

the future. When the next novel virus or biological unforeseen event occurs, Americans will expect more from this institution. We can learn from our successes and failures over the last 9 months and in the months to come as we look toward a COVID-19 vaccine and, ultimately, a return to our normal pace of life. We know some things will never be the same.

Change must happen in our country to make good on our founding promise that all people are created equal and that our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are protected. How we do that is a matter great debate playing out in our streets in protests, on social media, around dinner tables, and in headlines.

It seems like there is no good solution and no way forward. It is up to us—to every American—to forge a path together and to mend the fissures that are breaking apart our Nation and our democracy.

I have spent the last 8 years engaged in this work day in and day out. It is work I will continue for the rest of my life because the truth is we have far more in common than we don't.

We are up to this task. I believe in the American spirit, in the power of our ingenuity, and in the strength of our resolve.

We will get through these difficult days. This pandemic will end. We will get Americans and businesses back to work and school.

We will overcome the scourge of racism and prejudice.

We will restore trust and confidence in our government and in Congress.

We will once again see this Chamber full of big ideas aimed at ensuring the American Dream is within reach for everyone.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the very last time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for 30 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, when I was a professor teaching American Government before I was elected to Congress, the first thing I would do when beginning to teach a class about Congress and the legislative process would be to show this video. It is the 3-minute "Schoolhouse Rock" cartoon video from the 1970s called "I'm Just a Bill."

The cartoon begins with a group of constituents calling their Congressman with an idea for a new law. The Congressman introduces a bill, which goes through House committee debate and amendment before a vote to report the bill favorably to the House floor.

On the floor, the bill goes through debate and amendment before a majority vote that sends the bill over to the Senate, where the process continues.

This is a process that we call regular order. Regular order in the House is a standard way of legislating that facilitates extensive participation of Members in the deliberative, consensus-based decisionmaking process.

More importantly, this is how the Framers of the Constitution not only intended the House to work, but believed that the House needed to work if the United States, then in its infancy, was to succeed.

Congress was created in Article I of the Constitution because the legislative branch, being closest to the people, was necessarily the linchpin of American representative democracy.

While the Framers didn't include in the Constitution the rules by which the House and Senate would operate, they understood that the way in which the lawmaking process was conducted was critical to the creation of laws that were good for the Nation as a whole and to the legitimacy of Congress and those laws.

James Madison, oftentimes called the Father of Congress, believed it was essential that the legislative branch make policy in the manner that well represented the vast and varied Republic and best served the Nation as a whole.

Remember, our Nation began as a unique experiment in self-governance. There was great doubt about whether the views of people so diverse could successfully be forged into good policy that served such a large nation.

Madison believed that the way to do this was for Members of Congress to represent the multiple and diverse interests and ideas of their constituents in an open marketplace of ideas in Congress. Through the legislative process, the people's Representatives would debate, deliberate, and put together a consensus on legislation that served the common good of the Nation.

What the Constitution created was not a parliamentary system, because the Framers did not intend to empower temporary majorities. Instead, they wanted to compel compromise in a diverse society.

The exercise of power was shared so that all American voters had an opportunity to be heard in the lawmaking process and to ensure that only the will of broad, durable majorities could be acted upon. Especially because America was a large and diverse country whose unity needed to be nurtured, it was critical that the legislative process worked this way so that the American people saw Congress as an institution that truly represented them and saw American law as legitimate.

But today, the House doesn't often work this way, especially when we deal with issues that are of the greatest importance to our Nation. Those bills, when they get considered, don't get shaped through an open process in committee and on the House floor. Each Member doesn't have the opportunity to represent their constituents by bringing their ideas and interests in

the legislative process where debate, deliberation, and compromise produce the best policy for our Nation. Instead, the process runs through the Speaker's Office, where the content of legislation is shaped to get enough votes just out of the majority to pass something that pleases various partisans.

Now, before I go any further, I want to make clear that this is not a criticism of the current Speaker or any former Speaker. This is a problem of our institution.

So how did we get here?

Well, there has been a big change in the way Washington reacts every 2 years after a congressional election. It used to be the case that, when election results came in, everyone looked to see which party has the majority in the House, who has the majority in the Senate and whether it had 60 votes to overcome a filibuster, and which party held the White House.

