

What if we went to 9 percent interest?

It has happened.

What would happen?

Mr. Speaker, can anyone read this number?

Eighty-three percent of all tax receipts would go just to interest.

Here is the reality of today: For every dollar we take in in tax receipts, we spend \$1.39.

Yet, what we call discretionary, military has been substantially flat, all other nondefense discretionary is basically flat, almost all the growth is two things: in healthcare and in interest.

We can't do anything about interest. The deal is the deal is the deal when we sell a bond. As far as healthcare, once again, there is an army of lobbyists, once again, outside these walls, who will beat the absolutely living blank out of us when we ask them to moderate and actually use technology.

Even our brothers and sisters here are often defending not the last decade, but the business models from the decade before that within healthcare.

We don't have a choice. Open up your brain, Mr. Speaker, hire a computer brain. Hire some kid who is a data analyst scientist and start walking through the facts of what is going on. Then we have to do hard things. We will have to do a revolution.

Have you seen the numbers coming out of Medicare Advantage?

Has anyone taken a look at those Wall Street Journal articles from last year of the billions and billions and billions that they are documenting that are functionally fraud and abuse?

Are we going to be honest about it?

There are ways elegantly to fix it without beating the crap out of everyone. We just need to recognize our own problems.

Once again, for every dollar the United States takes in in tax receipts, we spend \$1.39.

Right now, I need to go back to an oldie but a goodie. I have done entire floor presentations repeatedly on this. You take all the tax hike proposals of our brothers and sisters on the left, Mr. Speaker, and score them for their economic specs, it will produce about 1½ points of GDP of new tax receipts. You take for our side, Mr. Speaker, all the cuts we have talked about, almost all of them being in nondefense discretionary, it is about one point of GDP. Add those two together and that is what, 2½. Congratulations.

So everything the talking heads do behind these microphones is 2½ percent. We are borrowing 7 percent this year of the entire economy, and here is your crisis: The solutions sound really good in a television commercial and maybe an interview on cable television, and they are crap math. They don't get us anywhere close to what is necessary because it turns out the actual scale of the math is so far beyond just raising people's taxes and just slash and burn this. You need a revolution on how we deliver on our commitments.

Why is that harder?

I still can't get my head around why that is harder. Once again, the single chart that makes people most angry, and it is already 1 year out of date, the numbers right now are much worse, CBO predicts that deficits of \$115 trillion over 2024 to 2054, Social Security, Medicare, \$124 trillion deficit, the rest of the budget has a \$9 trillion surplus.

Do you see, Mr. Speaker?

The spending and the interest covered, the spending and the interest covered, remember, Mr. Speaker, Social Security has about 9 more years and the trust fund is empty.

Are we going to fix it?

Are we allowed to talk about it?

If we talk about it, then the Democrats will run nasty ads about you. So somehow, they are comfortable with the immorality that in 9 years we are going to double senior poverty in America, because that is what is happening. However, Mr. Speaker, you are not allowed to talk about it because they will attack you.

They spent about a couple of a million dollars beating the crap out of me because I care about saving Social Security, and I care about not doubling senior poverty.

Somehow lying about it is the political tactic of this place?

They care so much more about power than saving our brothers and sisters?

We already have a crisis right now of baby boomers, inflation pushing them out of their housing. I think it was last year I saw the statistic on baby boomers' doubling of homelessness, because they are being priced out of their homes because of inflation. That is the morality of this place because we do crap economics. It is because we make public policy by our feelings instead of math.

The reality of it, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the CBO projection, now this is 1 year, 1½ years ago, so inflation has trimmed off a bit from their numbers, interest rates are substantially higher, these numbers are going to pop when they redo them because of the higher interest rates.

I was trying to do it, it is dangerous when I try to do these things off the top of my head, but I was coming in about \$133, \$136 trillion of borrowing over 30 years because of the higher interest rates, and it could be substantially higher if we are actually truly at a five or six.

