

American households, plus a third of America's Latino-Hispanic populations combined. In other words, 400 of our wealthiest citizens have as much wealth as 16 million African-American households, and 5 million Hispanic-Latino households.

At the end of the 20th century, the typical White family held a net worth six times greater than the typical African-American family. That gap is growing.

So this particular chart is from the work by Piketty. The blue line, as you can see, is the percentage of capital, the amount of capital as a percentage of GDP in this country, and the red line is wages. These green bars are where we have had recessions.

The important point to make in all of the slides is, the sweet spot where wages and capital were close to what Lincoln admonished us we should be, is where everybody benefited. And when you get to this, as in the Gilded Age, the concern here tonight is: What do we do about this? Do we respond, as we always have, through our civic institutions, to this institution, to this room, where Americans have struggled with these issues and come out with a product that largely benefited everyone, all Americans?

And it didn't benefit it based on any kind of demographic group. It benefited it in its best moments based on the merit of your hard work and willingness to work an honest day. Most Americans that I know, working people in my district and throughout this country that I have visited, don't ask for too much, in my view. They aspire to make enough to buy a home, to raise a family, to retire in comfort, and to leave the next generation wealthier and fuller than their generation.

We are failing in that obligation, and some of that obligation is for all of us. And I would reach out to those who are benefiting the most from this, and many of them, Warren Buffett and others, Bill Gates, have addressed this issue. But we really need them to lead us to a conversation about if this is right. If this historical record and the economic historians are right, how do we correct this? How do we correct it in such a way that is constructive and use these institutions to make sure that we improve upon this and really make America as great as it can be.

So in my opening, I talked about the Christian admonition from the Bible about to those who are given much, much is expected, required. This has been through our political liturgy, such as it is in this room and others, that there is a social obligation, a social contract. And we have an obligation to protect individual hard work and merit. Those two things are things that Americans believe in. And when they work together, they work for everyone.

The other thing that has come from many of our spiritual backgrounds is something that John Winthrop talked about when he left England and

brought those Puritans to the shore of Massachusetts to start anew, a place that I have been to many times in my youth growing up outside of Boston.

But Mr. Winthrop, future-Governor Winthrop, admonished to his shipmates, he said that where we are going, we should always be as a city upon a hill. And it comes from the Sermon on the Mount, that we should be as a city upon a hill because the rest of the world will look upon us.

It has been popular in our culture in both parties. Jack Kennedy, in a speech in 1961 before the Massachusetts legislature as President said: "We must always consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill—the eyes of all people are upon us."

Today, the eyes of all people are truly upon us—and our governments, in every branch, at every level, national, State and local, must be as a city upon a hill.

Kennedy continued and finished by saying history will not judge us, and I would say that this is true for us today, here.

Kennedy said: "History will not judge our endeavors—and a government cannot be selected—merely on the basis of color or creed or even party affiliation. Neither will competence and loyalty and stature, while essential to the utmost, suffice in times such as these."

Kennedy concluded: "For those to whom much is given, much is required."

And I conclude with Ronald Reagan who talked about a city on a hill often. He talked about it on the eve of his election in 1980. And as his farewell address, his last address to the country in the Oval Office on January 11, 1989, Reagan said: "I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity."

And Reagan concluded by saying: "And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still."

Ronald Reagan was right. Jack Kennedy was right. We should be as a city on a hill. And with the inequality we currently have in this country, I would argue the rest of the world does not look at us that way.

If we want to fulfill those obligations handed down to us through Scripture and our own political scripture, we have to have the courage and the confidence to address these issues in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I yield back.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I come into the conclusion of a very interesting day and week. Our current Speaker of the House, of course, has announced that he is not going to be seeking reelection. I think he made it clear before he was elected Speaker that he really wasn't seeking the position. He didn't really want the position. He had other things in mind. He enjoyed his chairmanship, but he ended up stepping up to the plate, being elected Speaker. And for his willingness to serve, he is to be applauded.