Understanding that balance of power and the issues facing our Nation over the next 2 years, Members of Congress would get to work figuring out what issues they may be able to come to an agreement on and get passed into law over the next 20 months or so before the next campaign cycle began.

Now, today, what happens is, after understanding the balance of power in Washington after an election, each party retreats to its corner and begins plotting what their party is going to do over the next 2 years.

If there is unified government—that is, one party has majorities in both Chambers of Congress and the Presidency—here in the House, the Speaker will consider the priorities of the party and decide what issues to make their legislative priorities over the next 2 years to create party-preferred laws and keep that majority.

If there is divided government, which is the norm, having occurred 30 out of the last 40 years, and if you include the filibuster, 39½ out of the last 40 years, if that is the case, the Speaker plans what the party can do over the next 2 years to help the party gain unified control of the government with the hope of them passing all of the party's preferred policies. On the other side of the aisle, they figure out what they can do over those 2 years so they can get control.

In order to help the party carry out this biennial plan, Members of Congress have given up much of their power to represent their constituents in the legislative process to party leaders.

So what has this led to?

Gridlock. There are so many issues we need to address in this Nation and we fail to act: healthcare costs, the Federal debt, immigration, climate change, the economic and military threat of China, Social Security and Medicare finances, transportation infrastructure, the continuing decline of good working-class jobs, and reforming the War Powers Act.

These are just some of the major issues which Congress has been failing

to address. I am sure there are other major ones that I just missed.

The one obligation that Congress has each year—passing appropriations bills to fund the government—is almost never accomplished on time.

Presidents have stepped in to fill the policymaking void. They now wield power even to address issues that were specifically put in the hands of Congress in the Constitution.

Increased Presidential exercise of power on policy has resulted in policy whipsawing back and forth depending on the Presidential administration. Lawmaking by executive order has become the norm, so much so that “Saturday Night Live” even did a parody of “I’m Just a Bill,” replacing “bill” with an executive order. And this President has taken it to a new level.

But no matter who the President has been, few of us stand up for our institution. We only criticize Presidential overreach when it is a policy that we don’t like.

And it is not only the President who has gained power because Congress is failing to act. The courts have also stepped in as activists and have turned to the judicial system to settle policy issues in the absence of Congress.

So what we have now is an imperial Presidency and powerful courts with a Congress that largely sits gridlocked.

What happens when we have unified government in those rare times?

The last two times this occurred, major policy changes were passed on completely party-line votes. The minority party then attacked the legitimacy of these laws.

Now, I am not saying that these laws were illegitimate—they were not—but the Framers knew that this kind of attack would happen if we did not come together to forge compromises.

Now, in both these cases when unified government occurred, the last two times it happened, in the next election the House majority was changed by the American people.

Today, Congress is failing in ways that the Founders feared. In Senator Lamar Alexander’s farewell address to the Senate, he defended the filibuster, saying that what is needed to make the Senate work better is not a change of rules but a change of behavior. Unfortunately, I believe that we need some of both.

□ 2100

Over the past 4 years, I have been a Member of the House Problem Solvers Caucus. The Caucus is a bipartisan group of about 50 members, evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans. We meet every week to talk policy and build relationships. Our goal is to work together to get to “yes” on policies that are good for our country. I greatly enjoyed the Caucus because not only have I been able to build friendships, but was able to participate in a microcosm of what Madison envisioned for the House.

The Problem Solvers Caucus doesn’t always succeed in forging compromise

because sometimes it has been out of our reach, but we have taken on some big issues. I was part of a Problem Solvers Caucus working group that was put together after President Trump said he was going to eliminate DACA, and then told Speaker PELOSI and Senate Democrat Leader SCHUMER he would help work out a legislative solution to protect these immigrants who were brought to the United States as children—the Dreamers.

The President never followed through on that, but the Caucus believed that there was a bipartisan agreement that we could work out that granted the opportunity for citizenship to millions, who we argued were deserving of this, while putting into place policies to prevent future illegal immigration.

Our working group’s meetings usually started at 9 p.m. because that was the time of day that everyone was free from every other obligation that we have around here. We would get together—Democrats and Republicans—learn from each other and from experts of our current law, discuss our views and our constituents’ views on what law should be, what should be done. Honestly, work through every minute detail of a compromise.

