

The reason why the statehooders got 97 percent of the vote was pretty much the same reason those two guys get 97 percent of the vote: only one political party participated.

All the other parties thought the election was so rigged and so predetermined for the outcome the sponsors wanted that they didn't even think it was worth participating.

The vast majority of Puerto Ricans agree. Only 23 percent of the people voted. Seventy-seven percent boycotted the election because they didn't think it was worth their time; and they were absolutely right, but I guess in the era of alternative facts and made-up statistics about how many people attend your inauguration, you can try to make a one-party vote of 23 percent of the people look like a mandate for statehood. But I am here to warn my fellow Democrats not to believe the hype for one second.

Those who are peddling the fantasy of statehood sometimes call themselves Democrats, but we should be aware of an elephant in donkey's clothing.

Let's look at leaders of the statehood party here in Washington. Our colleague, the Resident Commissioner who ran on the statehood ticket, is a Republican who caucuses with the Republicans here in the House. She is a proud supporter of Donald Trump and pals around with STEVE KING and other Members who we might say aren't too friendly to Latinos and Latino causes, much less the Democratic Party line.

The Governor's Washington, D.C., office is headed by a Republican, Carlos Mercader, who was appointed to the position by Governor Rossello after serving as executive director of the right-wing political organization called Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles, infamous for its constant bashing, yes, of President Obama.

That is who is pushing statehood in D.C., which makes me wonder why any Democrat would be embracing them, especially the chairman of the DNC, unless, of course, as the media reports, it is a payback for votes for DNC chairmanship.

And as for Governor Ricardo Rossello, leader of the statehood party, the "Democrat," his conservative record speaks for itself, even though he has only been in office for less than a year.

As a candidate, he sided with the bondholders and vulture capital funds and opposed any debt restructuring for Puerto Rico, saying that Puerto Rico should pay its debt in full to Wall Street speculators, in spite of massive cuts that that would entail for police, fire, health, pensions, roads, and schools.

He hosted, yes, a Democrat, the GOP Presidential candidate, Ben Carson; and the Governor opposes LGBT rights, including same-sex marriage, and opposes the teaching of gender equality in the schools.

Townhall, the uber conservative website, sees a kindred spirit in Gov-

ernor Rossello, the Democrat, praising him for his conservative approach to helping bondholders over schoolchildren. And the Governor has withheld his criticism of President Trump, which few Democrats are able to resist, and for Latino Democrats is darn near impossible unless you are just playing the Democratic role to get ahead.

When confronted with the obvious, that Trump has denigrated Mexicans as rapists and murderers, promised to build a wall to keep Latinos out, and sneered at Puerto Rico's desire for what Donald Trump called a bailout, Rossello responded, saying of the President: "My view is I don't know that he is anti-Latino. Obviously, I have heard some derogatory remarks, but I don't know him personally, and it doesn't deter me."

So instead of spending money to help children whose schools are closing, to fix roads that are falling apart, or to pay doctors enough to prevent them from leaving Puerto Rico and going to Florida, it seems the entire Puerto Rican government is now dedicated to pursuing the unlikely chance of statehood.

It is certainly useful as a distraction from what the Governor and his D.C. operatives are actually doing.

Mr. Speaker, I have said this before: I hope to be buried one day on that beautiful island of Puerto Rico. But when I am buried, I hope it happens in a free, sovereign nation that has thrown off the yoke of colonialism and dependence on an overseas master, just as this country did, the United States of America, the country in which I was born.

I look forward to celebrating the Fourth of July. In the meantime, I think it is important to warn my fellow Democrats that they should get no more in bed with the statehooders than with any other group of rightwing conservatives with an agenda.

THE HOUSE SHOULD DEBATE THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I am again on the floor to talk about a waste of life, a waste of money in Afghanistan. We have been there 16 years, and nothing has changed. Many of my colleagues agree with me that it is time to debate our country's longest war.

In response, I, along with JOHN GARAMENDI from California, have introduced H.R. 1666 in hopes of forcing that discussion. I am not asking for Members or leadership to agree with the bill itself or even vote for it, but I am asking that we be able to bring to the floor of the House the bill for the purpose of a debate.