I have appreciated having a Speaker who, even when we disagreed, I knew he always tried to be honest and was somebody that wanted to do the right thing. So I appreciate that very much. We hadn't always had that, and I appreciated having that from Speaker PAUL RYAN.

Some of my colleagues have said: "Gee, Louie, we have gotten calls saying you ought to run for Speaker again." And so I really appreciate that, but I need to make clear: Back in December of 2014, after the Speaker—at that time, John Boehner—had pushed through a CR/Omnibus bill that immediately broke many of the promises that got Republicans elected back to the majority in November of 2014, after the promises, so many of our promises and the Speaker's promises were broken in that December 2014 CR/Omnibus, a number of us realized, we have got to have a new Speaker. We can't go through 2 years like this, these kinds of outrageous, broken promises with the country suffering under ObamaCare, so many problems that were before us.

So we began to try to get enough Republicans. We did the numbers. We knew that if all of the Republicans voted, we needed 29 Republicans to vote for any living person to be Speaker who was not the current Speaker, John Boehner.

And we tried for like 3 weeks. We couldn't get more than nine people to agree to vote for someone other than John Boehner. The vote was coming up on the House floor on Tuesday, and on Friday night I got a call from THOMAS MASSIE and JIM BRIDENSTINE, two of the finest people who ever served in Congress—two of the smartest as well, people of real integrity. And THOMAS said, "Louie, Jim had a brilliant idea, and we need to talk to you about it."

And JIM BRIDENSTINE, who, like I say, was brilliant, served our Nation in the Air Force, graduated from Rice University, which has rather high standards of intelligence to be admitted. And JIM said: "Hey wait, Thomas, would you repeat that part about a guy from Rice having a brilliant idea, you being a guy from MIT?"

And anyway, they got on and they said: "We are stuck with nine people. We can't get past nine people. We need

29 Republicans to vote for somebody besides Speaker Boehner.” And if we can get to 29, of course, that was our goal. The whole goal, though—to make a full disclosure—the plan was, if we could get 29 Republicans to vote for somebody besides John Boehner, then that would throw it into a second ballot for the first time since 1923.

□ 1830

There was some point back in the 1800s, mid-1800s, when they had over 60 ballots cast before they elected a Speaker. But that was a goal, and we knew if we got 29 and we got to a second ballot, then we could call for an emergency conference among the Republicans, go down and meet in HC-5 downstairs, and we knew the 29 of us would be belittled, fussed at, and yelled at.

I could say: Look, you can yell at us and call us whatever names you want, but we are not changing our vote. So let's agree to a compromise Speaker.

By that afternoon, we expected to have a compromise Speaker. There were a number of potential people who would have been acceptable. That was the plan.

THOMAS, JIM, and I, all three, knew that if I announced, then there would be an awful lot of people in our party who would hate me for the rest of my life or their life, whichever came first. The point that THOMAS and JIM made was that we have a number of our Members who have been hearing from constituents who have said: Look, we want you to vote for somebody besides John Boehner for Speaker. There had been a poll done that showed that, as I recall, 61 percent of nationwide Republican voters across the country wanted somebody besides John Boehner as Speaker.

So as some of our Members heard from constituents saying to vote for anybody but Boehner. They said: I would. I would vote for anybody but John Boehner if someone else formally announced. But no one has formally announced, so I am not just going to throw my vote away, and that would satisfy their constituents.

THOMAS' and JIM's point was that, if you announce, then they will hear from all of those thousands of constituents saying: Hey, you said if somebody announced, and now a Republican has announced, so keep your promise and vote for somebody besides Boehner.

The thinking of THOMAS and JIM was that, if we do that and you announce, then that would make those guys so uncomfortable that had been promising I would vote for anybody but Boehner if somebody announces, that we could finally get to the 29. We have been stuck on nine for weeks now.

