the President's pivot to Asia into a pivot to America. The question is: Will we listen to the American people, or will we double down on a watered-down policy that has divided both the Democratic and Republican sides of the aisle? To stop the TPA, we must hold firm.

Republicans and Democrats all want trade barriers to be removed, but we are at a crossroads because both parties have voiced a lack of trust in the President's ability to be able to negotiate what is best for America. That is why we are still fighting to stop the trade promotional authority, better known as fast track.

Fast track will not be the panacea of all ills. In fact, if granted, we could see President Obama move swiftly on the Trans-Pacific Partnership that will likely not deliver the goods and have harmful secondary effects in multiple areas.

Dr. Aurolyn Luykx, from the University of Texas at El Paso, makes this analysis: ''I think the consequences could be very dire. We already saw under NAFTA how so many jobs left the United States and, also, went from Mexico. Then we saw, as well, tens of thousands of low-income Mexican families being put out of work and losing their land, and we saw how that drove migration to the United States.''

The architects of the TPA in both Congress and the White House claim that with fast track they can lower barriers on U.S. exports among the 11 other TPP nations in the negotiation, thus, increasing jobs and wages.

Now to the facts. We already have high-standard, free-trade agreements with 7 of those 11 other nations in the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership. We are writing the rules in the Pacific. Let's write them some more with good bilateral agreements.

If you don't believe me, how about Simon Johnson, a former chief economist of the International Monetary Fund and a professor at MIT Sloan. Here is what he says about the myth of needing the TPA to lower tariffs among the proposed members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership:

> Almost all tariffs on trade among Canada, Mexico, and the United States are long gone. Under the Australian and Singapore free trade agreements, almost all tariffs on U.S. goods have been eliminated. Goods from the United States have entered Chile without tariffs since January 1 of this year, and most tariffs imposed by Peru have already been phased out.
>
> The TPP will amount to a free trade agreement with Brunei, with a population less than Omaha, Nebraska, and New Zealand, with a population less than Louisiana. Encouraging exports to these countries is surely desirable, but the economic impact on the United States is unlikely to be more than a rounding error.
>
> That leaves three larger countries where the issues are more complex: Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam.
>
> And TPP will also confer special status on foreign investors, allowing them to sue for financial judgments against host-country regulations. Creating a quasi-legal process outside the regular court system just for foreigners can go wrong in many ways.

I would add, from my own reading of the TPP, without divulging the details, concerns about private rights in disputes; the transnational panel empowered with a living agreement even after the accord is signed; and possible exceptions granted to Brunei, whose legal system is not to the same standard as other nations.

So, one says, What solutions do you have? Well, here are a couple:

First, listen to the American people. If the majority of Americans completely across the political spectrum have voiced concerns against TPA, then our actions this week will truly reflect if we are being representative of that voice.

Second, the President must demonstrate he can lead on foreign policy. He has yet to do it. Granting fast track to negotiate with 40 percent of the world's economy should be based on how well he has handled foreign policy. Have we forgotten the handling of Syria, ISIS, Iraq, Crimea, Ukraine, and Iran? I can go on, but the question is, Why are we? The President must show us some deeds, not words. He should start by negotiating a bilateral agreement with our ally Japan. Intently focus there. Bring that to us, and we will likely approve it.

Third, negotiate an interim agreement with China. We still have much to do with raising the standards bar on Chinese trade, but China lacks lawyers to fight these problems. Well, do we know how to make plenty of those. Negotiate a law school program all across our land's rich institutions to create Chinese attorneys to help fight these issues.

As to goods, China is seeking oil, natural gas, coal, timber, aggregate, beef, and pork. We have an abundance of these. How about a trade agreement on these narrow products that will immediately benefit us all?

It is not impossible. We have the resource. We have the technology. What we need are the guts to do it, a rekindling of the American spirit, and the leadership to get it done. It starts by putting the brakes on fast track. We need the right track instead.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, I am going to talk about campaign finance reform.

First of all, though, I want to say that the United States of America is the greatest country in the world. You can see by our economic dominance, by our cultural dominance, and by our military power. But we face some very big challenges. Unless we are able to tackle those challenges, our dominance may be in peril.

Some of those challenges are climate change, global competitiveness. We need to make sure our manufacturing is up to par and can compete with any country on Earth. We have a vanishing middle class, which is very devastating to our country. We have a crumbling infrastructure. We also need to work on our educational system. But I can tell you, it is very difficult to attack any of these problems in a serious way with the current system of campaign financing.

So let me go over some of the problems with campaign financing in our current system:

First of all, you can see on the list here, campaign financing makes elected officials less effective because of the amount of time that we must spend raising money for the next election, which leaves less time to work on the issues that need to move our country forward.

The campaign money fuels negative campaign ads that turn off voters and suppress vote turnout.

Campaign financing causes wasteful government spending on programs that big donors want to see out there.

The threat of negative campaign adds—and this is very corrosive—causes elected officials to avoid taking stands and leadership on important issues, and this reduces the effectiveness of our government institutions.

□ 1215

Nowadays, even our judicial races are becoming expensive and tainted by the influence of money.

Next, people have become cynical about the government and disillusioned about the United States of America because, in part, of negative advertising.

Next, the super-PACs and dark money coming into campaigns are no longer controlled by the candidates on the ballot.

Lastly—and I think this is very important—excessive election spending drowns out free speech. If you look at campaign ads, what is happening is that the Big Money comes in, buys all the campaign ad time on TV, and floods our mailboxes with literature.

