our law enforcement is coming up, when they're approaching. It will cause them to divert, to go the other way, to perhaps take a side road—and there aren't many, but it will give them that sense of warning.

Now, for those who might think that I'm catching this secondhand, Mr. Speaker, and for those who might think that this is anecdotal, I can tell you that it's not anecdotal. It's real. I went down and I climbed to the tops of a number of these mountains. I sat in those locations and I observed the traffic. In those locations, with the stones stacked like sandbags on top of one of the smaller mountains, I found a broken piece of some fairly high-quality binoculars, and you could see clothes that had been left there. You can see from those locations that they've been spotting and tipping off as to the law enforcement that's moving along. It's an essential component for them. If they're going to smuggle drugs and if they don't know where law enforcement is, they can't just drive blindly up into Arizona with a truckload of marijuana. They have to know when the coast is clear. Well, these are the "coast is clear" spotter locations. They're on top of the mountains in Arizona. I climbed to several of them, observed it from there, took pictures up there, and saw the pieces of litter that were laying around. You can see the patterns and the habits, and you can get a pretty good idea of what their diet is and what they're doing up there.

Then we got in a Blackhawk and flew to the top of other locations—spotter lookout mountains—and we settled down close to that. We brought in law enforcement officers from the ground. With the headphones on and listening to the scanner, you can hear the scrambler of the frequency that they're using when they communicate with each other. It's high-quality optics and high-quality communications equipment with scramblers and descramblers. You could hear, flying from mountaintop to mountaintop, the intensity of the chatter go up and up and up in the earphones when we were tuned in to the frequency that they were using. It's that chipmunk language that has been scrambled into something that's completely unintelligible even though it was coming in, and, you know, it was Spanish that was scrambled, and it got descrambled at the other end.

What I could hear was the intensity of that chatter going up and up and up. About a minute from the time we arrived at the next lookout mountaintop, the spotter mountaintop, that frequency and that transmission would immediately stop and be hushed. We

would get to the mountaintop in about a minute, and the location that had been manned just moments before, just minutes before, was empty. It was empty every time because they came down off the mountain and went out into the desert and hid. So, when they get out into the desert and get away from that location and hide, they don't have to get very far away, a half a mile or so, and you can't identify them as being the people who were sitting on top of the mountain. Plus, we don't have a law against sitting on top of a mountain in Arizona, so it's hard to prosecute. It's hard to bring them to justice, but they exist.

These are paramilitary locations. These are strategic locations. These are people who are armed with high-quality optics and with their high-quality communications devices, and they're set up to smuggle drugs into the United States. So far, we have not been very successful in snapping those spotters off of those mountaintops and taking that tool away from the drug smugglers. That's another piece that, I think, Mr. BURTON is well aware of, and I add to the dialogue that he delivered here.

What do we see instead?

Instead of the administration using the resources that are at its disposal to go down and enforce the law in places like Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, and California, it's using resources to sue the State of Arizona. I've read through that complaint, and it's a bit astonishing to me to think that the Department of Justice could contrive such an argument, and even though it didn't mirror the ACLU's lawsuit and MALDEF's lawsuit and—let me see—the American Muslim Society's lawsuit, I thought it would. Instead, they wrote up a whole new legal theory. This is the Holder Justice Department.

Eric Holder essentially admitted that the President had ordered him to sue Arizona over their immigration law, and 5 minutes later, under oath, he admitted that he had not read the bill. So here we have the Attorney General bringing a lawsuit against the State of Arizona—determined to give the lawsuit—who came before the Judiciary Committee. Under oath, he testified that he hadn't read the bill. He conceded under oath that the President had ordered him to sue Arizona.

It was clear from listening to the President that the President hadn't read Arizona's law, S.B. 1070. So it's clear, as was concluded under oath and not denied, obviously, by the Attorney General of the United States, that the President ordered Eric Holder to sue Arizona. The President hadn't read the bill. Eric Holder hadn't read the bill, and they were determined to go forward anyway, so we made the commitment. I think that was actually announced by the Secretary of State when she was in South America—perhaps in Ecuador, if I remember right, maybe in Colombia.