So I had asked them to let me give it some thought overnight. The next morning, there was a conference call already scheduled with all nine of us. I said: Let's talk about it in the morning and give me a chance to think about it.

What occurred to me is what I told the other eight Members who had

agreed to vote for somebody besides the current Speaker, John Boehner: Look, guys, I have given this a lot of thought. If I am the only one who announces, then you will have both mainstream media and you will have Republican and Democratic reporters casting this as an election between this crazy guy from Texas, even though I feel quite certain that I scored much, much higher than my opponent would have at that time. They will say that he is crazy, and poor John Boehner is dealing with this crazy guy.

I said that what occurred to me is that, if one of you guys sent out word that you were announcing, then I could ask FOX News if I could come on to announce, and during the announcement I could make clear that this isn't about me being Speaker. It is about getting a different Speaker. So-and-so announced yesterday; somebody else may announce tomorrow. It is about getting a new Speaker.

TED YOHIO said: Well, LOUIE, if that is all it will take to get you to announce, I will send out an announcement this afternoon announcing that I am running for Speaker.

I said: Okay. TED, if you announce you are running for Speaker, send out that announcement today. As soon as it goes out, I will call FOX News to see if I can come on.

That all happened. TED sent out the press release. I called FOX News, and they let me on early that morning. I made it back from Dallas to Tyler in time to go to church, and the struggle was on.

But I knew, and all eight of our other patriot Republicans in the House knew, that by my announcing formally as a candidate for Speaker, which would bring about so much response from their constituents demanding that Members vote for somebody besides Boehner now that somebody has formally announced, those people who were made to feel very uncomfortable because of my announcement and the wrath they heard from constituents, some would probably never forgive me and would be angry with me. It would mean that I would never be able to be elected to any position. Even if we had a dogcatcher in the House, I could never get elected to that after I worked to have made that many people angry.

And I made a lot of people angry. People were calling by the thousands up here. I had many Members tell me they had gotten over 1,000 calls from constituents saying: Vote for LOUIE.

There was one article that got it right, that reported accurately that I was overheard a number of times saying: Look, guys, you know that Boehner is going to be mad at you if you don't vote for him; but you know he is going to be doubly mad at you if you vote for me because of how strongly he feels about me. So vote for anybody. You pick a living person and name them as your vote. We have got to have 29. If we get 29, we will have a compromise candidate for Speaker. Clear-

ly, it would never be me after I made that many people angry.

So overnight, Sunday night, we started getting new people to pledge that they were willing to vote for someone besides Boehner. I encouraged people to vote for somebody besides me so you don't make Boehner totally mad.

JIM BRIDENSTINE said: LOUIE, I am going to nominate you on the floor, and all I would ask is that you at least vote for yourself if I am going to nominate you so that I am not the only one voting for you.

He had been hearing me tell others to vote for anybody but me; it is fine. We just need to get to 29.

So I said: Absolutely, JIM. If you are gutsy enough to stand up and nominate me for Speaker, I will absolutely vote for myself so that you don't look, in some way, lame.

I will always treasure and appreciate the words that JIM BRIDENSTINE said and the things that he spoke during his nomination, even during so much of the uproar against me by some of my colleagues. It still warms my heart to hear what JIM BRIDENSTINE had to say here on the floor about me.

He has been nominated by our President to be head of NASA. BRIDENSTINE is probably one of the smartest people to be named as head of NASA. He has been in the sky. He has served his country nobly and well, both flying planes and flying the rules of the House here in Congress. He would be an absolutely incredible asset to NASA and to this country once he is confirmed.

I had asked some other people—I imagine JIM knows—but what I have heard from other people is that it is not the Democrats who have a hold on JIM BRIDENSTINE for head of NASA; it is actually our own Senator MARCO RUBIO. Now, that is what I was told by some people I trust.

