

to Senator GRASSLEY and provided more than 1,300 pages of internal documents showing how the letter came to be drafted. The documents demonstrated that the staff did not intentionally mislead Congress but relied on assurances from ATF leaders and officials in Arizona who ran the operation.

Did the committee call the head of the ATF, Ken Melson, to testify as to how this happened, as Democratic members of the committee requested? The answer is no. Did the committee call former Attorney General Mukasey, who was briefed on the botched effort to coordinate arms interdiction with Mexico in 2007? The answer is no.

Instead, the majority members demanded more internal deliberative documents from the Department of Justice after the Grassley letter had been sent. Instead, the committee leadership made an ever-escalating series of allegations regarding the involvement of the White House, documented in YouTube videos and news clips viewed on the Internet, which were subsequently withdrawn. The committee leadership has refused the Attorney General's offer to resolve the conflict.

The President has now claimed executive privilege over a very narrow group of documents from the Department of Justice in response to Chairman ISSA's threat to hold the Attorney General in contempt of Congress. This is the first time the President has claimed executive privilege, in sharp contrast to recent previous Presidents who used the claim on numerous occasions in similar circumstances.

Should the House continue to pursue this irresponsible action, it is likely that it would lead to many years of judicial action and would, of course, further poison the highly charged partisan atmosphere leading up to the elections and critical decisions regarding the Federal budget and all of the other things that we really seriously need to deal with.

So I join with others who are asking the Speaker, who are imploring this House not to take such an irresponsible vote, not to take an irresponsible action, but to sit with the Attorney General, and let's resolve the conflict between the House and the executive branch. That's what reasonable people would do.

DARK MONEY DONORS, SHOW YOURSELVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, money has taken over our political process. Big corporations and high-rolling political schemers tell us everything is still mom and apple pie, and there's nothing to worry about.

But some of us have seen the effects of these hidden million-dollar dark money donations. We've seen the ads that tell you what to think and who to vote for, without telling you who's

talking. We've seen the multimillion-dollar lawsuits that help elite corporate interests, without explaining who's paying the bill. We've seen more and more elections bought and paid for by the only people who can afford it. And those people are not us.

It's time to start naming names and asking why these people won't tell us who they are. We must start to fight back and ask them what they have to hide.

A front group called the National Federation of Independent Business is suing to block the Affordable Care Act. The president of the group says he's doing this to help small businesses. When I and my colleague Representative KEITH ELLISON wrote him a letter, asking him who his members are, he refused to answer. We asked him who gave him several recent million-dollar-plus donations that have helped fund the lawsuit; he refused to answer. We asked him why Karl Rove's Crossroads GPS political group gave him \$3.7 million just when he initiated the lawsuit; he refused to answer. And he thinks that's good enough. Well, it's not.

NFIB has never liked answering questions. In 2006, according to an article in the Nashville Scene, the organization claimed 600,000 member businesses nationwide. Today on its Web site, it claims about 300,000. But when we asked NFIB to disclose where its money comes from, instead of providing us the courtesy of a written response, the group told the press that its membership has been growing by leaps and bounds since the lawsuit began. It described shrinking by 50 percent as big, new expansion, and it said new members had made small donations that covered the cost of this complex lawsuit before the Supreme Court.

In other words, NFIB won't tell us the truth about who it represents or how big it is. What does it have to hide?

Our democracy has always been about people. It's been about individuals and families making choices about who represents their interests. It's about what kind of country we want to live in, not about what kind of country the very wealthy want to choose for us.

Today, as we prepare for the Supreme Court ruling on the Affordable Care Act, millions of Americans with pre-existing health conditions, with sick children, with long-term medical needs, and with no insurance stand together on one side. A front group with bottomless pockets that won't explain its motives sits on the other.

Mr. Speaker, this is not what our democracy is supposed to be about. Our Founding Fathers did not believe wealth makes a man more important than his neighbor. They didn't believe money is more important than the dignity of the individual. They didn't believe that any company or any organization is entitled to a special set of rules. And they certainly didn't believe that an incorporated business entity is the same thing as a human being.

There is no reason we have to accept the choices that the very, very wealthy few in this country are making for the rest of us. Today we stand up to be counted, and we demand that dark money donations come to light; that anyone who wants to influence our democracy step forward and state his name for the record and be honest and transparent with the American people.

□ 1110

Democracy is not for sale, and an election should not be an auction. I'm proud to be on the floor today and say that I am on the side of people that want disclosure, want fair elections, and are tired of the influence of dark money in our collective democracy.

I challenge those front groups to "put up" or "shut up." Tell us who's funding you and what you really want. It's about 4 months and a little more time until America elects a new Congress and a President. Let the voters decide. They know where I stand. And we want these front groups to tell us where they stand, where they get their money, who they are, and who they represent.

The American people in this great democracy of ours should make the choice whether we like it or not. The influence by a very few secretive groups that are fronting for others should not be the ones that decide who represents the American people, who will run this country, and who will set the priorities for this country.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE HOLDER CONTEMPT RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this resolution to hold in contempt Attorney General of the United States Mr. Eric Holder. This contempt resolution does no good in moving along the investigation of the gun-walking operations across our borders nor in the investigation of the death of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry, whose killing was associated with the recovery of two firearms linked with Operation Fast and Furious.

