

When did that happen? When did it become more important to defend your President than to defend the Constitution? When did it become more important to be a good Republican than to be a good Congressman? I argue we can still turn the tide on that, Mr. Speaker.

Representative George Miller from California, ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, which had jurisdiction over these issues in the House, said this: "President Obama's recess appointments will guarantee both employers and employees will have a place to go to have their rights under the law protected and enforced."

Well, that would be true except that they were unconstitutionally appointed, and, thus, all of the decisions they rendered are now moot. No one is defending article I. Folks are defending their President instead.

Senator HARRY REID: "Since President Obama took office, Senate Republicans have done everything possible to deny qualified nominees from receiving a fair up-or-down vote. President Obama did the right thing when he made these appointments on behalf of American workers."

Mr. Speaker, at 9-0, the Supreme Court said: No. You did not do the right thing, Mr. President. In fact, you did exactly the wrong thing. In fact, it is unconstitutional what you did. You do not have the power to act in this way. And Democrat after Democrat after Democrat is defending him.

□ 1300

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I put up these same charts from the Bush administration, I would have Democrats saying the Bush administration overstepped its bounds, and Republican after Republican after Republican would be defending them.

It has got to stop. It may be too late for this administration, Mr. Speaker. The lines in the sand may have already been dug so deep that we won't be able to cross them, but here in this Presidential primary season we have got to ask of our Presidential candidates: What are you first? Are you your own leader first? Are you a Republican or Democrat first? Or, are you the leader of the free world under the restrictions of article II first?

Are you going to use your pen and your phone? Are you just going to go out there and get it done by yourself? Or, are you going to go sell your boss on the idea—your boss, being 300 million Americans—and then are we going to bring ourselves together as a Nation to do these things one by one?

Mr. Speaker, we have got to stop defending or criticizing actions based on which party is involved in it. There is one rule book for this country. It is not the policy position of the Republican National Committee. It is not the policy position of the Democratic National Committee. The one rule book in this country is the United States Con-

stitution, which says Congress writes the law and the President enforces it.

We have got to expect more of our Presidents—not about the results that they get, but about the leadership they provide. Not the leadership to go around the law, but the leadership to change people's minds and then change the law.

We have got so much opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We have so much opportunity. The men and women that I have gotten to know in this Chamber would rather lose their seat tomorrow—who cares about the election—and they want to make a difference for the country. Don't tell me partisan gridlock has rendered self-governance impossible.

Gridlock is the natural state of the constitutional government that our Founding Fathers created. We have to work with it, not around it, and we have to work with the American people, changing hearts and minds, not going around the American people and having to rely on the Supreme Court to fix those mistakes.

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

#### PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE SENATE AND AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following privileged concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 31) providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and an adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

##### S. CON. RES. 31

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Thursday, February 11, 2016, through Saturday, February 20, 2016, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until 12:00 noon on Monday, February 22, 2016, or such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Friday, February 12, 2016, through Tuesday, February 16, 2016, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2016, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 3 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.*

SEC. 2. (a) The Majority Leader of the Senate or his designee, after concurrence with the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the Senate to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the Senate adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection

by its Majority Leader or his designee, the Senate shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

SEC. 3. (a) The Speaker or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the House to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the House adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the House shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RATCLIFFE). Without objection, the concurrent resolution is concurred in.

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### PRESIDENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

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

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the President submitted a budget request to the Congress. That budget request increases spending by approximately \$2.5 trillion over the next 10 years. It raises taxes by \$3.4 trillion over the next 10 years. And I will say that again. It increases spending by \$2.5 trillion and raises taxes by \$3.4 trillion over the next 10 years.

This budget, like every other budget that has been submitted by this White House, does not ever come into balance. It never comes into balance. It stays in the red. In fact, under this budget, we will see a 13 percent structural shortfall in funding. The deficit would increase this fiscal year to \$616 billion. That is up from approximately \$438 billion last year. Either number is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, with the trajectory that we are on, by 2022, just the interest on the debt—let me be clear: just the interest, not the principal—is going to result in us spending more money on paying that interest payment than we will spend on all of our defense spending in a year.

I will say that again. We will spend more money just paying the interest payment on the debt—not dropping the principal—than we will spend on our entire defense budget in the year by 2022, with the trajectory that we are on, increasing this Nation's debt.