We worked late into the night. A few times, I had to run out to catch the last metro train at Union Station at 11:30 so I can get back to my apartment. It was hard work, but enjoyable. And we came up with a compromise that was endorsed by a bipartisan group of 50 members, just as we had come up with a compromise legislation in the same manner which would have helped strengthen the Affordable Care Act and made it more affordable. But in the end, despite our agreement, we could not get legislation on either of these issues to the floor.

We had good policy for our Nation, which probably could have gotten the majority of the House to pass it, and possibly been able to get it through Senate with bipartisan support. We got there by bringing our constituents’ ideas and interests to the table, debating, deliberating, forging a compromise, but the rules did not give us an avenue to bring this agreement to the House.

In the summer of 2018, when the Problem Solvers Caucus proposed changes to the House rules, I said this: “Our Constitution empowered the American people by empowering Congress and their representatives. But Congressional rules are now rigged in a way that greatly diminishes our ability to represent our constituents. This has resulted in a Congress that doesn’t work and is frozen in partisan gridlock, allowing the President and the courts to grab the power that is supposed to be held by the American people. By instituting these proposed reforms, we will begin to restore this power, break partisan gridlock, and facilitate congressional problem-solving that will help us build a better America for future generations.”

We made a little bit of progress in changing rules, but much more is needed. Much more is needed to make this great institution work as it was intended by the Framers of the Constitution to work for the American people, and I am hopeful that those changes will occur and the Problem Solvers Caucus will be successful in the next couple of weeks and in the next Congress because American people need it.

Now, despite the ways in which the House falls short these days, good work still happens here because everyone who gets elected to the House does so because they want to make a difference. And there are still ways that we can succeed for our constituents.

During my time representing the people of the Third District of Illinois, I have always said that my goal every day was to make life a little better for my constituents and our country. And I knew that I had a whole team of staffers there to help me.

Recently, as I was driving out to Washington, I was listening to former Senator Al Franken’s book, “Giant of the Senate.” As an early “Saturday Night Live” watcher, I enjoyed the book very much, and Senator Franken was very candid on a lot of things. One of the most important truths that Franken mentioned, which is rarely spoken around here, is that Members of Congress are never supposed to admit that their staff was responsible for an idea or for being indispensable in getting something done. He says that he once publicly gave credit to a staffer for an idea, and he was told by a colleague not to do that.

It is always the Senator who has the idea and does the work, he was told. Franken thought that was wrong, and I agree. Maybe because I was a staffer before I was elected.

So as I look back on everything that I have done over 16 years, I thank all the staff that worked for me over the years. These are some of the things that we were able to accomplish. We were able to author 16 laws, and I was the chief Democratic cosponsor on 11 other laws.

Promoting American manufacturing jobs was a priority for me, having grown up in and now representing the southwest side of Chicago. We were able to get signed into law the Customs Training Enhancement Act to stop illegal goods coming into the country; the Small Aircraft Revitalization Act to help American aviation manufacturers; the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act Reauthorization to help these manufacturers thrive; and numerous Buy America provisions that we were able to get into transportation and other laws.

Mr. Speaker, but the one I am most proud of is the American Manufacturing and Competitiveness Act, which took 5 years to get done but resulted in the first comprehensive American manufacturing strategy plan to be produced by the Federal Government since

Alexander Hamilton. It is a good plan, and I am hopeful that the Biden administration considers its recommendations.

To protect the environment against climate change, we got the H-Prize Act and the BRIGHT Energy Savings Act into law. To protect victims of sexual assault in the military, we got the SANE Deployment Act into an NDAA. For veterans, we got the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act and the Tarawa MIA Recovery Act.

As an engineer, I love the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. We did much on that committee to increase funding for scientific research and to boost technological innovation activities of the Federal Government. I was proud to author the National Science Foundation Reauthorization Act of 2010. NSF continues to be the gold standard of all international scientific research and innovation agencies.

The most successful program that we were involved with has been the Innovation Corps, or I-Corps, program. I was the nonstop promoter of this program, which teaches university faculty and graduate students about entrepreneurship and has helped launched dozens of startups. We were able to grow that program at NSF and expand it to many other Federal departments and agencies. We were also able to get an offshoot hacking for defense set up at the DOD.