It's interesting to read the complaint and think, What did they have to sue

about? You know, it's like throwing a tantrum, and then somebody asks, What are you mad about? Well, let me see. I'll have to come up with something. I'm sure I'm mad about something. What could it be? Well, let me think. I guess I can't be mad about this whole list—that is obvious—but I'll make up a new reason to be mad. This is a new reason to sue, and here is what it is:

They argued in their complaint, the Department of Justice's complaint in their file against Arizona, that Congress had entrusted the various agencies in the executive branch of government with establishing and maintaining a "careful balance," a careful balance between the various immigration laws that this country has. A careful balance. Huh.

Well, Congress did no such thing. There is no record of Congress passing legislation and saying, Keep a careful balance, Mr. President, between the various immigration laws so that the Department of Justice thinks this is all right and so that the Department of Homeland Security thinks this is all right, as well as the State Department. Surely, don't enforce an immigration law that might cause the diplomatic arm of the State Department any heartburn with President Calderon.

That's their argument, that they may not enforce obvious immigration laws because it might upset our neighbors in one direction or another. This is an astonishing legal position to argue, that they have been entrusted with establishing a "careful balance," then maintaining that careful balance and, therefore, because Arizona is compelled to defend themselves, that somehow that careful balance has been upset by Arizona helping to enforce the laws that have been passed by the United States of America here in this Congress, on this floor, where we gave no direction—no direction—to the executive branch to have the discretion to enforce some laws and not others. There is no discussion. There is no history. There is no Congressional Record in here, let alone in the statutes, themselves, that declares a "careful balance" standard. That standard never existed. It was created by the imaginations of the lawyers in the Department of Justice, and now we've got to go all the way to the Supreme Court to fix a problem created and motivated by a political decision to sue Arizona, a decision which came directly out of the White House to order, exactly, Eric Holder to file that lawsuit.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what I think of what's going on here with the immigration situation, and it's just a bit of a sequel to the gentleman from Indiana's statements on immigration, Mr. BURTON. I want to make sure that I support that initiative that he took here tonight.

From my standpoint, we've got to stop the bleeding at the border. We've got to reestablish the rule of law. We've got to raise the expectation that

the law will be enforced in all of its aspects. We need to do a careful inventory of all of the resources that we're deploying, especially on the southern border, and make sure, when a Border Patrol officer puts his life on the line and pulls over a stray truck that has got more than a ton of marijuana in it, that that Border Patrol officer never has to get on the phone and plead with a county prosecutor to pick up the open-and-shut case and prosecute it. If not, we don't have the Federal prosecutors enough to prosecute and incarcerate someone who is smuggling a ton or so of marijuana into the United States of America.

□ 1520

We must take a look at the deployment of our resources. If our border patrol officers are an adequate number, that means we also have to have an adequate number of prosecutors, judges, and prison beds so that we can enforce the law so that there's an expectation that this Nation has as one of its essential pillars of American exceptionalism the rule of law, and we must stand for it. We cannot and I will not stand for its erosion any longer, Mr. Speaker.

But I came here tonight to talk about a number of other things as well, aside from the immigration issue. It was Mr. BURTON that got me wound up as I listened to him talk. So I want to go back, and without a very smooth segue, I would like to just take us back, Mr. Speaker, to the election results of a couple of weeks ago and the message that was sent by the American people and reflect a little bit about my experience here and what I've seen happen politically and that works out this way.

As I came here, I came here in the majority and we had the votes to pass legislation that was reasonable that the American people could accept, and we did so. As I engaged in the debate here and I watched as the level of intensity of that debate diminished from our side and the level of rebuttal increased from over on this side of the aisle, on the Democrat side of the aisle, I don't know that I realized that at the time—I could feel it here internally but I don't know that I realized it clearly enough at the time but there was a shift going on in the minds of the American people. I thought we were doing the right thing for the most part in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, but we weren't articulating this to the American people in a way that was as useful and accurate as it should have been.

The best example of that, and I say this example because of my great respect for the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States and put their lives on the line on a regular basis, that selfless and noble commitment. What I saw happening in the State of Iowa in 2003 was when we had Democrat Presidential candidates coming into Iowa on a regular basis, moving through the State stopping over and over again.