If that is the case, I know that BRIDENSTINE didn't support Senator RUBIO in the primary for President, but BRIDENSTINE is one of the finest, most qualified, and most intelligent people we could ever hope to have as head of NASA. If what I was told is true, that for some reason MARCO RUBIO has a grudge against JIM BRIDENSTINE, I hope that he will do the right thing, put that grudge aside, whatever it is, and get this incredibly noble and qualified man into being head of NASA. We can't keep hurting our country with these kinds of actions by Republicans.

So I appreciate very much, Madam Speaker, people calling and encouraging me to run for Speaker, but I knew exactly when I announced for Speaker before, there would be people who would likely never forgive me for making their lives so uncomfortable. I had a goal. I just knew in my soul, if we didn't get a new Speaker soon, we would lose the majority at the end of 2016.

If Congress had been in such dismal shape in 2016, it would have hurt any chance we had of possibly winning the

Presidency. I just knew this country was in such rough shape that we had to do that. Even though it meant people hating me and being angry at me for years to come, it was worth it to try to help my country. I was willing to do that.

So I appreciate the calls, and I appreciate the encouragement, but I was willing to sacrifice any possibility that I would ever be elected to anything by other Members of Congress in order to get a different Speaker.

We ended up with PAUL RYAN, and despite our disagreement on some things, I knew he was always trying to be honest, and I will always appreciate that. We all know that we did not lose the majority in the House and our failure under Speaker Boehner did not hurt us and keep us from being able to elect a Republican President. So I think those are good things that arose out of it, but now we need to be looking ahead for the future.

I do think that people—unlike me—who might have a chance to be elected Speaker and who have not done things like anger my colleagues by announcing back in 2015, people who have a chance need to put together a plan of action, something like a Contract with America, not a farce like was put together that Speaker Boehner helped direct, which was the Pledge to America. As soon as we were elected after that pledge, the pledge was abandoned by Speaker Boehner.

We need an agreement: You reelect us to the majority, here are the things we are going to do, and then do them.

I appreciate what my friend THOMAS MASSIE said to a reporter earlier this afternoon. The reporter was demanding of Congressman MASSIE what he saw would ultimately be the result of a race for Speaker. THOMAS MASSIE said: Well, I see this race for Speaker a lot like NASCAR. There are many, many laps to go, and I am sure there will be some spectacular crashes before we finish that race.

So I think that could very well be the case. There are many, many laps to go in the race for Speaker that we didn't even know about until this morning, and THOMAS is probably right. There will probably be some spectacular crashes along the way in that race to be Speaker. We just need people who believe in the power of prayer to be praying for an honest and honorable Speaker who will follow the right plan, and then we will go from there.

Also, I want to touch on this incredible investigation not of a crime—we have long since gotten past a special counsel, Special Counsel Mueller, investigating a crime which, under laws and regulations, is a requirement to even appoint a special counsel. You have to have a crime in order to have a special counsel. As we found out, there was no crime that could be pointed to, yet they raised the question maybe the Trump campaign somehow colluded with Russia.

As we have heard from Comey and so many others, there is no evidence of

Donald Trump colluding with Russia or the Trump campaign to change the outcome of the election.

□ 1845

So what the special counsel's job has morphed into, illegally, I might add, is the special counsel no longer being in pursuit of a specified crime in the appointment of special counsel to investigate; but he now has a person target, Donald Trump, and he has taken his job to be search everything you can, now raid his lawyer's office so that you can try to find some crime unrelated to Donald Trump that you could use in evidence to prove against his lawyer, Michael Cohen.

And then, once we have found sufficient crimes, we will tell Michael Cohen: Okay, we have got evidence that will put you in prison for life, or 1,000 years, whatever they are going to do, unless you agree to tell us something—don't care if it is true or untrue; we need you to say it is true—that Donald Trump committed a crime, and then we won't prosecute you.

That has to be what that big raid was all about, because even if Donald Trump told his attorney, Mr. Cohen, anything that had to do with a potential crime for which Mr. Cohen was representing him, they could not introduce that. That would be privileged, covered by the attorney/client relationship, the privilege. I know absolutely, without any question in my mind, that Donald Trump never made a question admitting guilt in anything because he certainly convinced me that he is not guilty of anything. Nothing that has been proven.