We have not debated our role in Afghanistan since 2001. Members can either vote for or against the bill; just give the House a debate after 16 years.

Afghanistan is a failed policy. I would like to share a few sentences of an email I received this week from a great American, my friend and unofficial adviser, the 31st Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, General Chuck Krulak, regarding his thoughts on Afghanistan:

"Sixteen years we have been involved in Afghanistan . . . 16 years fighting in a country that has really never seen peace. Sixteen years with fluctuating troop strength—100,000 to 5,000—with no definition to who we are fighting—al-Qaida, Taliban or ISIS . . . you pick 'em—with no strategy, no strong reason for entering the fray, no real measure of effectiveness, no use of the five elements of national power, no support from the people themselves, a weak government, and no exit strategy, and fighting a war that is unwinnable in any real sense of the word."

Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing when the President, the Commander in Chief, abdicates the responsibility of increasing the number of troops in Afghanistan to the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Mattis.

There is more reason today than ever before to have a debate on the future of Afghanistan. That is the reason why Speaker RYAN should instruct committees in the House to come forward with a new Authorization for Use of Military Force.

Where is the Congress? Don't we have a congressional responsibility to debate war if we are going to send a parent's young man or woman to die for this country?

I think we do have that responsibility.

In closing, I am going to share another quote from General Krulak, the former Commandant of the Marine Corps:

"I go back to what I have always said . . . back years ago. Afghanistan cannot be viewed through the lens of a true nation-state or as a true country. It is fragmented . . . tribal . . . controlled by war lords, economically a basket case, no real government outside of Kabul, and that is questionable, a poorly organized and led Army who will shoot at Americans as well as the 'enemy,' and no sense of what the country wants to be. No one has ever conquered Afghanistan . . . and many have tried. We will join the list of nations that have tried and failed. Afghanistan is the origin of 'whack a mole,' whether it is al-Qaida, ISIS, or the Taliban. You can't beat them in a geographic area . . . they will just pop up somewhere else."

Mr. Speaker, that is why many of us in this Congress, in both parties, feel that we have an obligation to our young men and women in uniform.

I have beside me a photo of a flag-draped coffin being taken off a plane at Dover. My question is this: How many more flag-draped coffins are we going to see when we increase the number of troops in Afghanistan without one word from Congress—not one word?

Mr. Speaker, we do owe it to the American people who pay their taxes, we do owe it to the parents whose young men and women will go and die for America. We do owe it to have a debate on the floor of the House. It has been 16 years since we have had a debate.

God help America and, please, God bless America.

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, like in anyone's office, the photos and trinkets on display in mine tell a little bit about who I am: a wedding photo, a picture of me and my family on our swearing-in day, a copy of the first bill I had signed into law, the moments that I am proud of, the pieces of me that I want to share with the world.

In this body, the people's House is no different. We have always been proud of our democracy and even prouder to display it for all the world to see. That is why we keep these cameras on whenever we are in session. It is why every single word that is uttered on this floor is documented and preserved long after the day we draw our last breath. It is why we walk beside Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs through the rotunda with the same awe of our Nation's history embodied in bronze statues and bold paintings. It is why every single night this building glows through the darkness; because the light of democracy not only lays bare our divisions and dissent, but it lights a path to our proudest moments.

In times of war and peace, fights over civil rights and equality, our debates in these halls have always been driven by a fierce conviction of our beliefs and a shared vision of a kinder, stronger country. Disagreements, yes, but enlightened by ideals, by vision, by a shared commitment to our American experiment.

And when you stand behind those principles and your policies, you welcome that spotlight; you engage in that debate; you are eager to answer questions; you are ready to be held accountable.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we should all be concerned by what has transpired in our Capitol over the course of the past few weeks. For if you are proud of your legislation, you don't lock it behind closed doors; you don't shield it from the very people that are going to be hurt most by it; you don't turn off the cameras and then call it mean; you don't sabotage a healthcare system and leave a wake of devastation and destruction to score political points.

Drafting TrumpCare under the cover of darkness is an admission that this bill cannot—cannot—withstand the sunlight of our neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, the America that I know would never turn its back on a

friend or a stranger in need. TrumpCare does.

The America that I know doesn't tell the sick, the elderly, or the frail that you are on your own. TrumpCare does.

