

severe, not just for the men themselves, but for their families and for the entire society.

Strong communities lay the foundation to strong societies, but when our criminal justice system emphasizes incarceration over rehabilitation, we make it increasingly difficult for those individuals to become productive members of society. We need a system that holds criminals accountable, while focusing on rehabilitation of nonviolent criminals.

If we are truly to make our communities more secure, we also need to address health disparities among African American men. Health disparities are a burden to African American communities. African American men suffer from a number of disease, including colorectal cancer, at higher rates than their White counterparts.

Part of the problem has to do with stigmas, and this is an area which I have been working hard to address in my capacity as co-chair of the Congressional Men's Health Caucus.

Along those lines, we need to eliminate the stigmas around mental health and make sure that those suffering from mental illness have the resources they need. No one struggling with mental illness should feel isolated and that they have nowhere to turn. It is clear that we are not doing enough, as a society, to get them the help they need.

We should not be seeing an uptick in the number of African American boys dying from suicide, that dreaded suicide rate. For these young boys and for others, we need to listen, and we need to encourage them not to be afraid to seek help.

The problem of “the missing black male” is not going to be resolved overnight, but closing the gap is a goal we all need to aspire to for ourselves, for our community, and for our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE PEOPLE'S NIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, tonight is a night about accountability, about taking responsibility. Many of my colleagues that will speak here tonight were sent by districts of people who wanted to hold this government accountable in both the fiscal and social arenas.

I think back today, though it was unplanned, on June 15, 1775, 240 years ago this very day, George Washington accepted the position as commander in chief of the Continental Army.

Washington was serving in the Second Continental Congress as a delegate from Virginia when his peers voted unanimously to hand him the reins of the entire Revolutionary Army.

About 100 paces from where I am standing, on the back of these Chambers, standing in the Capitol's rotunda is the history of how America was birthed into existence. It is displayed through the most glorious artwork.

Of all those paintings in the rotunda, I am most intrigued by John Trumbull's work on Washington submitting his resignation in 1783, after completing his assignment, through struggles and severe setbacks, more than 8 years after accepting the position.

Now, while some of these paintings depict those of conquests or discoveries, this particular work captures the great character of Washington. You see, Congress had granted Washington the powers equivalent to a dictator; yet the humility and the wisdom of Washington understood that, for a republic to survive, it must be held accountable by the people.

His resignation that day stated this:

I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence or a lack of self-confidence in my own abilities to accomplish so arduous a task which, however was superceded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven.

You see, Washington had resolved that a citizen-ruled government, though different than others in the past, had a chance to do something, to be something, something exceptional. Two hundred and forty years ago today, Washington laid the cornerstone of freedom through accountability to the people with a unique blessing from the divine power of Heaven.

□ 2015

That is why we have assembled tonight, to talk about what Washington's vision was: a citizen-ruled government that would hold the Federal Government and this administration accountable.

Tonight I would like to introduce the chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, a committee that I am privileged to serve on, someone who has been a champion on government oversight.

I yield to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And I thank those who are with us tonight because this topic is one of, I think, the most important to our Nation. It certainly was key to the foundation of this Nation.

And the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) is right, because if you go back and you read that farewell address that Washington gave, it is one

of the most inspirational pieces. He had the power. He had the position. He had the respect of the people. But he did probably the most admirable thing that we have seen in this Nation, in that he voluntarily gave it up because he knew that the power didn't reside in the President. He knew that the power didn't reside in him, as an individual. He understood that the power of this Nation stood with the people. And with that power comes a responsibility. It is a responsibility that all of us hold, as citizens of the United States of America. For it is truly a privilege and an honor to be a citizen in this country.

I hearken back a couple hundred years ago to those who blazed new trails and decided that this Nation was going to be an inspired nation, inspired by God, that we weren't bashful about recognizing that God played a role in our lives and that the power of prayer was an important part of our Nation.

But also incumbent upon that was that every man, woman, and child—every able-bodied person—do their part, that we all had accountability and responsibility not only to take care of ourselves but to also do what we can to help foster a greater community.

You see, this was a new idea. It wasn't that way across the world. There were dictators, and there were others that really wanted to rule and control people. But the inspiration that our Founders had in the foundation of our Nation was rooted in this idea that the people—the people—had the power.

Fast-forward now to those who serve—whether they serve in the armed services, whether they serve in the Federal Government or the State government or wherever they might serve, it should be a recognition that we serve the American people, that we serve them.

So as we look at all the issues that face us—whether we are going to spend money, whether we should pass this bill or not—let's remember a couple of things.

And I would mention this to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) because I know he knows this. And I know it. But I want my kids to know it.

As we look at things we do in Congress, as we look at the men and women who serve our Nation, most do it in a very admirable way. They are patriotic. They are hard-working. They care about this Nation. But we have some that don't really meet that standard. And it is probably most fair, most humane, most decent that we hold people to a high standard.

One of the things I want my kids to understand about government, about life in general, is that when they talk about the government and they talk about the Federal Government, it is really interesting. We will have this happen in our committee from time to time. We will say, well, whose money is it? And they will say, well, it is the government's money.