The point is, debate after debate after debate after debate, we stand here and we argue about the nondefense discretionary, which is like 13 percent of the spending, and even in this projection it actually grows slower than tax receipts.

So we are going to head towards doing reconciliation. We are going to try to do policy. We have a new President coming in who has a vision of growth for the country.

Are we, as the board of directors, as the Founding Fathers designed it, going to step up and do our job and actually save the future?

Are we going to avoid the hardest thing we do, and that is telling the truth to our voters, and maybe even telling the truth to each other?

There is still hope.

One of our economists actually has this chart he has been working on and he has been saying you may only have 3 or 4 more years if interest rates keep moving up where it is almost too late. You can't work yourself out of the higher interest rate cycle because the additional debt, the interest rate, the additional debt, the interest rate—and I think it was 1 year ago when we actually had a couple of months, 3 or 4 months, where we had to borrow money to cover our borrowing.

Mr. Speaker, there is hope. There is a way to make the math work. There is a way to do it in a moral fashion. It has been said that when you have a complex problem, it turns out the solutions are complex.

Is the modern Congress capable of doing complexity?

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

AND STILL I RISE: THE PEACEFUL TRANSFER OF POWER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise. And I rise today in the name of government of the people, by the people, and for the people; not government of the oligarchs, by the oligarchs, for the oligarchs; or for the plutocrats; and I surely do not rise in the name of government by the mob and for the mob.

No, I rise in the name of government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Today, as I rise, I am going to give two important reasons why Vice President HARRIS presided over a Republican certification process earlier this week.

Stated differently, I am going to give two important reasons why Democrats did not get the most electoral votes.

First, allow me to commend Vice President HARRIS for leading the United States of America, our country, back to the moral high ground. I was proud to be here. In fact, I was seated on this very row at the very end. I was proud to be here when the doors opened and the words were spoken: the Vice President of the United States and the Senate.

There she stood. She came forward. As she came forward, she was quite statuesque, comely, and courtly. She looked almost majestic as she walked in.

As she moved down towards the front of the room, I, in my mind, recited a part of the 23rd Psalm: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

I am not saying that she was walking through the valley of the shadow of

death. What I am saying is that I knew that if she could walk through the valley of death and fear no evil, then surely she could walk through the Halls of Congress and fear no evil.

As she moved forward, I was taken to a point in my life when a song meant something to me. The song was "You'll Never Walk Alone."

She walked forward, never to walk alone.

When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high. Don't be afraid of the dark.

Then, near the last stanza, the words are:

Walk on, walk on through the winds of life.

I am paraphrasing.

Walk on through the storms of life, and you will never walk alone.

She proceeded up to the dais. As she stood there announcing the number of electoral votes from the various States, I could see her standing there alone, and I am reminded as she did so of another song. This song has to do with standing, standing alone.

The words are: Just stand. After you have done all that you can, just stand.

I was reminded of all that she did. She worked hard. She worked long hours. She put everything into it. After you have done all that you can, then just stand. Sometimes it is better to stand alone, which is what she did, than not stand at all. It is better to stand alone than not stand at all.

So I am so proud of what she did because in doing this, she helped us to reclaim the moral high ground that we lost 4 years ago on January 6, to reclaim that moral high ground because as she was presiding over the certification process, it was more than Vice President HARRIS presiding or Vice President Pence when he presided. It was the candidate who ran for President and did not win certifying that the opposing candidate won. That was the moral high ground. That is something that the United States of America has had, and she was reclaiming it for the world to let the world know that in the United States of America, we know how to win, but, more importantly, we know how to lose.

She claimed the moral high ground for this country, and in so doing, she was more than an example. She was an exemplar. She was a supreme and superb standard for the kind of behavior that ought to be exhibited on occasions such as the one she was presiding over.

She made it clear to those who will look back in time upon this time that there are people among us who have dignity and respect for the process.

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She made it clear that, while she did not win, she respected the process and announced the winner.

I think that Vice President HARRIS can forever know that she has brought this country to another place. Many countries around the world envy what we were able to do this year and this

week, juxtaposed to what did not occur 4 years ago, when a mob disrupted the process at the behest of the President of the United States of America.