And as I listened to this dialogue and I remember the date, it was October 5, 2003, and I'm watching the news and listening to the debate of the Presidential candidates, and I opened up The Des Moines Register newspaper. Inside page 3, headline at the top of the page, Candidate Howard Dean Repeatedly calls President Bush a Liar. And I was appalled. I thought, how can anyone call the President of the United States a liar? How can this be in this article? What must the President have said?

So I read that article, October 5, 2003, and looking for the statement that would be identified that would make our Commander in Chief a liar, and I read the article and I missed it apparently and I went back and read it a second time for the language that would be in this article that would confirm the truth of the headline that our President, our Commander in Chief, was a liar.

It wasn't there, Mr. Speaker. There wasn't an allegation in the article about what the President had said. It was just a story about Howard Dean calling George Bush a liar, repeatedly calling George Bush a liar. Well, it turned out it was about 16 words in the State of the Union address that had taken place just a few months, 6 months or so before that when the President of the United States said, We recently learned from the British that the Iraqis were seeking uranium in the continent of Africa. That's the 16 words, roughly speaking, in general delivery here that was the objection that was delivered by Howard Dean.

Well, it turns out the statement was unequivocally true, and I actually have the evidence of that in the brief case that I carry with me wherever I go. But it wasn't so much the point of that because I remember when Charlton Heston ran commercials during the Presidential elections of 1996, when he looked into the camera and he said, Mr. President—and he was speaking of President Clinton—Mr. President, when what you say is wrong and you don't know that it's wrong, that's called a mistake. But when what you say is wrong and you know that it is wrong, that's a lie.

Well, I think that's an accurate definition of the difference between a lie and a mistake. I don't think President Bush made a mistake. What he said in that State of the Union address was spot on accurate, absolutely provable. They disagreed with it because of one Ambassador Joe Wilson, who—I will give him a pass tonight, Mr. Speaker, because the clock is ticking.

However, I turned to my wife, appalled that a Presidential candidate could declare our Commander in Chief to be a liar, and I said, Marilyn, I'm going to Iraq. So a few days later by the 17th of October, 15th to the 17th, I was in Iraq, and I took a look at what was going on there. I traveled through there, did a lot of stops, met with a lot of our officers that were there and enlisted men and women and came back

with a different story on what was going on in that country.

But the assault on President Bush and the undermining of his position and our men and women under arms, when I heard people on this side of the aisle say, well, I support the troops but not their mission, Mr. Speaker, that cannot be allowed to stand, to concede a point such as that. My point is, if you support the troops, you support their mission. You cannot ask them to put their lives on the line for Americans if you don't believe in their mission, too. We can't ask them to go on that kind of a mission.

So what we saw happen was the assault, the verbal assault on the operations in a time of war in Iraq, being constantly pounded by the Presidential candidates and by many of the people over on this other side of the aisle in an effort to erode public opinion for the war in Iraq because doing so, in my estimation—and I understand that their motives may well have been pure—in my estimation in their desire to win the Presidency and their desire to win back the majority, their zeal to re-characterize our war in Iraq undermined public support for a mission that's turned out to be, on the balance of it, a pretty good ending considering what we were in the middle of during that period of time.

My point is the President of the United States and the executive branch of government did not bring out a full-throated defense nor did they articulate a reason for being in Iraq in an adequate way. That left the door open so that the criticism that came against the war in Iraq nearly cost what's now considered by many to be a victory in Iraq. Public opinion's got to hold together. It should hold together on facts, and Republicans need to stand together and stand up for truth in principle when we're right. We cannot allow a debate to go the other way just because we think we have the votes. We must stand and win the debate and hold the votes together. That, Mr. Speaker, is an essential principle.

As we go forward and we see these election results, we also need to understand that there will be a time coming into the 112th Congress, gavelled in, sworn in January 5 of 2011, that we'll sit here and we'll think we have the votes, so we just have to wait Democrats out while they have their say.

I want Democrats to have their say. I agree with the incoming Speaker of the House, Mr. BOEHNER, that we need to have sunlight on this place and run this place with the kind of function that allows for—he says open rules. I'd shorten it up a little bit and say a lot more open rules. I don't know that we can do all open rules but more open rules so there's a legitimate debate here. And if Democrats have an idea, bring that amendment, let's debate that amendment, we'll vote them up or down. If Republicans have an idea, also bring your amendment. We'll debate it up or down.