No, it is not. It is the people's money. You see, every time we decide to spend money in Congress, what we are really deciding is, should we pull money out of somebody's pocket—should we pull money out of your wallet, take it over here, and hand it to somebody else?

Now there are some worthwhile causes for doing that, right? There are some worthwhile things to do: the protection of our Nation, for our armed services. I buy that. I get that. But we are spending far too much money on too many things. We can't be all things to all people.

So going back to my original premise here, as I try to teach my own kids and try to remember myself, we have to be exceptionally responsible stewards of these assets and resources that aren't ours. They are an individual's.

For you see, at the heart of this, it is something that I think President Washington understood: that the most powerful thing upon our Nation is the power of the people, and it is their own self-determination that should rule the day. You limit their self-determination the more you regulate them and the more you pull that money directly out of their pockets and give it to somebody else.

Now, there is room for regulation. There is room for certain things in the public good. But I tell you, most of what happens, most of what goes on in Washington, it is far too much. It is excessive. And we have to remember at its core that accountability and responsibility for those of us who are fortunate enough to serve in a public role is imperative, but it is also imperative that each individual takes upon themselves their own accountability and their own responsibility.

As able-bodied men and women, children, you have got to pull your own weight. You have got to carry your own bucket. You have got to do what you have got to do not only to help yourself but to help your community, your friends, and loved ones as well.

And that is the heart of what I think the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) brings to this body. I know he cares about it passionately. It is what we are here talking about tonight. There are a host of examples where we are not holding people accountable, and we want to change that. I hope we are able to talk about that a bit tonight. But for the moment, I would say to the gentleman, thank you for allowing me to participate.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Chairman CHAFFETZ. We are going to talk about some specific egregious behavior.

It wasn't long that I was here and serving with Chairman CHAFFETZ on the House Oversight Committee that we were requested to meet with the inspector general of the EPA. It was in that moment, only weeks after I had arrived, that here we have an inspector general, a gentleman appointed by the President, who had reached out to us in his tireless efforts to even so much as

to get the EPA to respond. The arrogance that stems from that agency has been grossly misused and abused.

It is my privilege tonight to acknowledge one of my North Carolina colleagues to talk specifically more about the Environmental Protection Agency. With that, I yield to the gentleman from the Charlotte, North Carolina, area, Mr. HUDSON.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank you for your strong leadership here in Congress. Often a new Member of Congress comes to town and spends a little bit of time learning the ropes, maybe sitting in the back row observing, but that is not true of MARK WALKER. MARK WALKER has quickly become a leader in Congress and particularly on issues such as this.

Tonight is the people's night. Government accountability is the topic.

I thank the gentleman for bringing up the issue of the EPA. We had a hearing Friday in the Energy and Commerce Committee, on which I serve, in which we had the acting assistant administrator who oversees the Clean Air Act. We were looking at this new proposed rule that the EPA has put out having to do with ground-level ozone.

Now in 2008, the EPA issued a rule that brought the levels of ground-level ozone down to 75 parts per billion. Based on that number, many counties in North Carolina and across this country were out of attainment.

Everyone wants clean air. Everyone wants clean water. Even those of us who are concerned about jobs know that if you don't have clean air and clean water, you can't attract industry, and you can't have businesses grow in your community. But you have to look at the real science, and you have to look at the real numbers. And the truth is, since 1980, we have cut ground-level ozone levels 30 percent in this country. We have done a tremendous job, and that has been driven by industry.

This new rule was issued in 2008, but the instructions to States weren't issued until March of this year. So in March of this year, the EPA finally told the States how to comply with these new levels of 75 parts per billion. But now they have come out with a new rule that says, we are going to drop that to 65 or maybe even 60. If that is the case, every county in North Carolina—except one county in western North Carolina—would be out of attainment.

So what does that mean? That means you can't have a road project. It means you can't build a new home. It means you can't add any jobs to any existing industry. It means you can't bring any new industry into the State. And they are doing this at a time when we haven't even implemented the old rule, when we have already cut ground-level ozone 30 percent.

So what I would say is, let's wait and look at the science. Let's look at the real health impacts. Let's see what the results of the current regulations are

before we rush out with some new regulations which we are told could cost as much as 270,000 jobs in North Carolina. I have seen a figure of 1.3 million jobs in the country. Before we bring on this cost, before we threaten these jobs, before we basically shut down all growth and development, let's take a look at the actual science.

So this is just one example of one agency that is overreaching. We have got other examples. You have got the IRS using "the dog ate my homework" excuse to duck responsibility. We have also got the Department of Veterans Affairs failing to provide adequate care for our heroes.

When he established the VA, President Abraham Lincoln promised that our Nation would take care of our men and women in uniform and their families who have served and defended our country.

Mr. Speaker, it is an understatement to say that today, the VA is failing and falling extremely short of that promise that President Lincoln made. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines have endured traumatic experiences on the battlefield and should not have to continue to fight to receive proper care when they return home.