Representing the heart of the transportation hub of our Nation, we were able to accomplish much for northeastern Illinois and the Nation in transportation. Locally, we brought home hundreds of millions of dollars in Federal money to improve local transportation, including funding for roads, bridges, public transportation, sidewalks and bike lanes, and airports.

We helped get a billion dollars for the CREATE rail modernization program to improve the rail network in the region and alleviate some blocked crossings. We added commuter train service on Metra's Heritage Corridor and SouthWest Service lines. We got funding for a new tower at Lewis University Airport and for rail underpasses in Bedford Park in Bridgeview. Midway Airport has been made safer and more successful as an economic engine for the southwest side.

I want to thank individually the staff here in D.C. that made all this possible:

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Chiefs of staff, Jason Tai, Jaclyn O'Day, Brian Oszakiewski, Michael McLaughlin, and Eric Lausten.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of them for the great work that they have done for me and for the people of the Third District of Illinois. I was going to start naming Members that had helped me get all this work done, but I know the danger in this business of leaving anyone out, so I will just thank all of my colleagues for the work that we have done together over these last 16 years.

Back in the district, we had what I would argue hands down was the best constituent service in the Nation, whether it was helping constituents with issues related to Social Security, Medicare, veterans' benefits and military service, immigration issues, passport issues, mail delivery issues, and many, many more issues.

The staff included Anthony Constantine, Yareli Cortez, Dawn Courtney, Salvatore DiFranco, Jessica Jaroch, Chris Jutton, Joseph Kirkoff, Jean Krupa, Josh Luke, John McGlynn, Frank Salerno, the late Zac Plantz, the late Marianne Viverito.

Over the last few years, we have lost a number of staffers. It has been very difficult, but we have grieved together as a staff and we are thankful to all those departed staffers and their families.

Over the years, Jerry Hurckes was the chief of staff in the Chicago office for most of my time in Congress and he ran that office and ran the district for me.

Lenore Goodfriend was there for most of my time, and she is well-loved by veterans across the district.

Joe Bonomo, who is now my district director, has been with me for all 16 years. Joe has done a great job.

Paula Belmonte, who has been there 16 years also, has helped so many immigrants, and we had a few that we saved from being deported.

And last, but not least, Jerry Mulvihill, who was probably, I would argue, the best case worker in the history of the Congress. Jerry has been called a saint more times than I could ever count for all the work he did for so many people for so many years not just on Federal issues, but any issue that anyone ever brought to Jerry. He is the only staffer I know who was ever written up multiple times in the Chicago newspaper for what he did for people.

Mr. Speaker, all these people made it work and did so much for all the residents of the Third District, and I thank them so much.

Finally, I thank my mother, who gave me the love of learning; and my father, who helped give me the love of

politics; but above all, they both gave me a love of helping others, as my mother was a teacher and my father served in the Chicago City Council before he served here.

I also thank my wife, Judy, who thought she was marrying a lifelong professor but then provided me with more support than I could have ever hoped for in this job. It is only those spouses of Members who know everything that it takes and everything they go through. So I thank Judy so much for her support.

Lastly, I thank the people of Illinois' Third District, who gave me the honor and privilege of serving as their representative.

□ 2115

Mr. Speaker, the greatness of our Nation springs from the founding principles which sound common to us today but were radical for their time: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

I still believe that this is the greatest Nation in the history of the world. It is not perfect because humans aren't perfect, and we cannot be perfected. But we must pray and work every day that each of us and our Nation better uphold the principle of equality, and we had better protect the life and liberty every day for every person, from the very first moment of life until natural death. With God's grace, we will do that, and we will be that shining city upon the hill for all the world to see and follow.

God bless this institution, and God bless the United States of America.

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

ECONOMIC MIRACLE IN 2018 AND 2019

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. LIPINSKI, being someone from the other side, you really are one of the good guys. I have had a handful of great conversations with you over the years. Even though I am a conservative from the desert, you have always been very kind to me, and your concern and love for your community have always shone through, so it is appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of those opportunities where you have the feeling you are going to be doing this a lot over this next year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make an argument that growth is moral, and I want to go a bit further than that. One of the things that spurred me to come here is I listened to Janet Yellen just a couple of days ago, who may be becoming Secretary of the Treasury, give a