Think of how this process is supposed to work. You get busy and you go to work in the subcommittee and you hold hearings and you gather facts and the staff does the research work, crunches it in a way so that the under oath testimony and the information that's submitted is meaningful and that it can be cataloged and rationalized in a way that we can move forward with a good piece of policy. Once that hearing's need is satisfied, then you can go to a subcommittee and mark the bill up, and there of course you have to accept amendments from each side. Whatever the product is of the subcommittee needs to go to the full committee, and when it goes to the full committee, there needs to be a full committee markup. And there we need to allow for an open and legitimate debate because the process is taking an idea, present it to the hearing. If it can sustain itself in open, public dialogue, then it can actually become the bill that moves through the process, subjected to amendments that are designed to perfect the legislation, on through the full committee and to the floor for the same kind of process.

□ 1530

That's what's envisioned by our Founding Fathers. It was never envisioned that there would be a Speaker of the House that would run this Congress, the House of Representatives, out of her office with her staff and disallow amendments, disallow debate, disallow an opportunity to even vote with a level of clarity so the American people can see what's going on.

So their level of disgust rose up, and 58 Democrats were voted out of office, and there were a number of open seats that increased that number substantially from there.

So I think the message should have been clear. It doesn't seem to be clear. It is clear to me. The American people are filled up with a process that does not reach out to draw the wisdom from the American people through this republican form of government, which is guaranteed to us in the Constitution of the United States. They're filled up. They've had it with the nationalization, the takeover of the banks; AIG, the insurance company; Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and all the liabilities that go with that. They are fed up with the takeover of General Motors and Chrysler. Now it looks like, though, the White House is going to concede and sell some General Motors shares off into the marketplace. They will take a little loss, maybe even a big loss. I think that's a good step, and I encourage a lot more of it.

In fact, I'm hopeful that by the time the 112th Congress gavelled out roughly 2 years from now that the Federal Government will have divested itself of all of those private sector entities that have been taken over. And I am hopeful that the first act of the 113th Congress, a little more than 2 years from now, will be to finally pass the final version

of the repeal of ObamaCare so that that can then go to the desk of the next President of the United States for his signature to finally repeal ObamaCare.

As we sit here in this Congress and we're watching the importance of jobs, the American people said they've had it up to here with debt and deficit. It's about jobs and the economy, and it's about freedom and liberty and being able to order our own lives instead of being ordered within our lives by a nanny state.

And ObamaCare is the flagship of socialism that has been delivered to us over the objections of the American people by the tens of thousands who poured into this city multiple times to peacefully petition the government for redress of grievances. Tens of thousands of people, for the first time that I know of in history, put a ring around this Capitol Building. They held hands and said, Keep your hands off of my health care. It wasn't just one set of people with long arms holding hands, ringing the entire Capitol. They were six or eight deep all the way around the Capitol and clustered in the corners by the thousands who just didn't bother to get in the line. They said, Keep your hands off of our health care; and Speaker PELOSI marched through the middle of all of that with her oversized gavel to come do what she believed needed to be done for the American people who couldn't apparently think for themselves and said, We have to pass the bill to find out what's in it.

Well, ObamaCare that passed could not have passed here in the House even with the strong Democrat majority if it were not for legislative maneuvering in an unparalleled way, including a promise that there would be a reconciliation bill that would circumvent the filibuster in the Senate that would be passed over there and come over here to amend the ObamaCare bill that had yet to be passed.

So if you are going to do that, why can't you amend the bill and make it say what you want it to say, and send it back to the Senate? The reason for that is, Mr. Speaker, the Senate wouldn't pass the bill either because they elected SCOTT BROWN in Massachusetts. They were so appalled at socialized medicine coming to America that the people in the Bay State sent SCOTT BROWN to the Senate to put the brakes on ObamaCare. He put the message out pretty strong and pretty loud, and the people of Massachusetts clearly did.