Make no mistake, there are many good and dedicated people at VA medical facilities across the country who do a tremendous job every day caring for our veterans. In fact, many of the folks working at VA facilities are veterans themselves. The problem is, the bureaucracy has gotten so massive and so out of control, the resources are wasted and the quality of care delivered to veterans has decreased.

This culture of unaccountability has led to long wait times, 10,000 disability claims still in backlog, and millions of our tax dollars wasted. Our veterans are being ignored and tragically, in some cases, left to die.

It was George Washington who has been talked about by my colleague. Mr. WALKER mentioned the anniversary of him resigning his commission. George Washington said: "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive how the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their Nation."

Mr. Speaker, I know we will continue our efforts to reshape the culture at the VA, but it is high time this administration takes responsibility and joins those of us who want to give veterans a choice.

Every veteran in this country should have the choice to go to any doctor of their choosing, and the VA should not have to preapprove it, and the VA should pay for that medical care. That is the proposal that I have talked about. I think that is the way that we could finally end these wait times, and we can break down these backlog.

I call on the administration to work with us. It is time for the people to have accountability from their government. It is time for our veterans to

have accountability from the VA. They put everything on the line for our country, for our freedom. It is time for us to do the same.

God bless our veterans and their families. It is time to get to work.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Representative HUDSON, for the passionate remarks regarding our veterans.

It is a shame, the abuse that we see sometimes of the veterans. But there has probably been no greater abuse than that of our own Internal Revenue system. With 75,000 pages, 8,000 pages that have been added under this administration, we can see why abuse and corruption exist.

What better person to speak on that than an economics professor. So I now yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BRAT), a new Member of the Congress.

Mr. BRAT. Thank you, Mr. WALKER.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, more details emerged about the IRS' targeting of conservative groups, where the agency tried to extort information on donors, find out what Members talked about at their meetings and probe into what Members did in their very free time.

We learned this month that the IRS had set up yet another roadblock to prevent Congress and the American people from getting to the bottom of this scandal.

The IRS established a team of hundreds of lawyers to redact information from the documents Congress had requested for its investigations. This obstruction makes me extremely concerned for every American who voices political beliefs that don't agree with this administration's, whether they are conservative, liberal, green, religious, or agnostic.

I am grateful for the organization in my own district that exposed this scandal to the American people. The Richmond Tea Party was the first in the country to go public with the IRS' abuse. Once it was exposed, conservative groups from all over the country came forward and revealed that they were victims of the same IRS tactics.

The IRS specifically targeted groups with "Tea Party" and "patriot" in their names because of their political positions. The IRS targeted them for increased scrutiny, and it delayed processing their applications for nonprofit status.

□ 2030

Let me go over that again just real slowly so the American people understand what is going on here.

The Tea Party group, the T stands for "taxed enough already." They are being targeted by the very government agency tasked with ensuring fairness in our tax revenue collections system. The irony could not be clearer. The groups were subjected to unprecedented and intimidating questioning. The IRS demanded resumes of board members, lists of all donors, and screen shots of blogs and social media posts to

determine if their speech was acceptable to the Big Brother government. The agency asked some groups for minutes of every board meeting as well as lists of positions they took on certain issues.

On April 15, 2009, thousands of average Virginians showed up to the Richmond Tea Party's first rally in the pouring rain to stand together against government run amuck and President Obama's promise to fundamentally transform America. People became engaged—many for the first time. After word of IRS targeting broke, people stopped coming to meetings and stopped giving money for fear of being targeted themselves.

It has been 2 years since the Justice Department opened its investigation, and it has been 2 years of waiting as nothing ever seems to happen. The IRS has tried to cover its tracks at every turn. It lied to the public and to this Congress about its secret targeting program. To this day, document requests submitted by Congress remain unfulfilled. The IRS complained it had lost thousands of emails belonging to Lois Lerner. Since then, the inspector general recovered more than 6,000 of them. They were located where anyone would expect: in the IRS data backup facility.

Congress held Lois Lerner in contempt after she claimed she knew nothing about the targeting and refused to answer questions about it. Yet the Obama Justice Department—the Justice Department—has never prosecuted her. This all creates the frightening potential that we could foresee a repeat of this very same behavior in the future. We need this President and this administration to live up to their promise of transparency rather than their practice of obstruction.

Mr. Speaker, we in Congress can put an end to this kind of mistreatment of our citizens by passing a fair tax or a flat tax. Either tax system would treat citizens more equally and would take away the IRS' power to discriminate and investigate against Americans who hold beliefs contrary to those in power.

Ladies and gentlemen, the right to express your political views is so critical to the foundation of a free society that it is enshrined in our First Amendment—the First Amendment. Our very freedoms and the future of our constitutional form of government depend on the ability of all Americans to freely exercise that right. That is why it is incumbent upon this Congress to put forth every effort to protect that precious right and to hold those who would infringe upon it accountable to the fullest extent of the law.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Congressman BRAT. I appreciate your shedding light.