The debt is going to be more than double what it was at the time this President took office. It is going to more than double by the time he leaves office. It currently exceeds \$18 trillion. Yes, \$18 trillion is our debt today. To break that down, that is approximately \$155,000 per taxpayer. This isn't Monopoly money. These are real repercussions.

Earlier this week, in this Chamber, I was able to host a seventh-grade class

from LSU University Lab School. These are the folks that are going to pay for it. It is that generation of these seventh-graders and their children and grandchildren and great children.

Mr. Speaker, at some point, this debt is going to be due. The bill is going to have to be paid. You can see that we are going off this cliff of spending to where our interest payments in a short 6 years are projected to exceed all that we are spending in our defense budget in a single year. This budget adds \$6 trillion in debt over the next 10 years.

I would like to break it down a little bit in terms of what some of these tax increases are and what the implications are.

The President has taken a lot of credit over the past few years over job growth. He has talked a lot about these increases in jobs that have occurred under his administration.

When you actually look at the numbers, where we have actually had job growth is in the energy sector. It is the one place where we have seen this extraordinary job growth over the last several years.

However, just over the last year, we have lost approximately 10,000 jobs in the energy industry in Louisiana. By some estimates, that is 20 percent of our oil and gas workforce. That is 10,000 jobs in the last year tied back to our energy sector.

There was a study that just came out that said, at current prices, oil and gas producers in the United States and Canada are losing approximately \$350 million every single day.

So, I am going to put this in perspective. We have lost 10,000 jobs in Louisiana alone. We are seeing a bleeding of energy jobs across this Nation. You have energy producers that are losing, according to one study, \$350 million every single day.

The White House's solution in their budget is to impose more taxes. It makes zero sense. For those of you that are listening, it is not going to make sense. People are bleeding jobs, they are losing money, and let's go ahead and put that last nail in the coffin and increase taxes.

We just don't subtly increase taxes. This budget proposes to increase taxes by \$10 a barrel. At the barrel prices that ended yesterday, that is in excess of 30 percent; in fact, it is approaching a 40 percent tax in an industry that is bleeding jobs. It is completely nonsensical. Obviously, it is not well thought out.

The study I referenced earlier projects that, by 2017, approximately one-third of the companies involved in oil and gas exploration and production activities will go bankrupt. It is killing American jobs.

I want to be clear that it is not going to decrease our demand for oil and gas, as we have seen prices as low as they are. You are seeing more people buying oil and gas because of the low prices. But what it means is that we are going to kill our domestic industry and be-

come more reliant on foreign sources. I will say it again: It is nonsensical.

Further, adding insult to injury is the fact that this administration is continuing to move forward on this well control rule, which they have hidden from industry, hidden from Congress, and refused to meet with committees and delegations about what they are trying to do. Yet, they thought it was appropriate to leak it to *The Wall Street Journal* this week.

So, they can't talk to the people that exercise oversight, but they can talk to the newspapers. Even their comments to the newspapers continue to demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of how our offshore industry works.

A study that was just released indicates that we can see a 35 percent reduction in domestic energy production in the offshore as a result of this well control rule.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear: Like everyone, I support safe energy production in the United States. What happened in 2010, with the Macondo disaster and the loss of those lives was an absolute travesty—and it was avoidable—but, as the judge said in that case, it was gross negligence and willful misconduct.

The judge didn't say that the Department of Interior was at fault from flawed rules. He said that the operators were at fault and that it was the result of multiple, multiple mistakes that, in aggregate, was grossly negligent and showed willful misconduct.

Since the Macondo spill, industry has taken their own steps to ensure safety. The Department of Interior has taken steps to ensure safety. Yet, this well control rule is going to result in a 35 percent reduction, and I believe it will actually result in decreased safety because of the fundamental misunderstanding of these regulators of the industry they are attempting to regulate. They are in an ivory tower—and it is inappropriate—further attempting to kill the oil and gas industry.

Now, here is where the irony comes in even further.

Mr. Speaker, the President indicated that the effort to assign this \$10 a barrel tax is tied back to his environmental agenda, tied back to his efforts to ensure that we are good environmental stewards, which, to be clear, Mr. Speaker, I am a strong advocate of the environment and ensuring that we balance environmental protection, environmental sustainability, and ecosystem production with our economic development efforts.