But the Senate could not have passed the legislation that passed in the House on that day, or any day since. The House could not have passed it either if it weren't for the promise that reconciliation would come from the Senate. And even then, it couldn't pass the House unless there was a fig leaf that was brought up which was by the President to give the pro-life group of Democrats—the Stupak Dozen, it's called—their fig leaf protection, as if

an executive order could amend a statute of the United States of America.

So, Mr. Speaker, here is the situation: we have the 2001 and the 2003 tax brackets that need to be extended or we will be seeing a huge tax increase, perhaps the largest tax increase of our lifetimes poised to hit us at midnight December 31 if this lame-duck Congress doesn't act. The negotiations on that are taking place. I do believe that there is more leverage in the Senate on this issue than in the House. If we don't get that resolved, Mr. Speaker, then our job is going to be—the first job, H.R. 1, bill number one—to make those tax brackets permanent so that no one faces anything but a temporary tax increase. And I mean that I would love to see this done in the lame-duck. If it's not done, it must be the first order of business in the new Congress in January. The estate tax, it is a painful thing to think about that kicking in in a diabolical way.

The second thing, let's just presume we get it negotiated, and this Congress in lame duck resolves the issue of the '01 and '03 tax brackets, so we are not faced with a tax increase.

Then, Mr. Speaker, if that's resolved, my sense of this is—and I think I have a vast amount of support, including 173 signatures on a discharge petition—that we must then use as the first order of business the repeal of ObamaCare. H.R. 1, repeal of ObamaCare. The new Congress will pass that in a heartbeat, to pull ObamaCare out by the roots, lock, stock, and barrel, so there is not one vestige of it left behind.

And then we start down the path of shutting off the funding that would be used to implement or enforce ObamaCare. We owe it to the American people. We owe it to the constitutional conservatives that rose up all across this land and rallied together to fight ObamaCare. That's the biggest reason why you have this vast change. The biggest change in majorities here in 72 years has taken place because ObamaCare was the crown jewel of the agenda that was driven that the American people have rejected. So I'm encouraging that we move forward with that.

I have no appetite for tying together repeal and replace. Those are two separate subjects. We didn't have ObamaCare as a law of the land until late March of this year. We got along fine without it. Having it is worse than having nothing, but we need to win the debate on repeal of ObamaCare, win that debate, and then move down the line with the pieces that we would pass that would improve the health care for the American people that hold together, that hold together the doctor-patient relationship and the free market component and let people have their choices. That's the only way America works.

We are not a dependent Nation. We are not a Nation that can submit to a nanny state or an onerous Federal reg-

ulation. We are a proud, free, independent people, totally unsuitable for the European style of socialized democracy. We have freedom. We have vigor. We have rights that come from good God. We are a unique race of people. And the vigor of America's history attests to that, and the destiny of America's future attests to that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate my friend very much. Stirring words, and accurate at that.

This being a time when we are recessing today through the Thanksgiving holiday, it is that time. We have so much to be thankful for. One of them is that we have a newspaper article—of course we've heard in the last week or so that it looks like the Obama administration was going to put off yet again the trials of the five charged in the 9/11 attacks as planning them. But the article from The New York Times says that the five Guantanamo detainees charged with coordinating the September 11 attacks told a military judge Monday they wanted to confess in full. And that was a move that seemed to challenge the government to put them to death.

At the start of what had been listed as routine proceedings Monday, Judge Henley said he had received a written statement from the five men, dated November 4, saying they plan to stop filing legal motions and to announce our confessions, to plea in full. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed said, "We don't want to waste our time with motions." You had one of the detainees, Ramzi bin al-Shibh, tell the judge, "We the brothers, all of us, would like to submit our confession." Mr. bin al-Shibh is charged with being the primary contact between the operation's organizers and the September 11 hijackers.

□ 1540

In one outburst, Mr. Bin al Scheib said he wanted to congratulate Osama bin Laden, adding, "We ask him to attack the American enemy with all his power." So that's the good news. They're going to plead guilty. We can be delighted with that.