Mr. Speaker, this administration, from the very beginning, went a long way in promising transparency and accountability. In fact, it was President Obama himself who expressed: "My administration is committed to creating

an unprecedented level of openness in government." In the same speech, President Obama went on to say: "Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their government is doing. Information maintained by the Federal Government is a national asset." President Obama said: "My administration will take appropriate action consistent with law and policy to disclose information rapidly in forms that the public can readily find and use." Well, that is what he said, but it has been the exact opposite for the Department of Justice.

Many of us have heard about Fast and Furious, and we may have time to get to it. What I want to talk about tonight is Operation Choke Point, and here to do that tonight is one of the strong conservatives in all of Congress, my colleague from South Carolina, Mr. MICK MULVANEY.

Mr. MULVANEY. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina. I thank him for doing this. I think it is wonderful that we are having a night designated as the people's night. You would think that we would do that just every day in here, but I think that more often than not we probably don't, so it is good to be here to talk about things that affect the people.

Some things that affect the people, Mr. Speaker, back where I live is Operation Choke Point. Where I live, people buy guns at gun shows. They use pawnshops. They might go to a payday lender every now and again. They might go and buy ammunition. Because of what has happened in Operation Choke Point the last year and a half or so, they are starting to lose the ability to do that.

I want to explain to people very briefly what Operation Choke Point is. This is not some rightwing conspiracy. It is not some Internet myth. This has been acknowledged by the Department of Justice.

Several years ago, the DOJ, along with the FDIC, one of the banking regulators, set out to attack legal businesses, businesses that were perfectly legal and permitted under the law, but they were in disfavor with this administration. Instead of trying to drive those businesses out of business by using the law, this administration decided to use the regulatory environment. Instead of going directly after those businesses, this administration went after their banks and said:

Look, we know that this pawnshop is a legal business, and we know that you have done business with them for a long time, but we could really make your life difficult if you continue to bank this particular pawnshop. In fact, your life will be much easier if you didn't bank this pawnshop.

Time and again, Mr. Speaker, what we found was these small businesses—a woman-owned business in my district—losing their banking relationships. The banks that had 25-year relationships with them would come to them and say:

Look, we simply can't bank with you anymore. It is too difficult to do. There is too much pressure to stop.

I had a woman-owned business, a pawnshop in my district. She tried to expand the business so that the business was big enough to give to both of her sons. She was a single mother. She wanted to get the business big enough to where both boys could inherit part of the business. She went to her local bank where she had more than a 20-year relationship, and she was told that, no, that she was now too hot to handle. Not only could they not give her a loan to expand the business, they had to pull back on the services they already provided.

There is another business elsewhere in the State, a large financial concern, and a little tiny piece of what they do is payday lending. You can say what you want to about it, Mr. Speaker. You may not like payday lending. A lot of people don't. But people use it, and people need it.

I will never forget when I was in the State legislature, we had a hearing on payday lending. One of the witnesses that spoke before me in the senate was an employee of one of the local credit unions. I knew who she was. I walked up to her afterwards and said: You are here to talk in favor of payday lending?

She said: Yes.

I said: But you work for a credit union.

She said: Yes.

I said: Why are you here?

She said: Because everybody in town knows who I am. I am having a tough divorce, and I need a little bit of money. If I go to my local bank or I go to my credit union where I work, everybody is going to know about it. I don't want people to know about my business.

She needed that particular service. Folks need this service. It may not be the proudest thing we do as a nation, but people need it.

This company in Greenville, South Carolina, had a little, tiny piece of their business in payday, a 30-year banking relationship for all the rest of their businesses. The bank came over one day and said: Look, we are under a great deal of pressure. We are going to have to pull all our relationships with you.

Maybe 5, maybe 2½ percent of their business was payday, and now this large employer in my district is struggling to find financial services.

It is so offensive, Mr. Speaker, that a couple of months ago, the DOJ finally acknowledged that it was wrong, and they agreed to stop the program. The FDIC agreed to stop as well. All I can tell you is that while the letter went out saying it was stopped, we are still hearing stories to this day that it is still going on.

My dad told me about a year ago, I had been here 3 years at the time, and he started paying attention to politics after I got here. He said: Do you want to know the difference, Mick, between government today and government when I was your age?

I said: What is that, Dad?

He said: When I was your age, you might not like what the government did, you might not like the party that was in power, but it never even occurred to us to be afraid of the government. It never even occurred to us that we might be targeted for what we believe or what we think or what we do for a living. That is what is different now.

Mr. Speaker, people are afraid of their government. And if you are home tonight, you are watching this, and you run an ammunition store in Union, South Carolina, you are legitimately afraid that the government is going to try and come and put you out of business. That is a dramatic change, Mr. Speaker, and not a change for the better.

To that extent, a group of men and women come here tonight at the invitation of the good gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER), come and just tell people that we think it is wrong, too, we have heard what they have had to say back home, and just deliver the message that they are not alone, that there are some men and women here in Washington who are just as outraged as they are, and they are dedicated to making sure that when our time here is done, they won't have to fear their government anymore.