But in this case, by taking these steps and reducing our domestic production of energy, particularly offshore, you are reducing the funds that are available for environmental restoration and environmental initiatives. Because it is going to result in a 35 percent reduction in offshore energy production, according to the McKinsey study. So, if that is accurate, it is going to result in billions of dollars of less revenue for the U.S. Government.

Now, what makes that even worse is that the far, majority of the offshore energy production in the United States happens off the shores of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

□ 1315

Mr. Speaker, I believe that is your home State, one of those.

So, under Federal law, from 2006, those energy revenues are shared back with the States so they can carry out efforts to help ensure the sustainability of their coasts and resilience of their communities.

In the case of Louisiana, my home State, we actually passed a constitutional amendment to dedicate those dollars back to restoring the coast, to preventing floods.

So this budget, as submitted, does not include funds through the Corps of Engineers for projects like the Morganza to the Gulf project. It doesn't include funds for important projects to prevent repetitive flooding, like the Comite project. It doesn't fulfill the President's commitment that he made to Louisiana in 2012, when he walked on the streets in St. John Parish and said he was going to advance the West Shore project to ensure that we don't continue to see flooding from hurricanes and storms in St. John Parish and St. Charles Parish and some of the adjacent areas.

He fails to fulfill his own commitment by zeroing out funding for that important project, and again adding insult to injury to insult to injury to insult, by taking away funds in his budget request, attempting to repeal these offshore energy revenue-sharing dollars that in the State of Louisiana are committed to ecosystem restoration and to community resilience efforts to prevent floodwaters, to save FEMA money, to prevent disasters, to prevent economic disruption, to prevent disrupting our families and our businesses in south Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to close by saying that this budget is entirely nonsensical. It talks about reducing spending and saving money, yet it does completely the opposite.

It talks about environmental initiatives, yet all it proposes to do is reduce funds available for environmental purposes, and then, in one case, swaps the Louisiana money, or attempts to take the Louisiana money—excuse me—take the money from the Gulf States and send it up to Alaska for a climate initiative on coastal resiliency.

And one last note on that, Mr. Speaker. I have been up to the communities in coastal Alaska. I have been up to Shishmaref and Kivalina and Kotzebue and Nome and Barrow and Deadhorse. I have been to these communities, and they deserve help. But, Mr. Speaker, to simply trade, or to rob Peter to pay Paul, to rob the Gulf to set up a program in Alaska, it is mind-boggling.

Mr. Speaker, they all deserve help. They all deserve help. To simply take

money from one area and to send it to another one, that doesn't fix the problem.

This budget, from a fiscal perspective, is fatally flawed policy. It is going to put extraordinary financial burden on future generations. From an environmental perspective, it is completely nonsensical in that it takes money away from environmental restoration and environmental initiatives and community resilience. It is going to result in increasing FEMA disaster spending by leaving these communities vulnerable by failing to address these hazards.

I urge, Mr. Speaker, that, as we move forward, we move forward with commonsense reforms to reduce spending, to bring the debt under control, to begin reducing our national debt, and to make sure that we are spending money in places where it makes sense, to fulfill commitments to the people in St. John and St. Charles Parishes, to ensure that our communities and our economy are more resilient, and not to continue mortgaging our future and continue allowing our environment to degrade, as it is in coastal Louisiana.

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

#### LESSONS FROM THE VIETNAM WAR

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Louisiana, my neighbor—wonderful points being made.

I also want to call attention, Mr. Speaker, today to the 43rd anniversary of the release from imprisonment of American POWs from North Vietnam, among whom is our friend and hero here in the House, SAM JOHNSON.

It was nice of staff to have a little reception for Congressman JOHNSON, and it is important to remember such things and try to learn from our mistakes. Because once again, in the last couple of weeks, I have heard references to mistakes of the past, like the lesson we should have learned from Vietnam, and then they get the lesson all wrong.

We really didn't allow our military in Vietnam to win the war in Vietnam. Our pilots, our military operations, they could have won that war had they been allowed to do so.

And the best indication of that is, after 7 years that SAM JOHNSON spent in just the most horrid conditions, horrendous torture, joined by other American heroes, like JOHN MCCAIN, who was 3 years at the Hanoi Hilton, where SAM JOHNSON was.