Who can deny that? Who can deny that they came here at the urging of the President of the United States of America and that their behavior was nothing near exemplary? Their behavior was shameful. They marched with symbols of Nazism, with a gallows. They marched saying ugly things and making vile comments. They stormed the Capitol of the United States of America.

In so doing, their behavior was disdainful and shameful as they marched through the Halls. Some even went so far as to defecate in the Capitol, in places where one would not expect such things to occur. Yes, there was a difference between this year and what happened 4 years ago, and that is because we had a Vice President who was a candidate for President and who understood the necessity to have a peaceful transfer of power.

Though Vice President HARRIS stood alone, she stood alone at a time when it was appropriate and necessary. I have said it many times, and I will say it one more. There are times when it is better to stand alone than to not stand at all, as Vice President HARRIS did, and she shall be remembered in history as bringing us back to the moral high ground.

Mr. Speaker, I will give the two reasons why she didn't preside over her own certification and why Democrats didn't get the most electoral votes. There are two reasons. They had to do with legislation that was not passed. I am going to walk through the legislation, and then I will give the two reasons as to why the legislation didn't pass.

The legislation. I have noted six pieces of legislation: The PRO Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act—I have shortened the title—George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, comprehensive immigration reform, and legislation to raise the minimum wage, as well as to pass the Equality Act. I have noted those six.

Now let's take a look at these six with a bit more information. This is legislation that would have made a difference for America and Americans.

Starting with the PRO Act, the PRO Act would have benefited all Americans. Labor unions were obviously desirous of having it pass, but it would have benefited all Americans. It would have benefited American laborers, the working class. It would have been the legislation that we need to help close the wage gap. This wage gap is something that has to be dealt with because, from 1967 to today's date, that wage gap has increased exponentially.

Currently, the median income for a CEO is about \$16 million. It is \$16.3 million, to be a little bit more specific. The annual median income for a minimum wage worker at \$7.25 an hour is a lot less than that CEO who is making

\$16 million. In fact, the CEO making \$16 million would make 1,000 times more than the minimum wage worker at \$7.25 an hour, which would be something more than about \$15,000 annually.

Who can survive on \$7.25 an hour in the United States of America? You have to have at least two jobs and maybe three. A family would have to have at least two persons working.

The minimum wage has to be raised. If we pass the PRO Act, labor would be in a position to defend the desire and the need to raise the minimum wage and could have pushed more for a higher wage. We have to raise it to a living wage.

If we should raise it to a living wage, then we can start to close this wealth gap. Raising it to a living wage won't do it in and of itself. There is much more that has to be done, but that is a pretty good start.

It would also help us to protect the right to organize. That right to organize is a means by which labor can move forward en masse to negotiate and to do that which is necessary to cause the industries in this country to raise the minimum wage.

We have more States in this country with a minimum wage above \$7.25 an hour than not. In fact, the States are ahead of the Congress. The Congress needs to catch up with the States and move on beyond that. A wage of \$7.25 an hour is what is known as a slave wage in many quarters.

We need to pass the PRO Act. We did not. I will explain why in a moment. There are two reasons.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Act, had we passed it, would have enfranchised more voters and caused greater participation in the process. This act would have helped us by reinstating a version of the Voting Rights Act. In fact, it was in *Shelby County v. Holder* that the Voting Rights Act was weakened greatly when section 4 of it was declared unconstitutional and the preclearance portion of it in section 5 could no longer be exercised.

This Voting Rights Act would have helped to reinstate a version of the preclearance process. This Voting Rights Act would have helped to allow people to vote without fear of having the hours set such that it didn't help persons who might work late hours. There are some people who work late hours. They work into the morning hours.

In Houston, at one point, we had an opportunity to vote 24-7, 24 hours in a given day. I went out to see the people who were coming in to vote. Well, we can no longer do that, but had this version of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act passed, we would have made it easier for people to vote, harder for people to cheat, and brought more people into the process. We would have had greater participation. It did not pass.