So with that, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina, again, for setting up this Special Order.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about accountability, we think of great leaders here in the Congress, even people who have reached out as mentors. I can think of no one higher that has that honor for my respect than the colleague, the part of our delegation from North Carolina, Mr. MARK MEADOWS, and with that, I yield to him.

Mr. MEADOWS. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his leadership and truly for being willing to be the voice of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to really highlight what so many Americans have a hard time understanding, and that is why we as the American people can continue to allow a government to overreach its true authority and not be reined in, Mr. Speaker. So tonight I want to highlight just a few things.

Before I do that, I think it is important that we talk about the Federal workers here that work for the American people, the vast majority of which—I would say almost 99 percent of which—are dedicated public servants who each and every day give their utmost for their fellow man, truly, to serve this great country.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, I rise to really highlight some of those that give the rest of those great Federal workers a bad name. For many of us, they also give us a reason to pause and say: Wait just a minute. How can that happen in this great land?

So tonight I feel like it is important that we identify some of these workers

who truly have displaced the trust of the American people. They have taken Federal tax dollars, they have continued to take a salary, and yet what we find is they did not uphold their constitutional duty to do what is right on behalf of the American people.

We know one example is with the EPA, the gentleman who worked to define the Clean Air Act. We found that, over time, he was not even showing up for work, that he would continue to be paid for years and years and years, that he was paid without showing up. Now, certainly his colleagues would have to know that there was an empty cubicle next to them, but yet, for over a decade, we have an EPA employee who pretended to be a CIA agent.

Now, when we start to look at this, here he was not showing up for work. He was traveling all over the world at taxpayers' expense. Indeed, what he was continuing to do is pretend like he was an employee of the Federal Government, but not showing up.

□ 2045

So my question is really more about accountability, Mr. Speaker. Where was the management team? Where was the accountability? We can understand one bad apple, but where was the management?

Well, let me tell you where they were. This particular EPA employee decides that they are going to go and they are going to retire, and so all the management comes together. They give him a great retirement party. He retires and he says: But wait just a minute. You need to continue to pay me because I am still working for the CIA.

Now, the sad part about it is they continued to pay him for another 18 months. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know about you, but that is just hard to believe. It is the thing that novels are made of, but yet this is not fictitious; it is the truth.

We have got other EPA employees that are there that are watching porn on their government computer over 6 hours a day for 4 years. Where is the oversight there?

And yet, when people are willing to blow the whistle and say, "This is not right with some of my colleagues," what do they meet with?

Well, we heard at a hearing just this last week that a whistleblower for the Department of Homeland Security in their EB-5 program was punished because she dared to speak up.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it is time that the American people start to hold the management of Federal workers accountable because they are entrusted with that trust that needs to be carried out each and every day. And so tonight I am here to call out Mr. Mayorkas. Recently, an IG report identified Mr. Mayorkas as doing special favors for political operatives—allegedly, the Governor of Virginia; allegedly, the brother of our former Secretary of State.

What the American people will not stand for, Mr. Speaker, is a double standard. If political favors are going to be given out, the people who give them out should be held accountable. And I appreciate the gentleman from North Carolina, his leadership, because not only is this service on Oversight and Government Reform designed to make sure that we get to the truth of it, but he is unrelenting in his willingness to go after those who live by a double standard.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Congressman MEADOWS. I appreciate your words tonight.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of interest these days in the growing list of candidates that we have running for the 2016 Presidential election, and one of the things that drove me to make a decision in running for Congress to begin with was the great abuses that we have in some of the particular agencies.

Three years ago, none were more glaring than the State Department and the actions taken by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. To this day, I can't understand why she could look and even hug a family and tell them point-blank that this was about a video. Nine days later, our President followed up with pretty much the same inaccurate jargon.

It is my privilege to yield to the gentleman from Colorado, Representative KEN BUCK, my friend, tonight, who is going to talk some about her work and her time. He is a great conservative from the State of Colorado.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and my friend from North Carolina for putting this together and for yielding to me.

Many of us know that today marks an important anniversary in world history. Eight hundred years ago, following a populist revolution led by courageous English barons demanding the protections from executive overreach, England's King John signed into law a document known as the Magna Carta. This "Grand Charter" marked the first time that everyone, including kings, were subjected to the rule of law, that everyone would enjoy the benefits of due process and equal protection under the law.

The Magna Carta inspired our Founding Fathers to demand liberty in the Declaration of Independence. Many Magna Carta principles appeared again in the United States Constitution. This one single document became the basis of our Republic and established one of our greatest founding principles, the rule of law, and the rule of law remains as important as ever.

President Obama is working to fundamentally transform our laws without consent, granting citizenship to illegal immigrants, making recess appointments to the NLRB when the Senate is not in recess, and changing the healthcare law without an act of Congress.

The IRS ignored the rule of law by targeting and harassing individuals based on their political beliefs. And who could forget the ATF's Fast and Furious program, which allowed U.S. weapons to be walked across the U.S.-Mexico border in hopes of catching Mexican drug lords, but ended with the tragic murder of U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry.

