

been about bringing the marginalized out from the shadows. So the entire Kennedy clan should be so proud of this man, PATRICK KENNEDY, and this Nation should be as grateful for his presence in this Congress.

Let me emphasize, Madam Speaker, the fact that mental health parity would not have become law had it not been for PATRICK KENNEDY. That is a legacy for which this Nation should always be grateful. PATRICK KENNEDY's legacy will continue for generations to come. We can't thank him enough for his service to this Nation and this Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### DR. RICHARD LEVIN COMMENCEMENT SPEECH EXCERPTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, last May, President Richard Levin of Yale University delivered a commencement speech, and I think the message he conveyed in that speech is worth repeating here for the Members of this body and also for the American people. I am going to read a portion of the speech and then include the entire commencement speech for the RECORD. These are the words of Dr. Richard Levin:

"Aristotle tells us that we are by nature political animals. But one wonders whether we would recognize the species we have become. Eighteen months ago, the United States elected a new President who was prepared to address intelligently and collaboratively the most pressing problems confronting the Nation—education, health care, climate change, and improving America's image in the rest of the world. Late in the election campaign, the financial crisis intervened, and economic recovery and financial sector reform were added to this ambitious agenda.

"What has happened since does not inspire great confidence in the capacity of our system to deal intelligently with important problems. Why is this happening?"

Dr. Levin says: "Let me make two observations and then trace their implications for how you might conduct yourselves as citizens and participants in political life. First, contemporary political discussion is too often dominated by oversimplified ideologies with superficial appeal to voters. And, second, political actors in the United States give too much weight to the interests of groups with the resources to influence their reelection and too little attention to the costs and benefits of their actions on the wider public.

"In the Federalist No. 10, James Madison addresses the second of these observations in the context of the fledgling republic established by the U.S. Constitution. He notes that the tendency to pursue self-interest can never be entirely suppressed, but it can be mitigated by the proper design of political institutions.

"The protections that our form of government offers against ideology and faction have attenuated greatly since Madison's time, for at least two reasons. First, mass communication increases the opportunity to sway voters by appeal to simple formulations. Of course, the rise of mass communication could be a tool for raising the level of discourse through more effective education of the electorate. But it interacts with the second attenuating factor: that the money required to win elections through the media has created a dependence on funding from special interest groups. And it is these interest groups who distort reasoned dialogue by sponsoring oversimplified messages.

"To move beyond ideology and faction, we need to raise the level of political discourse. You, as the emerging leaders of your generation," he told the students, "must rise to the challenge.

"In the first paragraph of the Federalist No. 1, writing about the infant republic whose constitution he was endeavoring to defend, Alexander Hamilton asserts:

"It has frequently been remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice.

"There is much in America's history of the past two-and-a-quarter centuries that would incline us to conclude that Hamilton's question has been answered in the affirmative. Our institutions of representative government have proven themselves to be durable, the rule of law has prevailed, and the scope of personal liberty has expanded far beyond what the Founders envisioned. But today, in the face of oversimplified ideology and the dominance of narrow interests, we must wonder again whether Hamilton's question is still open.

"Women and men of the Yale College class of 2010," Dr. Levin said, "it falls to you, the superbly educated leaders of your generation, to rise above ideology and faction, to bring to bear your intelligence and powers of critical thinking to elevate public discourse, to participate as citizens, and to answer the call to service. Only with your commitment can we be certain that our future will be decided by reflection and choice in the broad best interest of humanity. You can do it. Yes, you can."

Madam Speaker, Dr. Levin made this call to the young women and men who will lead our Nation in the years to come. But all of us should listen.

As we end this Congress and begin a new one, our Nation faces challenges as complex as they are consequential, and we stand at a tipping point. More special interest money is flooding our political system than ever before. Congress is the most partisan it has been in history. The media is often more a source of polarization than information. And the American people don't know whom to believe, if anyone; and I don't blame them.

The result is that our ability to have serious discussions about serious challenges is severely damaged. And now arguably the most significant challenge facing our country is figuring out how to have those conversations. That must be our calling for the 112th Congress. If we fail in this effort, we not only fail Congress, we fail our country.

#### BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS: RECLAIMING POLITICS

President Richard C. Levin, Yale University

What a journey you have had! Four years of exploring a place so rich with treasure: courses taught by some of the world's most brilliant and creative scholars and scientists, a library with few peers, museums that expose you to the full variety of nature and human cultures, musical and theatrical performances of the highest quality, vigorous intercollegiate and intramural athletic programs, and classmates whose excellence never ceases to astonish—and all this set within the imposing and inspiring architecture of a campus that is itself a museum. You have had the chance to interact with classmates from 50 states and 50 nations, and the great majority of you have taken advantage of Yale's abundant international programs to spend a semester or a summer abroad.

In the classroom, you were encouraged to engage thoroughly and rigorously in thinking independently about the subjects you studied. You were challenged to develop the powers of critical reasoning fundamental to success in any life endeavor. Outside the classroom, as you worked productively in the hundreds of organizations you joined or founded, you exercised the skills of teamwork and leadership. In your overseas experiences, you deepened your capacity for understanding those whose values and cultures differ from your own—preparing you for citizenship in a globally interconnected world. You may not recognize this in yourselves, but you are ready for what is next.

Understandably, you may be uncertain and a bit anxious about what lies ahead. But, if history is to be trusted, you will find many paths open to you. Because of the talent you possessed before you came here, as well as the intellectual and personal growth you have experienced here, you will find, with high likelihood, success in your chosen endeavors. And we expect you to stay connected. The vibrant life of this university is greatly enriched by the deep commitment and active participation of its graduates—think of all the master's teas and guest lectures and college seminars offered by our alumni. And keep in mind that when you thanked your parents a few moments ago, you might also have been thanking the generations of Yale graduates whose gifts past and present supported half the total cost of your education.

Perhaps I am overconfident about your prospects for personal fulfillment and professional success, but I don't think so. If you will concede my point for the sake of argument, let's ask the next question, one so

deeply rooted in Yale's mission and tradition that for most of you, fortunately, it has become ingrained. And that question is: how can I serve? How can I contribute to the wellbeing of those around me, much as we all have done in building communities within the residential colleges and volunteering in so many valuable roles in the city of New Haven? Now is an important time to be asking this question. Let me suggest why, and then let me suggest an answer.

Aristotle tells us that we are by nature political animals. But one wonders whether he would recognize the species that we have become. Eighteen months ago, the United States elected a new president who was prepared to address, intelligently and collaboratively, the most pressing problems confronting the nation—education, health care, climate change, and improving America's image in the rest of the world. Late in the election campaign, the financial crisis intervened, and economic recovery and financial sector reform were added to this ambitious agenda.

What has happened since does not inspire great confidence in the capacity of our system to deal intelligently with important problems. We legislated a stimulus package that was less effective than it should have been, and far less effective than the corresponding measures undertaken in China. Fifteen months later, unemployment in the United States is still 9.9%. After months of stalemate, Congress enacted a health care bill that extends care to millions of uncovered individuals and families, but takes only the most tentative steps toward containing the escalating costs that will create an unsustainable burden of public debt within the next decade or two. We failed to address climate change in time to achieve a meaningful global agreement in Copenhagen. And, although financial sector reform now seems to be a possibility, the debate has been replete with misunderstanding of what actually went wrong and a misplaced desire for revenge.

Why is this happening? Let me make two observations, and then trace their implications for how you might conduct yourselves as citizens and participants in political life. First, contemporary political discussion is too often dominated by oversimplified ideologies with superficial appeal to voters. And, second, political actors in the United States give too much weight to the interests of groups with the resources to influence their re-election, and too little attention to the costs and benefits of their actions on the wider public.

In *The Federalist* (No. 10), James Madison addresses the second of these observations, in the context of the fledgling republic established by the U.S. Constitution. He notes that the tendency to pursue self-interest can never be entirely suppressed, but it can be mitigated by the proper design of political institutions. In contrast to a direct democracy where individuals would tend to vote their own interests, a republican form of government, Madison argues, will have a greater tendency to select representatives who attend to the broader interests of the whole. And, he further argues, representatives in a large republic constituted of a wide range of divergent interests will find it easier to rise above parochialism than those in a smaller republic comprised of a small number of competing factions.

The protections that our form of government offers against ideology and faction have attenuated greatly since Madison's time, for at least two reasons. First, mass communication increases the opportunity to sway voters by appeal to simple formulations. Of course, the rise of mass communication could be a tool for raising the level

of discourse through more effective education of the electorate. But it interacts with the second attenuating factor: that the money required to win elections through the media has created a dependence on funding from special interest groups. And it is these interest groups who distort reasoned dialogue by sponsoring oversimplified messages.