George Floyd Justice in Policing Act did not pass. This wouldn't have cured but would have assisted in arresting

bad police behavior. My colleagues have seen the videos. I don't have to try to convince people anymore that there are bad police officers. Not all police officers are bad. Some are. This doesn't mean that you should paint all officers with the same brush. It simply means that the bad ones have to be weeded out.

This piece of legislation, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, would have helped us to weed them out. It would have also dealt with these no-knock laws that have cost lives, dealt with chokeholds that have taken lives.

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act would have made a difference, and I can say there were many of my constituents who were eager to see the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act pass and who were very disappointed when it did not. Many of my constituents were disappointed when the John Lewis Voting Rights Act didn't pass. American minorities, a good many, were disappointed.

These pieces of legislation could have made a difference in voter participation.

Let's move on to three more.

Comprehensive immigration reform. This was a key piece of legislation that would have addressed the border issues, addressed labor issues, H-1B issues, all of these various means by which persons could come into the country for various purposes associated with work.

Family reunification issues. This country has a history of keeping families together. We have strayed away from that history. This piece of legislation, comprehensive immigration reform, would have addressed that issue, and it also would have addressed discontentment.

What is discontentment? I hear it quite regularly when I am out and about. I go into places where people are buying food. I hear people talking. Many of them are not talking to me. Many of them do talk to me and explain what I am about to tell you.

There are people in this country who just don't believe that it is fair and that it is right for persons who are coming into the country to receive what they perceive as benefits that they are not receiving. They talk about this discontentment. They are not pleased with the way the system is functioning.

Comprehensive immigration reform could have given us the opportunity to address this issue. It did not pass.

Of course, raising the minimum wage, I have spoken about this and closing the wage gap. When you raise the minimum wage, you do something that we talk about here quite often, and that is the rising tide theory. A rising tide will raise all boats, we say.

Raising the minimum wage would create that rising tide that would raise the wages above the minimum wage. The minimum wage has an impact not only on those who are receiving it but also others who are workers. It has an impact on the working class.

Raising the minimum wage would have made a difference. I assure you there are people who would have been grateful that the minimum wage was raised, and it would have inspired them to come to the polls to vote.

The Equality Act. This act would have protected the LGBTQ community. It would protect their civil rights and their human rights.

Yes, the Supreme Court made a ruling about discriminating against persons because of their sexuality, but that is not enough. We have many more means by which they can be protected if we pass the Equality Act.

Having gone through these six pieces of legislation, there are more. The Paycheck Fairness Act, that would help women to achieve equal pay for equal work. Women now make less than 90 cents for every dollar a man makes, generally speaking, in the country. That is all women.

Over some number of years, I saw a figure of a trillion dollars having been lost because women are making so much less. I believe that it was from the year 1967, and I think it was up to last year.

That is a trillion dollars. Assuming that my numbers are a little bit off—maybe I didn't get the years exactly right—a trillion dollars is still a trillion dollars, and it was lost. That is money lost for healthcare, money lost for schools, children going to school, buying food, buying clothing, providing shelter, and also money lost for a pension, something to retire with. It is lost because women are making less than men in the richest country in the world. They still do make pennies on the dollar. That is what women are making compared to what men make.

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So, the query is: Why did we not pass all of these pieces of legislation? The answer is because we had two Senators—two Senators, not the entire Democratic Party; not all the Democratic leadership, two Senators—who would not do what Republicans did when they wanted to get a certain Supreme Court nominee confirmed.

When Republicans wanted to confirm a certain Supreme Court nominee, they challenged the process of coming to cloture and, in so doing, moved to a point where you could appoint that nominee to the Supreme Court with 51 votes as opposed to 60. They did that, and it was along party lines. All the Republicans voted to change the rules.

Mr. Speaker, to his credit, Senator SCHUMER brought the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act that I have called to your attention to the floor of the Senate. To simplify it, he made a request that it be passed with 51 votes as opposed to having to hit the 60-vote threshold and then come back and pass it with 51 votes. He made the request. It would have passed but for two Senators. These are the two reasons, two Senators, two Democratic Senators.