It is time to prevent future would-be monarchs from being elected and further eroding our proud tradition for the rule of law. While the Clinton family has been known to play by their own set of rules and has a laundry list of scandals that goes back decades, I am squarely focused on two dubious, dishonest, and dangerous scandals that Hillary Clinton was involved in while serving as Secretary of State.

As the Nation's top diplomat, Secretary Clinton used her position of power to create her own set of rules, using a personal email account for official State Department business. She continued to do so even after issuing a memo calling on staff to use official government email accounts.

Secretary Clinton ignored the rule of law when she deleted over 30,000 State Department emails from a personal server located in the basement of her Georgetown mansion. What makes this worse is that she deleted these emails even as Congress called for her to release them. Storing these emails on a private server violates Federal records law. Deleting these emails also raises questions not seen since the IRS targeting investigation. What is she hiding in these deleted emails? Did she even consider what might happen if these records fell into the wrong hands? Would she even know if her server had been breached?

Secretary Clinton proudly stated during a March 10 press conference: I fully complied with every rule I was governed by.

Americans will never know because she ignored the rule of law. By exclusively using a personal email account to conduct State Department business, Secretary Clinton put the State Department at a great risk just for her personal convenience. The Secretary of State is also not allowed to conduct and store official State Department business on a private, unsecured server. If any other hard-working American conducted their business this way, they would be out of a job and most likely in jail.

This brings me to the Clinton family's next scandal. While Hillary Clinton served as Secretary of State, the Clinton family foundation continued to accept millions of dollars in donations from foreign governments. All told, seven foreign nations, including Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Algeria, donated money to the Clinton Foundation during the time Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State.

These contributions raised questions about Secretary Clinton's independence and ethical judgment. But when

some of the \$1 million donations in question came from nations like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, it raises concerns about whether these nations were hoping to gain better diplomatic ties to the United States through sizable donations to the Clinton Foundation. When the Secretary of State is playing fast and loose with the rule of law, even ignoring a memorandum of understanding with the White House regarding a questionable donation from the Algerian Government, it is extremely difficult to trust her judgment or her word when she claims not to have broken any laws.

The rule of law has been a core principle since our founding. Brave men and women have fought and died to protect this idea and preserve the liberty we hold so dearly. This is why I find it especially tragic that Secretary Clinton blatantly ignored the rule of law.

The Magna Carta's anniversary is a great opportunity to remember the courageous barons who secured the rule of law. We must restore this key principle and stop the attacks on our founding principles. It is our job to safeguard those liberties and protect the America we know and love for generations to come.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Congressman BUCK.

With that, it is my privilege to yield to the gentleman from Georgia, Congressman JODY HICE, my colleague and a former fellow minister.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to be just astounded at the lack of accountability and transparency surrounding the scandal with the IRS as it relates to conservative groups and the targeting that the IRS had towards those groups.

It is absolutely unacceptable that we have waited now for over 2 years to get answers to this scandal and the targeting of conservative groups. Right at the epicenter of all of that is Lois Lerner. We requested emails some 2 years ago and only right now, 2 years later, some of these requests for emails are coming to light. These documents and communications requested should have been brought forth long ago. In fact, we are at the time now in this investigation, we are at the point now that I believe we need to seriously question the process by which Congress' requests for information from the IRS are being handled by the IRS.

One example, Mr. Speaker, in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, where I have the distinct honor of serving, it came to light in that committee that the IRS actually formed a special project team in order to deal with the Lois Lerner investigation.

According to testimony by Ms. Mary Howard, who is the Director of the Privacy, Governmental Liaison and Disclosure for the IRS, according to her

testimony, all congressional subpoenas, requests for information, Freedom of Information Act requests, and other investigative requests were directed to this special group, this special project team, rather than going through the normal process of investigations that other similar investigations might go through.

According to her testimony, Mr. Speaker, these requests were handled primarily by the IRS Commissioner and the IRS Office of Chief Council rather than the normal process. In other words, this special project team handled the issue with Lois Lerner differently than they handle other similar investigations.

Ms. Howard's testimony further revealed that the IRS, on numerous occasions, went away from the standard way of dealing with freedom of information requests and, if her testimony is true, the handling of the FOIA requests not only for Ms. Lois Lerner, but for other 501(c)(3) and (c)(4) organizations, and may have gone beyond what is even permissible under the Freedom of Information Act.

Following her testimony, Chairmen CHAFFETZ and JORDAN sent a letter to the IRS Commissioner, John Koskinen, requesting more information so that the Oversight Committee could better understand the process that they used in dealing with Ms. Lois Lerner. And I am told that, even as recently as this past Friday, the letter received back from the IRS is totally inadequate. It does not answer the questions, and here we are still years removed from it.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely frustrating that now, 2 years later, we are still dealing with this issue. It is frustrating that in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee we are still dealing with the deplorable activities of how the IRS has been handling this.