The tragic thing was that was their announcement, according to the New York Times, back in December of 2008. December of 2008. But no, this administration wanted to play games with this country's safety and with justice. And so now, 2 years later, they're going to put it off for another couple of years, wait till after the next election so that he doesn't have to deal with it. These guys were ready for justice. They were ready to plead guilty until this administration played games. And even in the pleading that was declassified, written apparently by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed on behalf of all five, they have quotes in here like: We fight you with Almighty God. So if our act of jihad and our fighting with you cause fear and terror, then many thanks to

God, because it is Him that has thrown fear into your hearts, which resulted in your infidelity, paganism, and your statement that God had a son, and your trinity beliefs.

Another statement he makes is: We will make all of our materials available to defend and deter and egress you and the filthy Jews from our countries. God has ordered us to spend for jihad and his cause. This is evident in many Koranic verses.

He also says: We fight you and destroy you and terrorize you. The jihad is God's cause and a great duty in our religion. So we ask from God to accept our contributions to the great attack, the great attack on America, and to place our 19 martyred brethren among the highest peaks in paradise.

So, you know, they filed that, but this administration wants to play games with these guys who were ready to plead guilty, filed no more motions until this administration offered them a big show trial. So, we have a lot to be thankful for in that regard. They're in prison, where they should be. And justice should have already come swiftly, but at least they're behind bars.

Well, I want to finish the time the gentleman has yielded to me.

William J. Federer does such a great job of putting together much of American histories and proclamations and prayers and really a great job of our godly heritage, just like David Barton does. This book, "Prayers & Presidents—Inspiring Faith from Leaders of the Past," among so many other things, has proclamations of Thanksgiving, and I thought it would be appropriate—though this will not be the last hour of today—today is the last hour before Thanksgiving, just so people know, Mr. Speaker, that this is our heritage.

This President says we're not a Christian Nation. I will not debate that with him. But the Presidents of the past, before this President, knew that it was. Perhaps it's not now.

George Washington, October 3, 1789, these are Washington's words:

"Where it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits and humbly implore His protection and favor, we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and ruler of nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all to render our national government a blessing to all the people, to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue."

James Madison, who's given so much credit for writing the Constitution. You would think the guy would know what was constitutional and what wasn't. March 4, 1815:

"No people ought to feel greater obligation to celebrate the goodness of the great disposer of events and of the destiny of nations than the people of the United States. To the same Divine Au-

thor of every good and perfect gift, we are indebted for all those privileges and advantages, religious as well as civil, which are so richly enjoyed in this favored land. I now recommend a day on which the people of every religious denomination may, in their solemn assemblies, unite their hearts and their voices in a freewill offering to their Heavenly Benefactor of their homage of thanksgiving and their songs of praise."

Now, we have these for virtually every year, every President, so I'm being very selective here because time is so short.

Abraham Lincoln, July 15, 1863:

"It is meet and right to recognize and confess the presence of the Almighty Father and the power of His hand equally in these triumphs and these sorrows.

"I invite the people of the United States to assemble on that occasion in their customary places of worship, in the forms approved by their consciences, render the homage due to the Divine Majesty for the wonderful things He has done in the Nation's behalf, and invoke the influence of His Holy Spirit to subdue the anger which has produced and long sustained a needless and cruel rebellion."

Andrew Johnson, 1865, October 28:

"Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God during the year which is now coming to an end, to relieve our beloved country from the fearful scourge of civil war and to permit us to secure the blessings of peace, unity, and harmony with great enlargement of civil liberty; and, whereas, our Heavenly Father has also, during the year, graciously averted from us the calamities of foreign war, pestilence, and famine, while our granaries are full of the fruits of an abundant season; and, whereas, righteousness exalteth a nation while sin is a reproach to any people, I recommend to the people thereof that they do set apart and observe the first Thursday of December next as a day of national thanksgiving to the Creator of the universe for these great deliverances and blessings."

Ulysses S. Grant, October 5, 1865:

"It becomes a people thus favored to making acknowledgement to the Supreme Author from whom such blessings flow of their gratitude and their dependence, to render praise and thanksgiving for the same, and devoutly to implore a continuance of God's mercy.