But as The Heritage Foundation established in recent years, there are so many laws that carry criminal penalties that incorporate regulations that unelected bureaucrats have put in place so that if you violate a regulation, then you could be convicted, put in prison.

We have had hearings in prior years in Judiciary Committee. The estimate is probably over 5,000 Federal crimes. And we are not even sure how many there are, but probably over 5,000. And so many of them incorporate regulations: If you violate the regulation promulgated by this agency or department, then you are guilty of a crime, and you can go to prison.

So we heard some horror stories; such as, the gentleman, nerd, up in the northwest trying to create some kind of new, better battery. And he knew the laws and the requirements how to take care of chemicals, and he was very fastidious in doing that, followed the law, legal requirements, on keeping chemicals that he used to try to develop this battery. And one day he is driving along in his little fuel-efficient, small car, and he has three suburban snoop up: one behind, one in front, one to the side. They force him off the road. They grab him out of his little car, throw him to the ground, boot in the back, handcuff him. He had no idea

what he had done, and he didn't learn for quite some time.

But he had sent some chemical to Alaska to be used to help research what he was trying to establish in making a new battery. This was my understanding from the testimony we had at the hearing. So, since he was sending something by mail to Alaska, then, under venue statutes, that allowed the U.S. attorney to prosecute either in his home State, in the continental U.S., or in Alaska; and since he really wasn't friends with anybody in Alaska, they drug him up to Alaska, threw him in jail there with a high bond for no reason other than the Justice Department being ruthless.

And they tried this man for committing the heinous crime of violating a regulation that required, if someone sent this particular substance through the mail, it had to go by ground. He knew that. He checked the box to mail by ground only. He didn't realize that even when you check the box "by ground only" there was a regulation that said that wasn't good enough; you also had to get this Federal stamp to put on there that had a picture of an airplane with a line across the airplane so that it wasn't supposed to be taken in the air.

He got thrown to the ground, badly abused, taken to jail in Alaska, tried for a Federal felony because he didn't put a little sticker on with a plane with a line through it. Well, the jury did the right thing. They did a jury nullification and found him not guilty, although technically he was guilty of not putting that little sticker on there. They felt like he had been punished enough. They found him not guilty.

So he was ready to go home, but the Justice Department was so angry that he had been acquitted that they looked for anything to try to keep him incarcerated. And what they came up with was another statute that said, if anyone ever leaves certain substances unattended for so many days, then they are strictly liable, they are guilty of a Federal felony of abandoning these chemicals. And there is no defense for the fact that you were kept away from those chemicals 100 percent involuntarily, against your will.

So, as I understood from what we got at our hearing, he ended up being convicted of abandoning these chemicals, even though he didn't abandon them. The Justice Department was guilty of that, not him. But those were the regulations. They were properly stored, but he was forced to go to Alaska. He couldn't stay there with his chemicals, and he went to prison for that.

Now, I bring all that up to say that there are probably thousands of cases like that. We heard about a number of others. And The Heritage Foundation's point was that probably most Americans have committed Federal felonies we don't even know about because of some technical violation like that gentleman had that ended up with him being incarcerated for 18 months or so.

So if we abandon the constitutional approach to proving crimes in America that you are innocent until proven guilty and that judges are not allowed to give search warrants, or even arrest warrants, unless—well, for search warrants, under the Fourth Amendment, items are described with particularity that are to be searched for, and the area to be searched is identified with particularity. You have got to be specific.

And in this case, we have a special counsel who is out of control. I have told the President, I have said in the media: Mueller should be investigated himself. And I can't help but think that Rosenstein, as deputy attorney general, and Mueller, as special counsel, are running out the clock on statutes of limitation for any crimes they may have committed in stifling the investigation under Rosenstein's control as U.S. attorney and Mueller's control as FBI Director into Russia trying to gain control over American uranium.