It is up to Congress. We must continue pushing forward for increased accountability and transparency in all areas of our government, particularly as it relates to this with the IRS.

I want to thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Congressman HICE.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from the State of Texas, Mr. JOHN RATCLIFFE, one of our sharpest new Members from the State of Texas, a district attorney, who we asked specifically to come out to share some thoughts tonight specifically about some of the continued abuses.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for yielding this evening.

Mr. Speaker, the most fundamental principle of our criminal justice system is that we are innocent until proven guilty. Operation Choke Point turns that most sacred tenet on its head.

When President Obama and his administration uses agencies like the Department of Justice and the FDIC to target legal businesses without due

process, without any public debate, and when he bases his attacks not on the rule of law but on his own political beliefs, well, that is a tragic breakdown of the system of checks and balances and separation of powers that our Founding Fathers deliberately designed.

Mr. Speaker, Operation Choke Point is just flat wrong. Folks all across the Fourth Congressional District of Texas in cities and towns like Bonham, Denison, Sulphur Springs, Texarkana, and Sherman, they all just want to run their businesses and enjoy their freedoms without fear of persecution from a President that has overstepped his authority time and time again.

Many of the Texans that I represent are deeply troubled and concerned about Operation Choke Point, an initiative which is pressuring banks and others in the financial industry to deny access to financial services to businesses like gun sellers and coal producers.

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My constituents see this operation for what it really is, a blunt weapon that targets and stigmatizes entire industries that the Obama administration dislikes, instead of an honest effort to get rid of actual bad actors and lawbreakers.

Sadly, as a direct result of Operation Choke Point, legitimate businesses in Texas and across the country have been forced to close simply because the President and his activist bureaucrats have a political agenda, and they don't like what these businesses are selling. When you weaponize your government to go after folks you don't like and when you target your own citizens as political enemies, that is the way that Third World governments operate, not the greatest country the world has ever seen.

Mr. Speaker, this is the United States of America, and our government should never go after its own citizens for political reasons. This is especially outrageous when the administration does so by targeting the Bill of Rights, and that is exactly what is happening here.

When you specifically target gun dealers and ammunition manufacturers, that is an affront to and an assault upon our Second Amendment rights. No President or administration is above the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. I have met recently with far too many honest, hard-working, law-abiding folks in the gun industry who have been politically targeted by this initiative.

We can't allow this administration to continue to target legitimate businesses, like gun stores and cigar and pawn shops, through Operation Choke Point, just because the President doesn't like what they sell. Pressuring and forcing banks to stop engaging with legal industries needs to stop. We can't allow unelected bureaucrats to make such a brazen, backdoor assault

on legitimate businesses and the hard-working, law-abiding citizens who own and operate them.

In July of 2014, one of the Judiciary subcommittees on which I now serve held a hearing on Operation Choke Point, and because of that hearing and of the due process concerns raised by the testimony there, the DOJ and the FDIC announced it would rescind its list of so-called high-risk merchants.

That move seemed to be an apparent recognition of the fact that Operation Choke Point is wrongfully inflicting collateral damage on legitimate businesses that are losing access to financial services. Despite this acknowledgment and admission from those at the top, companies across my district tell me that the administration's foot soldiers on the ground simply haven't gotten the message yet. The harassment is continuing, and this is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, we should stand up for the rights of every American. I am saddened to see a President who is so out of touch with what has made this country great, who is so out of touch that he would use an army of unelected bureaucrats to attack businesses that don't toe the ideological line with his administration.

Mr. Speaker, congressional oversight demands that we refuse to step aside, that we refuse to let this unprovoked attack on our constitutional and fundamental rights go unchallenged. I will continue to stand watch against this overreach. My colleagues and I will not allow our constituents' rights to be violated or our Constitution to be trampled.

Mr. WALKER. I thank Congressman RATCLIFFE for his powerful stance.

Mr. Speaker, since 2012, one of the bulldogs that has been holding the IRS accountable is the Congressman from central Florida. At this point, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS).

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank my friend from North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, if you are a taxpayer and if you become subjected to an IRS audit, you have got to prove and justify what you have submitted to the IRS. If you tell the IRS, "I don't really have those documents. They were destroyed, and there is nothing I can do. Let's just move along," I don't think most IRS agents are going to accept that, and I think the taxpayer would likely find himself in hot water.

I think it is really unacceptable that the IRS seems to think it could operate under a totally different standard than the standard that it imposes on American taxpayers.

We have been going through this now since 2013 with Lois Lerner and the targeting scandal in our trying to get more information. Last year, before Congress, John Koskinen, the IRS Commissioner, said: We are going to produce Lois Lerner's emails. We will produce all of them. We have nothing to hide.

A couple of months later, he said: Actually, most of Lois Lerner's emails were destroyed because, you see, they are held on these backup tapes, and we recycle the backup tapes. We destroy the tapes, so there is just nothing we can do here. We are just going to move along, and we are not going to participate in any meaningful way with your investigation.