"I, Ulysses S. Grant, the President of the United States, do recommend that Thursday, the 18th day of November next, be observed as a day of thanksgiving and of praise and of prayer to Almighty God, the creator and the ruler of the universe. And I do further recommend to all the people of the United States to assemble on that day in their accustomed places of public worship and to unite in the homage and praise due to the bountiful Father of All Mercies and in fervent prayer for the continuance of the manifold bless-

ings He has vouchsafed to us as a people."

Rutherford B. Hayes, October of 1877:

"The completed circle of summer and winter, seed time and harvest has brought to us the accustomed season at which a religious people celebrate with praise and thanksgiving the enduring mercy of Almighty God. Let us, with one spirit and with one voice, lift up praise and thanksgiving to God for His manifold goodness to our land, His manifest care for our Nation. I earnestly recommend that, withdrawing themselves from secular cares and labors, the people of the United States do meet together on that day in their respective places of worship, there to give thanks and praise to Almighty God for His mercies to devoutly beseech their continuance."

And parenthetically here, in the midst of these Presidential proclamations, were it not for the teachings of Jesus and the fact that this Nation is based on biblical principle, you would not have a Nation in which people, whether Muslim or any religion, would be able to so freely worship. But it's because of that caring that we're able to do that here, because, as we know, in so many nations that are non-Christian, including Muslim nations, they don't have a lot of sympathy for those who practice Christianity.

Chester A. Arthur, November 4, 1881:

"It has long been the pious custom of our people, with the closing of the year, to look back upon the blessings brought to them in the changing course of the seasons and to return solemn thanks to the all-giving source from whom they flow. The countless benefits which have showered upon us during the past 12-month call for our fervent gratitude and make it fitting that we should rejoice with thankfulness that the Lord, in His infinite mercy, has most signally favored our country and our people."

There are just so many wonderful tributes before Thanksgiving.

Let me go to one from Benjamin Harrison, November of 1891—and these are just partial. Most of them are not the entire proclamation:

"It is a very glad incident of the marvellous prosperity which has crowned the year now drawing to a close that its helpful and reassuring touch has been felt by all our people.

□ 1550

"It has been as wide as our country and so special that every home has felt its comforting influence.

"It is too great to be the work of man's power and too particular to be the device of his mind. To God, the beneficent and the all-wise, who makes the labors of men to be fruitful, redeems their losses by His grace, and the measure of whose giving is as much beyond the thoughts of man as it is beyond his deserts, the praise and gratitude of the people of this favored Nation are justly due."

So many great proclamations.

Over to William McKinley, 1897:

"In remembrance of God's goodness to us during the past year, which has been so abundant," and then he quotes from Scripture, "let us offer unto him our thanksgiving and pay our vows unto the most high. Under His watchful providence, industry has prospered, the conditions of labor have been improved, the rewards of the husbandman have been increased and the comforts of our home multiplied. His mighty hand has preserved peace and protected the Nation. Respect for law and order has been strengthened, love of free institutions cherished, and all sections of our beloved country brought into closer bonds of fraternal regard and generous cooperation

"For these great benefits, it is our duty to praise the Lord in a spirit of humility and gratitude and to offer up to Him our most earnest supplications that we may acknowledge our obligation as a people to Him who has so graciously granted us the blessings of free government and material prosperity."

Theodore Roosevelt, October of 1903:

"The season is at hand when, according to the custom of our people, it falls upon the President to appoint a day of praise and thanksgiving to God. During the last year, the Lord has dealt bountifully with us, giving us peace at home and abroad, and the chance for our citizens to work for their welfare unhindered by war, famine, and plague. Therefore, in thanking God for the mercies extended to us in the past, we beseech Him that he may not withhold them in the future."

William Howard Taft, the only President to have also been elected to Congress and to have been on the Supreme Court, actually as Chief Justice:

"A God-fearing Nation like ours owes it to its inborn and sincere sense of the moral duty to testify its devout gratitude to the All-Giver for the countless benefits it has enjoyed. For many years, it has been customary at the close of the year for the national executive to call upon his fellow countrymen to offer praise and thanks to God for the manifold blessings vouchsafed to them."

Woodrow Wilson says, in part, 1913:

"The season is at hand in which it has long been our respected custom as a people to turn in praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His manifold mercies and blessings to us as a Nation. The year that has just passed has been marked in a peculiar degree by manifestations of His gracious and beneficent providence."