Last year, the House Oversight Committee initiated an investigation into allegations of this operation in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives, or ATF, field division in Arizona. Over the past year, the committee has extended its investigation by requesting thousands of pages of documents from the Department of Justice and interviewing about two dozen officials. In response, the Department has made extraordinary attempts, in my opinion, to accommodate these requests by submitting over almost 8,000 pages of documents. Attorney General Holder has also testified before the committee about nine times on this matter.

But the current contempt debate has lost its focus. This debate is no longer about gun-walking and Operation Fast and Furious. Having already discovered that Fast and Furious was the fourth in a series of gun-walking operations run by ATF's Phoenix field division in Arizona, dating back from the time of former President George W. Bush's administration, and finding no evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the Attorney General, the committee is now turning their focus to a single letter sent by the Department of Justice's Office of Legislative Affairs to Senator GRASSLEY on February 4, 2011, which initially denied allegations of gun-walking.

The Department has acknowledged that its letter was inaccurate and has formally withdrawn the letter. The Department has also turned over 1,300 pages of internal deliberative documents relating to how it was drafted, showing that staffers who drafted the letter relied on inaccurate assurances from ATF leaders and officials in Arizona who ran the operation. Again, the focus has shifted from the real matter of investigation and bringing justice to Agent Brian Terry's family.

During the 16-month investigation, the committee refused all Democratic requests for key witnesses and hearings, as well as requests to interview any Bush administration appointees. For example, the committee refused a public hearing with Ken Melson, the head of ATF, as well as a hearing or even a private meeting with former Attorney General Mukasey.

Attorney General Holder has worked in good faith, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, to respond to the committee's requests and even met with the bipartisan leaders from both Chambers last week, offering to provide additional documents regarding the Fast and Furious initiative. His offer was rejected, and even yet the committee has continue to move the goal posts by demanding additional internal deliberative documents from after the February 4 letter that is now in question.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is the concluding step of what has turned out to be, in my opinion, an unfair process of defaming a public servant who has thus far made all good-faith efforts to cooperate with the Oversight Committee.

Mr. Speaker, to suggest that today's debate and deliberations on this proposed contempt resolution against Attorney General Holder is a profound example of democracy at its best may also be considered a sad day—a sad day for our Nation and a recognition of the fact that there has been a failure of the system to function properly.

I would respectfully urge the Speaker not to bring this resolution to the floor and allow the leadership of both sides of the Oversight Committee not to give up, and continue the dialogue, continue the deliberation, and not to question the motives and integrity of our colleagues on the committee, but solve

the problem that is before us today, Mr. Speaker.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to give a special tribute to those fathers and their families who have come to America as refugees, escaping the harsh political and economic conditions in their home countries. On June 20, we celebrated World Refugee Day. Like many of our forefathers, refugees came to America hoping for a better life. Refugees receive sanctuary in the United States because they are in harm's way, they cannot return home safely, and they have nowhere else to turn.

For generations, we have resettled millions of refugees from all over the world. They have come from many backgrounds and ethnicities. America has offered sanctuary to countless Jews, Eastern Europeans, and many others displaced during World War II. We have welcomed people from Cuba, Vietnam, and other Asian countries who were fleeing repressive regimes.

In my home State of Georgia, I have seen how refugees have become an asset, contributing to the local economy and to the local culture. According to data from the Matching Grant Program, on average, 85 percent of refugee families in Georgia are self-sufficient 180 days after arrival.

Many Americans know the remarkable story of the Lost Boys of Sudan. Thousands of Sudanese boys were displaced and separated from their families during the second Sudanese civil war between 1983 and 2005. They traveled by foot for weeks and sometimes years to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya just to survive. Their resilience and hard work should be an example for us all.

Defying all odds, these young men pursued their dream of getting an education in America and grew to become productive members of my congressional district in Scottdale and Clarkston, Georgia. Nonprofit organizations such as Refugee Family Services and RRSIA, located in my district, provide refugees with the resources they need to become self-sufficient and adapt to life here in America.

Thanks to services provided by these organizations, Ram, a young man who grew up in a Nepali refugee camp, was awarded a prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship, a full 4-year scholarship to any college in the country. Ram chose to remain close to his family in Georgia, and he is attending Georgia Tech and plans to become a doctor.

So as we celebrate and recognize World Refugee Day this month, let us take a moment to think of those refugees, and let us recognize those organizations and volunteers working tirelessly every day helping refugees build

a better future for generations to come. Let us also be proud as Americans for following our age-old tradition of welcoming those who have lost almost everything, but have found in our great country a promise for a better tomorrow.

□ 1120

Moreover, let us celebrate the generosity of the American people who have granted to refugees the best gift of all—freedom and hope.

So I ask all of my colleagues not to cut funding for refugees just to score cheap political points. Let us instead embrace refugees. Except for Native Americans, we are all descendants of progenitors who came here under some form of duress. Let us uphold our better nature of compassion and kindness that lies at the heart of who we are as Americans.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 21 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As the energy and tensions of the Second Session gather, may there be peace among the Members of the people's House. Grant that all might be confident in the mission they have been given and buoyed by the spirit of our ancestors who built our Republic through many trials and contentious debates. May all strive with noble sincerity for the betterment of our Nation.

Many centuries ago, You blessed Abraham for his welcome to strangers by the oaks of Mamre. Bless this Chamber this day with the same spirit of hospitality, so that all Americans might know that in the people's House all voices are respected, even those with whom there is disagreement.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.