And we also know that Comey has admitted he leaked information, which should be pretty easy to prove is a crime. He admitted it. He should be investigated. Each time Mueller's special counsel team has leaked information, it most likely has been a crime as well, for which Mueller needs to be investigated and held to account.

Each time there has been a leak about the President that contained information that it was a crime to leak, Mueller should have been all over that. But the trouble, we know, if he were to be investigating the most obvious crimes being committed, then he would be most likely under arrest himself.

We need to know: Rosenstein and Mueller, were they complicit in helping ensure that Russia would end up with such a sizable amount, 20 percent or so, of our uranium? They had a person under cover that was giving them information showing that Russians were committing crimes; and, as far as we can tell, they made sure nothing was done so that nothing would prevent some of the Cabinet members approving the sale of U.S. uranium. That needs to be investigated.

The leaks that we know have been committed that are crimes, they need to be investigated. Obviously that is going to take a second counsel, a special counsel. And no, even appointing a current U.S. attorney somewhere to investigate the special counsel and Comey and Rosenstein, it is going to have to be outside of the current Justice Department, outside the current U.S. attorney.

And it seems pretty clear to me, no one would need as many of the heartless prosecutors as Mueller has hired. It is obvious he is on a witch hunt. Seemed pretty obvious to some of us that, by his outrageous activity in raiding a lawyer's office, he was probably hoping the President would fire Mueller. That is an indication he really doesn't have anything; he has gotten desperate and is trying to manipulate

lawyer Cohen and, in the alternative, trying to get evidence that they could use to squeeze Cohen to get him to testify, even creating a crime if he has to. That seems pretty serious.

But you look at the history of what Robert Mueller has been engaged in, the way he destroyed the life of Ted Stevens. He probably would still be a Senator today and be alive were it not for Robert Mueller's FBI.

□ 1900

And what of the supervising FBI agent who we found out had helped manufacture evidence and hid evidence that proved Ted Stevens was innocent—not just a reasonable doubt, definitely proving he was innocent? Well, she continued on with the FBI. I don't know if she is still with them, but the person who was the whistleblower was run out of the FBI pretty quickly. He was notified he would not be allowed to investigate any more criminal cases, which means he has got to get out.

So Mueller made sure the guilty, malicious prosecuting FBI agent was rewarded and the honest, honorable FBI agent was punished. We saw what he did to Dr. Hatfill, who was not guilty of any crime, yet Mueller was incessant in trying to establish that he was guilty for a number of years without any proof whatsoever. And that is, of course, why Dr. Hatfill ended up with a \$6 million or so settlement from the Federal Government.

But the great consistent thing about Robert Mueller—no matter how many lives he destroys, how many people, like the two in Boston who died in prison of a crime that Mueller's FBI agents he was supervising had totally framed—he was still there at the end trying to keep them from being paroled, even till eventually they ended up with a \$100 million-plus settlement—but no matter how many lives he destroys, how many people he pushes for malicious prosecution, how many businesses he may jeopardize, his great consistency is he never apologizes. It doesn't matter who he destroys or what he destroys. He won't ever apologize.

And you got to really admire a guy who is so strong-headed that despite any crimes that he or those working for him may commit or people who may die, as happened at Boston as he refused to adequately investigate the—twice, the tip that was given twice by Russia that the older Tsarnaev was a radical Islamist and going to kill people. Under Mueller, he made sure that FBI agents purged the training material, and then he made sure that—from what agents have told me, they make you, as an FBI agent, feel like that if you receive a complaint or a notice that an American citizen has noticed suspicious activity by somebody who says appears to be a practicing Muslim, but they are gathering guns, maybe gathering materials to build bombs or like the guns out in San Diego, what Mueller made sure his agents were

trained to know when they got a complaint about a potential radical Islamist threat is it tells you that the person making the complaint or giving the information about a potential radical Islamist terrorist is an Islamophobe and you really need to investigate the person making the complaint about or giving the information about the potential terrorist, that is who you need to investigate. As I have been told by former FBI agents, it was like Mueller made us look under every rock for Islamophobes rather than looking for radical terrorists.