John F. Kennedy, October of 1961:

"The Pilgrims, after a year of hardship and peril, humbly and reverently set aside a special day upon which to give thanks to God. I ask the head of each family to recount to his children the story of the first New England Thanksgiving, thus to impress upon future generations the heritage of this Nation born in toil, in danger, in purpose, and in the conviction that right and justice and freedom can, through

man's efforts, persevere and come to fruition with the blessing of God."

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his presentation here and setting the tone right for Thanksgiving as we are departing this city and going back to spend time with our families again. We are a grateful Nation, and I know that we will have a lot to be thankful for in the King household, as does America have a lot to be thankful for.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your attention, being recognized, and all of our service here to the American people.

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, my name is KEITH ELLISON, and I am proud to come before the House today to address you and the American people regarding our Nation and regarding the state of affairs facing our people. This is an hour I claim on behalf of the Progressive Caucus.

The Congressional Progressive Caucus is that group of Members of Congress who believe that, yes, it's true, we all must be included in the great American Dream. The Progressive Caucus is that group of Congresspeople who believe that peace and diplomacy and development are far, far away preferable to war and fighting and strife.

The Progressive Caucus, we are the ones who say, yes, we should have child nutrition; yes, we should have food stamps for people in need; yes, we should have real commitments to small business and small farmers, not big business and the farming agricultural industry.

The Progressive Caucus is that body of Members in this Congress who come together around peace, around economic justice, around the issue of civil rights. We are the ones who say Don't Ask, Don't Tell must be repealed. We are the ones who say, as a Congress, that the American people are one people and need to be included in this great American Dream; that the arms of America are broad enough for all of us. This is what the Progressive Caucus is. This is what we believe.

We are not the ones who say that some Americans are not okay based on who they love or what their religion is; and we are not the ones who say that economic prosperity should only be for the wealthiest among us; and we are not the ones who urge war. We are the ones who urge peace. We are the ones who urge economic justice. We are the ones who believe that the poor must be within our thoughts, particularly at this time of year.

We are the ones who argue that we must extend unemployment insurance benefits, which, sadly, went down on the floor of this House earlier today.

This is the Progressive Caucus, and this hour we claim on behalf of the Progressive Caucus to talk to Americans about the importance of having a progressive vision for America. Even in this time after the elections were so difficult for so many, the fact is that we remain vigilant. We remain on the job projecting a progressive vision for this great Nation.

And this hour we speak on behalf of the Progressive Caucus, and this is the progressive message, three progressive messages today for everybody, three messages we want to hit.

The first message is the unemployment extension. I want to talk about that. The other one is the Bush tax cuts extension. And the third point is the absolute deluge of dirty money which totally swept through this last election cycle, corrupted our politics, all to the tune of about \$75 million, some of it from sources no one knows where they came from, and the absolute urgent need for transparency and to get corporate money out of American politics. Those are my three topics tonight.

Let me start by talking about unemployment benefits. Today, we had a vote to extend unemployment benefits which will expire at the end of this month, in November. This comes at a time when Americans are looking forward to what their Thanksgiving dinner is going to be like. This comes at a time when many Americans are looking at Christmas, Hanukkah, holidays, time to be together. But 2 million Americans, if we don't find a way to somehow get unemployment insurance benefits extended, which again failed on the House floor today because of Republican opposition, will have a very grim holiday.

□ 1600

This is a national shame. This is a travesty. This is something that is too, too bad.

Today on the House floor, unemployment extension benefits were up on the House floor, and we had to pass them by two-thirds vote because they were on the suspension calendar. It's necessary to put things on the suspension calendar because if we go through regular order, we can bet that there will be a Republican motion to recommit which will cause all kinds of damage and mischief. So the unemployment insurance extension was put up that is expiring in a few days. And you would think that something like extending unemployment benefits would be very easy because we have 9.6 percent unemployment, so many people are facing no opportunity to have any income if these benefits are allowed to expire at the end of this month, of course compassionate Congress would step right up. You wonder why we wouldn't get 100 percent of all these Members to vote for extension of unemployment benefits. But 150 of our colleagues on the Republican side voted "no" to extension of unemployment insurance