Now, why would I focus on Democratic Senators when the Republicans voted against it? Because if you make your deposits in the Democratic Party, you expect your interests to come from the Democratic Party. You may get some from someplace else, but you expect the Democratic Party to perform. If you put your money into a Democratic corporation, you expect Democratic dividends.

The Democrats, two of them, chose not to allow the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to pass the Senate, which is an indication that none of the other legislation could have passed with 51 votes.

Here is what would have happened had it passed: 50 Democrats would have voted to allow it to pass with 51 votes. That is not a majority. The Vice President would be the tiebreaker. The Vice President would have said to the world that we passed the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and I was proud to break the tie. We passed the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act; I was proud to break the tie. We passed the PRO Act; I was proud to break the tie. We passed the Equality Act; I was proud to break the tie.

All of these various pieces of legislation could have been passed but for two reasons. Two Senators did not do what more than 50 Republicans did to claim another seat on the Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, the prognostication from me—I am speaking for myself and no one else—is that we would have seen KAMALA HARRIS come through that door, still comely, still courtly, still stately, still statuesque. We would have seen her walk down. We would have seen her go up to the podium at the dais, and we would have seen her, if this legislation had passed, certify the election of KAMALA HARRIS for President—as President, to be more appropriate, if the legislation had passed.

There are two reasons: Two Democratic Senators refused to do what more than 50 Republicans did when they saw the opportunity.

I will close with this. Do not assume that those Republicans will now do what they have done in the past and oppose moving to 51 votes as they did when there was a Democratic issue on the table. I prognosticate here and now that they will move to use 51 votes if their agenda is stalled, and they will think nothing of it. They will do it with alacrity. They will pass their agenda.

Mr. Speaker, I guarantee you that if they run into a roadblock, they will do it. If that becomes the issue, they are going to do it. When they do it, I am going to come back to this podium, and I am going to say I told you so because we have suffered long enough from our history of using the filibuster to prevent progress, especially among the minorities in this country.

I am not giving them a license to do anything. They are going to do what they are going to do. I am just telling the truth. They are going to do it.

They will do it regardless of what anybody on this side of the aisle says.

We have nothing to do with what they do, but I can tell you this: We have suffered because two Senators would not vote to pass legislation that could have made a difference in the lives of the American people as well as in the lives of specific people who have suffered great injustices, great injustices, grave injustices, lives lost.

I believe that the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act would save lives. Voters would receive a better path to getting their votes into the process. More of them would participate.

I am not saying the election was rigged, none of that. What I am saying is that we had legislation that people would have appreciated, and we could have marketed that legislation by simply saying here is what we accomplished that benefits you at a different level.

Yes, we passed the infrastructure bill. It is a great bill. Yes, we passed the CHIPS and Science Act. I am glad we did it. These are the kinds of kitchen-table issues, this is the kitchen-table legislation, that people were talking about, and the lack of seeing this legislation passed dampened the enthusiasm of key aspects of the Democratic base.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know there are some people who now want to back off of this legislation. They want to try to become Republican lite. That is what I call it. We have to be ourselves. This is what has been important to our base. We have to stay with what has been important to our base.

There is nothing wrong with any one of these issues. Nothing has changed. We still need them. America needs them. America wants them. We just have to pass this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am always grateful to have this opportunity to speak. It means something to me because I don't hate the country. I love this country. That is why I want to improve it with this legislation. It means something to me. I am proud to say that I stand here in this place to speak on behalf of people who cannot speak for themselves, and I pray that one day we will be able to say that we were there to vote, to take maybe hard votes and pass legislation that makes a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I guarantee you, if my colleagues on the other side run into a roadblock, they will do as I said.

Our time will come again. We will have to take advantage of the time.

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

COMMEMORATING ANTHONY PESCETTI

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRANK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to commemorate the life of Anthony

Pescetti, of Granite Bay, who passed away unexpectedly in early December.