Most Americans didn't accept that, and it really was not worth the paper it was printed on in terms of an excuse. It was, obviously, much different than what the IRS would impose on a taxpayer, but it was even more than that. It was more than just a weak excuse; it was false.

Once Koskinen said that the emails were destroyed—guess what?—the Inspector General for Tax Administration in the Treasury Department did basic due diligence and said: Do you know what? I am going to check to see whether Koskinen is telling the truth.

What did the IG do? He drove out to West Virginia where they have the warehouse of all of the backup tapes. What did they find? The Lois Lerner emails on the backup tapes. They were there the whole time. Now, they have pulled thousands and thousands of Lois Lerner emails.

These are emails that are, in many cases, different than the emails that the IRS begrudgingly produced to Congress and to the American people. This is a major, major issue. Of course, there is the targeting, but then there are the lengths that the IRS has gone to stymie Congress' investigation.

Just this week in Federal court, they are fighting Judicial Watch. They don't want to turn over even these new emails that the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration provided to the IRS.

They are saying: We can't turn them over to you now in the course of the litigation. We are not going to turn them over to Congress because we need to check to see whether there are any duplicates from the emails that we have already turned over.

Really? Who cares? Give us the emails. Give the American people the truth. What they are trying to do is to stonewall and drag this out as long as they can, hoping that the American people will forget about it. Then, basically, they get away scot-free, with nobody in their organization being held accountable.

I think it is a test of this institution here in the Congress about whether somebody like Commissioner Koskinen is going to be held to account for misleading Congress, for providing false information to Congress.

The fact of the matter is, if an American taxpayer were hauled in front of a Federal grand jury or a Federal court and if he gave testimony like that, that was not true, he would face consequences. You can bet your bottom dollar.

I think the IRS is kind of the grossest example that we have in Wash-

ington of really a fundamental problem with how our government operates, which is that the people who work and operate in and around Washington, D.C.—6 of the 10 wealthiest counties in our country are now suburbs of Washington, D.C. We are not producing shale here. We don't have technology—nothing—in Washington.

It is all because of the power and growth of government, so people inside the beltway are not held accountable. You have people at the IRS, and you have people at the EPA, and you have people in all of these different agencies. Essentially, they are allowed to operate under a lower standard of conduct than what an American taxpayer or a citizen would be allowed or permitted to do by the government. That is unacceptable.

I think that this IRS issue is as important a government accountability issue as we are facing in this Congress. I think it is a test for the House as to whether we are going to be serious about this and hold these IRS officials accountable.

I am glad my friend from North Carolina had the time here today. I think it was very productive to listen to some of the other Members. I just want the American people to know that I am committed to getting to the bottom of this and to holding these people accountable not only for the targeting, but for obstructing the investigation when it has been obstructed over and over again.

Mr. WALKER. I thank Congressman DESANTIS.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, in closing, we have had an evening which we have called and labeled “the People's Night,” one of many that we plan on holding. I thank the dozen or so colleagues who have shown their concern.

We talk much about awareness these days, but few times do we get to the accountable and to the action step process. Government has run amuck. That is why many of us ran to begin with.

I sent out an email this afternoon, asking a few of the constituents back home what some of the things are they are concerned about. The president of our local women's Republican club sent back two paragraphs and listed about 12 or 13 things. Those are the kinds of things we need to be calling out.

It has been a privilege to be with my colleagues this evening. I appreciate their time as they continue to show strong support for these wonderful men and women.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PRO-
VIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF
H.R. 2596, INTELLIGENCE AU-
THORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2016

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-155) on the resolution (H. Res. 315) providing for

consideration of the bill (H.R. 2596) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

IRAN'S HISTORY OF TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, this evening, I would like to take some time to remind the American people of the nature of a sworn enemy of the United States, whose leaders to this day, as they have for the past 36 years, continue to chant, “Death to America.”

That enemy, Mr. Speaker, is Iran. Mr. Speaker, the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China, plus Germany, this group known as the P5+1—have engaged in negotiations with Iran in an attempt to halt Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

Of significant note, unlike the negotiations that we had with North Korea years ago regarding its pursuit of nuclear weapons, those negotiations included the United States and North Korea's neighbors—China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan. Iran's regional neighbors and closest targets, however—Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel—were not invited to participate in these talks.

A framework for an agreement with the P5+1 and Iran was reached in April, but that framework is simply inadequate to halt the regime's march to a nuclear weapon.

Iran cannot be allowed to get a nuclear weapon. Such an event would set off a destabilizing arms race in a region of the world that is already afire with sectarian hatred. It is a real threat that Iran would use such a weapon against Israel, Europe, or with its continued development of long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles against the United States.

Iran's surface-to-surface missile expansion is a threat typically left out of discussions over its nuclear program, but we cannot ignore that Iran has now built itself the largest and most sophisticated long-range missile arsenal in the Middle East.

The current nuclear framework agreed to in April represents a significant shift in U.S. policy regarding Iran's nuclear program. Under the agreed upon framework, Iran's nuclear centrifuges will be allowed to keep spinning for the next decade. This is the first Presidential administration to