I know he was shot down 5 years before the release, but it was only the last 3 years that he was placed in confinement there with, I believe, 10 others in the worst of the worst facilities, so bad that even today, after they

cleaned up some of the torture chambers and tried to dress them up, they still won't let Americans go into the original Hanoi Hilton where they held 11, including SAM JOHNSON, in the most horrid of conditions.

But the chronology, basically, in a nutshell, Nixon promised that he would, if he was reelected, he would get us out of Vietnam. So after reelection, they start the Paris peace talks—and I realize this is a gross generalization. They start the Paris peace talks. The North Vietnamese storm out. So Nixon orders carpet bombing of sites in North Vietnam that they had never been allowed to bomb before, including the areas in Hanoi itself.

SAM has related personally that, when they first heard the first bomb drop, they thought: Wow, one might fall here. And then they were absolutely overjoyed that, finally, their country, the United States of America, was finally bringing the war to the North Vietnamese leaders. They had not done that.

So there was massive bombing for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, tremendous bombing, then the leaders came rushing back to the peace tables: Let's work this out.

They got a peace accord agreed to. They agreed to provide all the names, locations of Americans who were killed in action or missing in action, provide all of the POWs. Apparently, American officials knew pretty quickly they didn't give us everybody, and that is another dark chapter in our history. But they agreed to release the POWs.

As SAM JOHNSON and others were being released from the Hanoi Hilton, he said probably the cruelest of the officers there was laughing and smirking at the Americans as they were allowed to leave and go to a bus and, basically, said: You stupid Americans. If you had just bombed us for one more week, we would have had to surrender unconditionally.

Yes, that is right. The lesson of Vietnam should have been that we should never, ever put our military in harm's way without giving them all of the equipment and ordnance they need to win and the order to win. If we are not willing to give them rules of engagement that allow them to win, they should not be sent.

Yet, since this administration has been in office, there have been three to four times more American military lives lost.

I am told by many in the military, because of the rules of engagement, because of where they are placed, without being able to properly defend themselves, that, under Commander in Chief Obama, three to four times more military members, American military members, have given their lives, their last full measure of devotion, than were lost during the 7¼ years in which the war in Afghanistan raged at its highest under Commander in Chief Bush. The difference is you had one Commander in Chief that gave them

more authority to win and a second, a later Commander in Chief, that tied their hands behind their backs.

So that brings us to where we are today, 43 years after SAM JOHNSON and other American POWs were released from North Vietnam. The real lesson of Vietnam still hasn't been learned because we have still got American military members being killed abroad, in Afghanistan, without giving them the rules of engagement to protect themselves.

And if that were the end of the story, that would be bad enough; but it is even worse when our military members have been subjected to the examples of having American military members punished, sent to prison if they dared to put the safety and lives of their men as the first consideration of their actions and their orders.

So we have a lieutenant in Leavenworth who, when an Afghan on a motorcycle refused to honor the signs, the orders to stop, refused to stop or even slow down when shots were fired in his direction, and so you have to give some credit to this administration and the military leaders and the orders that make their way from the top down and the rules of engagement as to why, just in recent weeks, we have lost military members when someone on a motorcycle rode up and exploded themselves.

They knew. Our American military that died in that suicide motorcycle bombing, they knew what had happened to the lieutenant. All of our people in Afghanistan know what happened when this administration makes an example out of an officer who dares to put the safety of his own people utmost in his mind.

It is a sad time in America. Our allies notice that, if we will not even take the life, the treasure of our own American military more seriously, then how can they possibly put their faith in us that we will keep our word and protect them? They have seen what happened in Ukraine.

□ 1330

They didn't really lift a finger to help the Ukrainians against the Russian aggression. In fact, after Russian aggression against Georgia, President Bush put some sanctions in place. Relations got more chilled between the United States and Russia because of the egregious, unfair actions of Russia in Georgia.

The first thing this President did was send Hillary Clinton over with a plastic, red button. They put the wrong interpretation on it. They meant to say a reset button, and they got the wrong language on there.

The message was very clear to the Russians: Ah, President Obama and Hillary Clinton don't care if we violate their allies. They don't care if we invade their friends. They don't care. They want a reset button and basically have apologized for getting upset that we in Russia invaded Georgia. So Hillary Clinton and President Obama are fine with us invading other places.