It is easy to see how these developments have thwarted recent efforts to shape responsible public policy. For example, the interest groups opposing health care reform defeated efforts to contain costs by labeling them "death panels," and they defeated the creation of a new public vehicle for providing health insurance by insisting that we must "keep government out of the health care business," when in fact Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans Administration already pay nearly 40 per cent of the nation's health care bill. I am not taking sides here, only pointing to the fact that intelligent debate on these subjects was crowded out by ideological distortion.

How can we create a national and global dialogue that transcends such oversimplification and parochialism? Let me suggest that we need each of you to raise the level of debate. You came here to develop your powers of critical thinking, to separate what makes sense from what is superficial, misleading, and seductive. Whether you have studied literature, philosophy, history, politics, economics, biology, physics, chemistry, or engineering, you have been challenged to think deeply, to identify the inconsistent and illogical, and to reason your way to intelligent conclusions. You can apply these powers of critical discernment not simply to fulfill personal aspirations, but to make a contribution to public life.

Every signal you have received in this nurturing community has been unwavering in its message that the growth of your competencies is not to benefit you alone. You have learned in your residential colleges that building a successful community has required you to respect and value one another, and, when appropriate, to moderate your own desires for the benefit of the whole. And so it should be in your lives after Yale. If you are to help to solve this nation's problems—or work across national boundaries to address global problems such as climate, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation—you will need to draw upon both these fruits of a Yale education: the capacity to reason and the ethical imperative to think beyond your own self-interest.

I know that many of you are taking advantage of these first years after graduation to take up public service, and I hope that even more of you will consider this path. There are plenty of jobs in the public sector for enterprising recent graduates; many are short-term but others may lead to careers. Many of you have signed up to be teachers. Others will enter business or the professions. But whatever choice you make, you can help to strengthen the nation and the world—by treating political choices not as triggers for an ideological reflex and not as opportunities to maximize self-interest. To combat reflexive ideologies, you must use the powers of reason that you have developed here to sift through the issues to reach thoughtful, intelligent conclusions. To combat parochialism, you must draw upon the ethical imperative that Yale has imbued in you—an imperative that begins with the golden rule. Whether you serve in government directly or simply exercise your responsibilities as a citizen and voter, recognize that we will all be best served if we take account not merely of our own self-interest, but the broader interests of humanity. To move beyond ideology and faction, we need to raise the level of political discourse. You, as the emerging lead-

ers of your generation, must rise to this challenge.

In the first paragraph of *The Federalist* (No. 1), writing about the infant republic whose constitution he was endeavoring to defend, Alexander Hamilton asserts:

It has frequently been remarked, that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies . . . are really capable or not, of establishing good government from reflection and choice . . .

There is much in America's history of the past two and a quarter centuries that would incline us to conclude that Hamilton's question has been answered in the affirmative. Our institutions of representative government have proven themselves to be durable; the rule of law has prevailed, and the scope of personal liberty has expanded far beyond what the founders envisioned. But today, in the face of oversimplified ideology and the dominance of narrow interests, we must wonder again whether Hamilton's question is still open.

Women and men of the Yale College class of 2010: It falls to you, the superbly educated leaders of your generation, to rise above ideology and faction, to bring to bear your intelligence and powers of critical thinking to elevate public discourse, to participate as citizens and to answer the call to service. Only with your commitment can we be certain that our future will be decided by "reflection and choice" in the broad best interest of humanity. You can do it. Yes you can.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RANGEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the *Extensions of Remarks*.)

THANKS AND BEST WISHES FROM  
THE HONORABLE DIANE E. WATSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, I offer my thanks to BARBARA LEE, who is the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I want to read to you something I will leave to every Member and staff of this House:

"A happy wish for you to receive only the best that this season offers! I thank you for making my experience here one of learning, training, and developing legislative solutions. My motto is 'lift as you climb,' so that is why I am so pleased that California Speaker Emeritus Karen Bass will take my place. So, with that said, I appreciate knowing you."

I want you to know how privileged I have felt serving in this House. As I conclude my 10th year, I go back to Los Angeles to see if I can find another job. I always said that, you know, I can't keep a job.

As you heard, I started out teaching school, and I became a school psychologist. That was the most important work I could do because I was able to analyze with the young people what it