Anthony Pescetti lived a life of service. He was an elected member of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, serving 7 years, from 1987 to 1994.

Later, he served two terms in the California State Assembly, from 1998 to 2002.

During his time in public service, Assembly Member Pescetti was well-regarded for the level of communication that he brought to the office and was considered fair and easy to approach. He took pride in listening and keeping in touch with his constituents, holding monthly breakfasts for the public in each community of his district.

Assembly Member Pescetti was also an advocate for his district and secured various victories, such as for public safety and recreation, during his tenure.

Assembly Member Pescetti followed his internal compass. He decided not to run for reelection in 2002, and after 4 years of training, he was ordained deacon with the Sacramento Catholic Diocese. He went on to serve at St. Mel Parish, St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, and later at Presentation Parish in Sacramento.

Anthony loved people, and people loved him. He put a tremendous amount of work and effort toward his community to improve their quality of life.

He also enjoyed his family life with his wife, Kathy, and their son and daughter, Anthony and Sarina. The world was a richer place with Anthony Pescetti, and we will sincerely miss him.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF RICK BARTEE

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize retiring Roseville Fire Department Chief Rick Bartee for his years of service in the Roseville area.

Rick Bartee's devoted career of service to the Roseville community and his country has spanned over four decades, including the last 9 years as chief of the Roseville Fire Department.

Chief Bartee's longstanding commitment to public safety goes back to the age of 18 when he first joined the fire service. He built a strong educational foundation, earning his bachelor's of applied science degree, studying public safety and emergency management at Grand Canyon University.

Before embarking on his service to the city of Roseville, Chief Bartee had a decorated career in several capacities, including his over three decades of service for the Phoenix Fire Department.

Over the course of his tenure, Chief Bartee conducted the duties of engineer, captain, battalion chief, shift commander, managing the Homeland Defense Bureau, deputy chief, and many others.

Chief Bartee's dedication to public safety also went beyond his department and region. Throughout his time in the fire service, he also served on FEMA's urban search and rescue team.

Chief Bartee was onsite at some of the most destructive disasters our country has seen, providing much-needed response and relief. He sifted through the rubble at Ground Zero after 9/11, responded to the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster, aided along the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, and responded to many other catastrophes during his service to the task force. He has demonstrated selflessness in his deployments, locating and extricating disaster victims.

Chief Bartee's experience and scope of duties over his accomplished career, in conjunction with his devotion to service, enabled him to be an exemplary leader as chief of the Roseville Fire Department.

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Over the last 9 years, Chief Bartee has been steadfast in his leadership in overseeing 130 firefighters in the department.

During his tenure as fire chief, Rick also performed the duties of Incident Support Team Leader of the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. Chief Bartee's expertise in specialized training and disaster relief has truly brought invaluable knowledge and experience to the region.

Chief Bartee's lifetime dedication to service and public safety will leave a long-standing legacy, as his selfless leadership will benefit the Roseville area for many, many years to come.

The unwavering commitment to the public and leadership by example of people like Chief Rick Bartee ensures the Roseville area will remain a wonderful and safe place to live.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, it is a great honor and privilege to recognize Roseville Fire Chief Rick Bartee for his career in public service. I join the Roseville community in wishing him the very best in retirement.

OPTIMISM FOR CALIFORNIA

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, near the beginning of last year, I rose on the floor of this House to say a few words about my home State of California and how it was on potentially a path back to sanity, and how that opportunity lay ahead of us.

The reason for that optimism was that there were two potential policy changes then being considered that could set our State on an entirely new course when it comes to the key issues of public safety and homelessness.

California voters were about to consider Proposition 36, an initiative to make crime illegal again in California by largely reversing the disastrous proposition known as Prop 47.

Then there was a case before the United States Supreme Court, which I wrote an amicus brief for, called the Grants Pass case that would potentially liberate our communities from a Ninth Circuit decision that made it virtually impossible for them to clear out homeless encampments.

These two opportunities together presented a path back to law and order,