

long-term benefit from sound policies—which, interestingly enough, translate into good politics. Strengthening the economy and getting our country on a track to brighter and more prosperous times should be our priority.

We have proven in Indiana that good policy, no matter how politically difficult it might seem at the time to achieve, does translate into good politics. But much more important than the politics, good policy can translate into strengthening our economy, improving the lives of Americans, and providing opportunity for future generations.

It is time we learn that lesson in Washington that our State of Indiana and many States across the country, as well as other communities, are learning. It is time we exhibit the political courage to stand and do what I think just about everyone in this body understands; that is, to get a hold of runaway spending and borrowing that is putting us in a very deep fiscal hole and will have significant, dire consequences not only on future generations but even our current generation.

The time is now. As I said from this spot yesterday, 2013 is the decisive year. In 2014, we will be back into an election year, and that tired old belief that we cannot make these kinds of changes with the election looming will surface again. If we don't act now, more people will say that we need to wait until after the next election. It will push us into 2015. Many who have looked at our situation fiscally and analyzed it from a nonpartisan, non-ideological basis have said 2015 is too late.

This is the time when we need to summon our courage, summon our political will, and do what is right for the American people. We cannot continue to bump along at less than 2 percent growth. We cannot continue to keep more than 8 percent or nearly 8 percent of our people unemployed; and, obviously, that number is much higher when we count those who are no longer looking for work who have given up. We cannot continue to keep America on the edge of uncertainty in terms of what our fiscal future will look like.

Let us summon that courage to go forward. Let us use examples from those States, the support of those Governors and the support they have received from people across those States. Let us summon the courage to do what we need to do.

I want to continue talking about how we need to address this with a “go big, go bold” type of approach. Everyone says and concludes that if we can put that package together to address our long-term ills over a period of time and bring us back to balance and stability, we will see a revival of the economy of this country and we will see great hope for the American people going forward.

Madam President, with that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. I ask the Acting President pro tempore if we are in morning business, and I assume we are.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. ROBERTS. Thank you, Madam President.

(The remarks of Mr. ROBERTS pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 8 are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

Mr. ROBERTS. I yield back the remainder of my time, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, President Obama may have been vague on details in his inaugural speech on Monday, but I will give him this, he couldn't have been clearer about the tone and the direction he has in mind for the second term. Gone is the postpartisan rhetoric that propelled him onto the national stage and into the White House. In its place is an unabashedly leftwing appeal for more bureaucratic control and centralized power here in Washington.

On Monday, we saw a President and a party that appeared to have shifted into reverse and jammed on the gas. For Democrats in the Obama age, the era of big government being over is officially over. And anybody who disagrees with their approach isn't just wrong, they are not just standing in the way of progress, they are malevolent, they are the bad guys, they are the ones who want to take food away from children, they want the old and the infirm to suffer, they want to choose between caring for the people who built this country, as the President put it on Monday, and investing in those who will build our future.

I don't know if the President buys all this stuff; I don't know if he believes his own caricature—I certainly hope not—but one thing I do know is that questioning the intentions of one's political opponents makes it awfully hard

to get anything done in a representative democracy. As the President himself said, without so much as a hint of irony, we cannot mistake absolutism for principle or substitute spectacle for politics or treat name calling as reasoned debate.

The President won the election. I congratulate him on his victory. It is his prerogative to lay out an agenda and to make an argument—against all evidence—for the efficacy of big government, more Washington spending, and centralization. It is even his prerogative to argue—mistakenly, in my view—that America's greatness somehow rests not on its communities and voluntary associations, its churches and charities, on civil society, but instead on the dictates of Washington. But to suggest that those of us and our constituents who believe otherwise don't want the best interest of our parents or our children or our country's future is, at best, needlessly provocative; at worst, it suggests a troubling inability to view those who don't happen to share your opinions as beneath you.

To suggest, as one of the President's spokesmen did earlier this week, that both the American political system and those who belong to the party of Lincoln aren't worthy of this White House or its agenda isn't the way to get things done. It makes it impossible to tend to problems we simply have to face up to and that we will only solve together. Frankly, it calls into question the President's own belief in the wisdom and the efficacy of the constitutional system of checks and balances that the Founders so wisely put in place.

The postinaugural period is usually a chance to pivot to governing after a long campaign. It is an opportunity for Presidents to reach out to the minority and to forge compromises. But that is not what we are seeing this time around. Even before Monday we all noted the harsh change in tone, the reboot of the campaign machine, and how, instead of offering an olive branch to those who disagree with him, the President had already decided to transform his campaign operation into a weapon to bulldoze anyone who doesn't share his vision. Well, I would suggest that one thing the American people don't want is a permanent campaign. That is the last thing the American people are looking for—a permanent campaign. They want us to work together on solutions to our problems. And deficits and debt are right at the top of the list.

I wish to suggest this morning the President rethink the adversarial tone he has adopted in recent weeks. Our problems are simply too urgent and too big for the President to give up on working with us. I appeal to him once again to work with us on the things we can achieve together, and let us start with the deficit and the debt. Because the only way we will be able to tackle these problems is by doing it together.