People are only going to listen to so much campaign rhetoric, so they turn it off. The people with the most money are the ones who are listened to, and the ideas of the folks without much money are never heard. They don't ever get very far. I think this is a very critical issue.

We see the problems that we have with the current system; but how do we change it? There are some very big challenges that we face in terms of changing the current campaign financing system.

First of all, the Supreme Court of the United States of America has shown a very strong bias in the last decade or so toward putting more money in politics. That is right. The Supreme Court has made it so that more money is coming into politics and election campaigns every single year.

The Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court ruled that corporations

have the same free speech rights as people, allowing corporations to use their treasuries to finance campaigns. I can't think of anything that would be more corrosive to campaigns than to see a plethora of corporate and union money coming in with no controls and controlling the message.

In fact, just this year, the Republicans in the House and the Senate passed legislation that increases the total that an individual American citizen can contribute to political parties almost by a factor of 10, going from $35,000 to $300,000, so an individual can donate $300,000 to a political campaign; yet there is significant public support for taking money out of politics.

According to a June 2015 New York Times-CBS poll, 84 percent of Americans say money has too much influence in politics, and 85 percent of those surveyed said that the campaign financing system should be either completely rebuilt or fundamentally changed.

The growth of money in politics represents a threat to our cherished democratic institutions that were built by our Founding Fathers. This is not what the American people want for our democracy. It is critical to inform the American public about what is happening and what can be done about the problem. There are reform options of two kinds.

The first kind is legislative reform actions, and there are three or four types of those. The first and most important is disclosure and transparency, and then there are constitutional amendments. Constitutional amendments are very hard to pass, but they are not subject to be overturned by the Supreme Court. I have a proposed constitutional amendment, H.J. Res. 31, which will do away with PACs and super-PACs.

I hope the American public will examine those alternatives and decide what they want to see because our system is in desperate need of change.

ABOVE THE LAW

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much the comments of my friend Mr. RUSSELL, a neighbor from an adjoining State. He is right. The American people have made clear that they did not want the TPA passed. They certainly don't want the TAA passed.

How ironic that we are told that TPA's passage will create a massive number of jobs; yet the people who have really looked at it on the Democratic side say, ''Huh-uh, this is going to cost a lot of jobs so that we have got to have more unemployment benefits and more government help for people who are going to lose their jobs,'' which is what the TAA basically does, ''or we can't vote for the TPA''—how ironic.

Also how ironic that President Obama seems to have worked harder on this bill than he has on anything since ObamaCare—he has come to the Hill; he went to the baseball game. He is really pushing people to join him. It is rather ironic because it is just hard to believe that he would be working this hard to limit his own powers. He has never done that before. He has never worked to limit his own powers.

It also strikes me as a bit interesting that some of the same people who pushed so hard to pass TARP, the Wall Street bailout, are also pushing for this. There was a former FDIC Chairman named Isaac, who came to the Hill with the support of many economists, saying: ''Please, don't get into this socialist activity where government partners with private business. Don't do that and certainly not for $700 billion. There is no justification.''

Look, we clearly have more than that, that American individuals and American businesses have overseas in banks that they will never bring into the United States. They have already paid a massive amount of tax on it overseas.

A far better, free market approach would be to just pass a bill and say, ''If you want to shore up any asset or any entity, like Goldman Sachs''—you could have saved Lehman Brothers, AIG, Chrysler, GM; you could have saved any of them if you had just said: ''Bring that money in from overseas, no tax.''

We could have made it very attractive to do that, and then we wouldn't have had to have given the government $700 billion with basically no limits on how the Secretary of the Treasury could spend his money.

He couldn't prop up a central bank of a foreign government, but I read the bill. I couldn't believe we were going to give that kind of power to one person. We have not done that since the Constitution passed.

It also should be noted, I think, that, if we had not passed that $700 billion Wall Street bailout—that giveaway—then President Obama would never have gotten $900 billion. He would never have been able to push so much more for bigger government and had gotten it.

We would have been able to have stood stronger against that, which could have prevented ObamaCare from even coming up or passing. It had terribly damaging effects. Some of the same people who wanted TARP are now wanting TPA and TAA. It is a bad idea.

I just want to just finish, Mr. Speaker, by noting that we have the Supreme Court taking up an issue—it is supposedly going to come out with an opinion before the end of the month—and ruling in a case involving same-sex marriage.

Neither the Constitution nor the Bill of Rights provides any power for the Federal Government to get involved in the issue of marriage. That has always been a State issue. It should be under the 10th Amendment; yet we have the Supreme Court potentially going to weigh in and take over that power.

We also know that the law is very clear: 28 U.S. Code, section 455, says that any justice, judge, or magistrate judge of the United States shall disqualify himself in any proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned.

Two Justices have made clear how they feel. They have presided over same-sex marriage ceremonies. If they do not disqualify themselves and if they rule on this case, they have shown a total contempt for the law. That should lead to impeachment, but America would have to rise up to make that known.

We will see here, in the 800th year anniversary of the Magna Carta, when it was made clear that nobody, not even the King, is above the law, if the Supreme Court will say, 800 years later: ''We are the Supreme Court, and we are above the law, and there is nothing you can do about it.''

I hope and pray they are not that arrogant in trying to bring down this constitutional Republic. We will see.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

During these busy weeks of House work, we ask Your special blessing upon the Members of this assembly. Issues of national security, trade, and the welfare of our citizens stand in the balance of the deliberations of these days.

May each Member be filled with a surfeit of wisdom, patience, and equanimity that these weeks of appropriations might issue forth in solutions that benefit the Nation.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.