What a legacy. It will be in history books in years to come. Not current ones. Because as long as the Federal Government is involved in education, history is not taught, and when it is, so often it is not taught appropriately, but perhaps it is after the rise and fall of the United States, but at some point history books will record how amazing it was that America could select a special counsel who had done so much damage, blinding the FBI of its ability to see what a radical Islamic terrorist was doing, and maliciously prosecuting people, and they are going to say: Are these potential indications of the fall of the civilization that rewards people who are not actually defending the country but prosecuting patriots within the country? It is a very interesting time.

I don't think we have to get to that. I think if we can get a second special counsel to investigate Comey; his mentor and bosom buddy, Robert Mueller; and Mr. Rosenstein—I mean, for heaven's sake, we find out that Mr. Rosenstein not only was involved in the Russian investigation, knew that they were trying to illegally obtain U.S. uranium, but that he also signed at least one of the requests for a warrant extension on a Trump campaign member, even when he knew that it was salacious allegations, that the allegations were not verified, and that the Clinton campaign was behind the production, as was a foreign intelligence agent out for hire who also hated Donald Trump.

So, I mean, for heaven's sake, Mr. Rosenstein obviously committed at least one fraud upon the FISA court, which brings me back around again to the point: I think it is time to get rid of the FISA courts. Let's go back to having Federal courts that can be trusted but just can't make everything secret.

Let's make sure that we have a legitimate judge who can't be sure that everything will be so secret that he or she feels comfortable just granting 99.9 percent of the requests. I know I have read the one that was made for a warrant to get Verizon to disclose all of its information about all of its customers; and when I read the affidavit that came out from WikiLeaks and I read the application, I was astonished.

It burst my bubble of thinking we could trust the FISA courts because there was no particularity. It said, just

basically, we don't know of any crimes being committed, but we do need every Verizon customers' records, and that is what the application said. Yeah, we just need every—we need a warrant to require Verizon to give us every customers' records, all the records they have got.

And the judge, a nominated and confirmed Federal judge just signed off on it. Oh, sure, you want every record. No crime has been committed. There is no particularity of describing a particular thing to be seized or a person who has committed a crime or anything like that, just give us all the records you have got on everybody you got records on. And the FISA court judge just signed it.

Again, I come back to the fact: any judge—Federal, State, or local—who has lawyers come before that court and commit a fraud upon the court, as blatant as was committed in extending, getting a search warrant and continuing a search warrant on a member of the Trump campaign, even though it was such a brief time, and four times they got that warrant, extended three times, apparently, and the judges are not outraged enough to call the lawyers to account?

Well, we find out at least one of the parties involved was apparently dear friends with the Federal judge, so I guess, to that Federal judge, if you are a dear friend and you lie to the judge or you participate in the fraud upon the court, it is okay, because you are friends; whereas, an honorable, up-right, honest American would be outraged that a friend would participate in a fraud upon the court.

But until we can see that the FISA courts can be trusted, I think we need to come back to that issue. We need to redesign courts. Yes, I know there are agents in this world who want to destroy the United States of America and our freedom, and some things would need to be done in camera, some records would need to be sealed, but we can't keep doing this where FISA judges can make outrageously unconstitutional rulings, granting warrants, and no accountability.

And the thing here is, I would be saying this if this were being done to a Democrat. I would be saying this if it were done, you know, to anybody. It is just so wrong, and I am hoping that eventually, at some point, some of my friends across the aisle will say: Wait a minute, we can't keep allowing the United States Department of Justice to be spying on American citizens. We surely can go a ways further as a nation before we become quite so Orwellian as has occurred in the FISA court and in this special counsel vilification of individuals.