The America that I know doesn't tell the young woman struggling through an opioid recovery that your next relapse, well, that one was one too many. TrumpCare does.

The America that I know understands that our greatness comes from our goodness; that we lean into challenges, you don't yield to them; that the frustration that we see in our streets and our communities is a cry for our government to be as good and as decent as the people we aim to serve. They, we, deserve nothing less. TrumpCare is not that cure.

IN MEMORY OF A.A. "GUS" KARLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the remarkable life of Mr. "Gus" Karle of Waycross, Georgia, who passed away on Sunday, May 7, 2017.

From a young age, Mr. Karle was deeply interested in trains and railways. In 1939, he skipped school to visit his local train station, where he landed his first job at the young age of 12, working as an assistant porter, responsible for loading and unloading train passengers.

After graduating from Wabash College in Indiana, he went on to start a career in railroad industry design and construction, working as an administrator for nearly 40 years.

Mr. Karle's career was extremely important to the economic development of the City of Waycross, Georgia, by way of his involvement in the design of Rice Yard, one of the busiest CSX rail crossroads in the Nation. Rice Yard serves as a daily transfer point for nearly 3,000 rail cars and remains one of the city's biggest employers, staffed by nearly 1,300 people from Ware and surrounding counties.

Mr. Karle retired from CSX Railroad in 2016. Last year, former CSX president, Clarence Gooden, whom Mr. Karle hired and trained in 1970, proclaimed every November 16 "A.A. 'Gus' Karle Day" in commemoration of Mr. Karle's hard work with the company.

Mr. Karle is a legend around Waycross. I want to thank him and his family for everything that he did to make Waycross and the First Congressional District of Georgia what it is today.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MRS. NAN THOMPSON MILLER

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Mrs. Nan Thompson Miller, who passed away on Saturday, June 10, at the age of 89, and was laid to rest last week in Dublin, Georgia.

Mrs. Miller worked hard during her long life, selflessly serving others through a profession she loved.

At the age of 17, Mrs. Miller joined the United States Army Nurse Corps and attended the University of Georgia to study nursing, where she was a member of the last graduating class to receive their RN degrees.

Following the war, Mrs. Miller put her training to work with the Naval Hospital in Dublin, where she eventually rose to the position of head nurse before retiring in 1983.

As a young nurse, Mrs. Miller met the late George Anderson Miller, to whom she was married for 55 years. The Millers were active members of their community that helped form the Pine Forest United Methodist Church. Mrs. Miller was also a member of the Pilot Club of Dublin, the Order of the Blarney Stone, and the American Nurses Association.

Today, I have the pleasure of working with Mrs. Miller's granddaughter, Brooke. I can say from my own experience that Brooke's commitment to public service and dedication to our constituents is a wonderful testament to the legacy of her grandmother.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members will join me; my wife, Amy; and my staff in sending our thoughts and prayers to the Miller family as they remember the life and legacy of Mrs. Nan Thompson Miller.

GEORGIA PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARD RECIPIENT, KATHLEEN RUSSELL

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Kathleen Russell, from Darien, Georgia, who received the President's Award on behalf of the Georgia Press Association on Friday, June 2, 2017.

Ms. Russell's strong dedication to her role as longtime editor of The Darien News makes her worthy of such an honor. Each year, an individual who has exhibited outstanding leadership abilities and who serves as an innovator in Georgia's media industry is named a recipient of this prestigious award.

For generations, members of Ms. Russell's family have worked in the press, and it is only fitting that Ms. Russell would find herself working as a journalist.

Constituents remember Ms. Russell's beloved father, Mr. Charles Williamson, as a journalist who stood up to wrongdoers in McIntosh County, exposing corruption and theft by a multitude of former county officials.

As a child, Kathleen assisted her parents in the production of the weekly newspaper. During that time, her parents nurtured her love for the press.

After graduating from the University of Georgia in 1974, Ms. Russell began a career as an educator. She left education in pursuit of a career as a journalist and assumed the role of associate editor of The Darien News. In 2009, Ms. Russell was honored for her hard work when she was named publisher and editor of the newspaper.

Ms. Russell has remained an active member of McIntosh County, serving on several boards over the years, including the Division of Family and