They have got their person. Now, I am sure they would be pleased to indict the President if they could find that perhaps he ever mailed a substance that didn't have the little sticker with the airplane on it with a line through it. They are looking for anything they

can get. It is like Eric Holder said recently in an interview: I know Robert Mueller, and he won't stop until he gets something on Trump—something like that.

I think he is right. It is time to fire Rosenstein. It is time to have Rosenstein, Mueller, and Comey investigated. It is time to get down to what we know has been occurring, that it so clearly appears to be Federal felonies.

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

PROTECT AMERICAN CONSUMERS AND DEFEND THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GAETZ). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) for 30 minutes.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. We are here today to declare our strongest resolve and determination to protect American consumers and defend the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The Bureau is under assault by the current administration, the Republican administration, and we will do everything in our power to guard it and to protect it so that it can protect consumers.

I am pleased to stand here with Democratic House members of the Financial Services Committee and of the Joint Economic Committee. I would like to thank Ranking Member MAXINE WATERS for her leadership and for working collaboratively with me to organize this important Special Order.

□ 1915

It is fitting that the Financial Services Committee Democrats lead efforts to protect the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, because we created it in 2009 when we passed the landmark Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, known as Dodd-Frank for Senator Chris Dodd and our former colleague and chairman, Barney Frank.

It is also fitting that Democratic House Members of the Joint Economic Committee participate because the attack on the CFPB not only hurts consumers, but harms businesses and our overall broader economy.

Let's put things in historical perspective. During the last 2 years of the George W. Bush administration, we suffered what former Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke called "the worst financial crisis in global history, including the Great Depression."

The former Chair of the Joint Economic Committee for President Obama, Christina Roamer, said that the economic shocks during that period were five times greater than the Great Depression.

In the last month of the Bush Presidency alone, our economy lost over 800,000 private sector jobs. We were

hemorrhaging 800,000 jobs a month. Nearly \$13 trillion in household wealth was completely lost. Home values plunged, on average, by almost 20 percent. Millions of people lost their homes. And at the peak of the recession, unemployment reached 10 percent. African-American unemployment reached almost 17 percent, and Latino unemployment was 13 percent.

In short, millions of Americans lost their jobs and millions lost their homes. At the root of the economic crisis were bad mortgages sold to families that could not afford them, a lack of consumer protections to shield Americans from financial predators.

No single government agency was dedicated to protecting consumers. They were dedicated to protecting banks and other financial institutions. But often consumer concerns was a secondary thought, a third thought, or not thought about at all.

So Democrats wrote and passed into law the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and at the heart was the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Its sole purpose was to prevent this type of economic disaster and to protect consumers.

Consumers want and need protection. The Federal Government sets and enforces safety standards on a wide variety of consumer goods. But until 2010, with the passage of the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, there were few protections for consumers of financial products—and many, many abuses.

Senator ELIZABETH WARREN, in her groundbreaking article, called for the creation of an agency dedicated solely to protecting consumers of financial products, pointed out the absurdity of not protecting consumers:

"It is impossible to buy a toaster that has a one-in-five chance of bursting into flames and burning down your house. But it is possible to refinance an existing home with a mortgage that has the same one-in-five chance of putting the family out on the street. . . ."

What is good enough for toasters and washing machines and cars, she argued, is good enough for mortgages. And it certainly would help our people. She was right. And that is a primary reason that we must defend the original mission of the CFPB today.

Ranking Member WATERS will describe some of the excellent work of the CFPB, which they have done to protect consumers.

Three numbers bear pointing out: In the first 6 years, the CFPB handled more than 1.2 million complaints and has delivered almost \$12 billion—billion, as in B—in relief, and sent that money back to consumers for their use in their pockets and their homes, to nearly 30 million consumers who had been harmed.

My Republican colleagues call this "regulatory overreach" or government run amuck. They want the CFPB to be less aggressive. In other words, they don't want the CFPB there to protect