

perspective that I have gained in our interactions.

Two, I am thankful to my God above. Over the years, I have grown to hold tightly to what's talked about in Romans 8:28. It says that God works not some, but all things, toward a bigger plan. That's a notion that we will all question at different points in our lives, but I am thankful for a God that knows how many hairs there are on my head and whether or not a sparrow falls to the ground. I respect friends who are reticent about the notion of God and faith but couldn't live my life without that belief that things are moving toward a divine end regardless of the daily ups and downs. Accordingly, I should thank not only the people who have been brought in to my life over politics but as well the people who helped raise and define me as a boy. Mom was ever-giving, creative, loved people, and always there; Dad never gave up. His big life lesson was on pushing through the inevitable obstacles that would come in life, and I am most thankful for all they did that helped wire me for the politics I have seen over the last 25 years.

Three, and finally, I ask you to remember the power of ideas—and how they can change the world. We are living in a weird time on this front right now. It's important that we go back to our roots as a reason-based republic. We seem to flirt with populism about every hundred years in this country, and it seems we are in our latest courtship given the era of Trump. But a cult of personality is never what our Founding Fathers intended. We in fact were to be a nation of laws and not men. Over my 25 years, I have come to revere what the Founding Fathers created here—along with the traditions and institutions that they established in support of this simple but sacred idea of being about laws and ideas rather than a nation subject to the whims of men.

It's part of the reason I have come to believe so passionately in limited government. I have seen first hand government's many inefficiencies, and any look at history screams the dangers of walking away from the Founding Fathers' inherent distrust in systems built on men rather than ideas and the institutions built to protect those ideas.

So, along with the many things that I have enumerated above, my simple parting wisdom is that we remember what Benjamin Franklin said as he left the Constitutional Convention—that we had been given a republic, if we could keep it.

This will require vigilance on all of our parts.

It will mean not spending what we don't have. Math always works. Professors Reinhart and Rogoff spoke eloquently to this theme in their book "This Time Is Different." Over the 800 years of financial history that they studied, it never was different. In every instance, the civilization in question found itself confronting the same math that our country now faces, and the politicians inevitably answered "this time is different" when talking about the math behind their debt burden. The political answer brought with it the seeds of destruction, and if we simply accept the political answer of more spending—that this administration and past administrations have proffered, we will face the same fate of those now extinct civilizations.

I believe that we are marching our way toward the most predictable financial and economic crisis in the history of our republic. If we don't change course soon, markets will do it for us, and the consequences will be damning with regard to future inflation, the value of the dollar, the worth of our savings, and ultimately our way of life. More than anything, these last 25 years have been about

trying in some small way to affect the trajectory of government spending. It has at times been a most lonely battle, but I am thankful that people like Justin Amash will still be here in Congress to carry the flag forward in this eternal battle between government's growth and liberty, between freedom and security, and between the soothing promises of populism and real math.

Hayek warned us of the moment we are now living in America. In his book "The Road to Serfdom," he talks about how open political systems become more and more difficult and cumbersome with the passage of time. This we all know. It's again part of what makes me believe so strongly in conservative philosophy and the importance of limiting government. Part of making government more efficient simply means reducing its size. Open political systems are never designed for efficiency, they are designed to give each one of us a voice—and that process of democracy is hard. It means we all have to roll up our sleeves and give just a little to find the compromises necessary to move things forward.

What's valuable about Hayek's writing is the other half of the story. Because as open political systems become cumbersome and inefficient, inevitably a strong man comes along and offers easy promises. He says that he can take care of it for us. People desperate for a change accept his offer. They have to give up a few freedoms in the equation to get more security. It doesn't work out so well, as Hayek's book in this instance is about the rise of Hitler in post-WWI German history.

I want to be clear and explicit that I am not likening Trump to Hitler, but the forces at play could lead to a future Hitler-like character if we don't watch out. It must be remembered that another thing that Benjamin Franklin said was that he who trades his freedom for security, deserves neither. Indeed, how true.

So my parting wisdom again is this:

As a country, we have to get back to math that works. We are riding on the Titanic as it now stands. This will end tragically for all of us, if we don't turn our spending habits around. Paul Kennedy wrote an interesting book a few years ago titled "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers," and again the dynamics that he talked about were once again simply tied to math.

We can't throw the baby out with the bathwater with regard to institutions and traditions that have served our country well for more than 200 years. If we have no faith in our institutions and the people that populate them, our system breaks down.

We must embrace the truth, and it will set us free. Open political systems cannot survive in a post-truth world. While none of us are perfect, and there will always be grey around some areas of truth, we cannot accept chronic streams of distrust. If everything is subjective, there is nothing to debate. If, on the other hand, there is objective truth, and I can approach it from the right while you approach it from a perspective more to the left, then we can join in debate. Without truth out in the middle, there is no starting point and the reasoned debate that an open political system relies on for its survival is strangled and dissipates.

A corollary to this is that we can't accept the idea of "fake news." I have certainly had more than my share of bad stories of my time in politics. Some of them were indeed not designed to bring forward the truth but were rather attempts discovering the most sensational nugget or line regardless of its context. And context is key to understanding any new bit of information before us. But this does not make all news fake. In the former Soviet Union, they have truly

fake news, and attempts to equate what's happening here with what happened there is most dangerous. There is a reason that the Founding Fathers enshrined the idea of a free and open press in the First Amendment. We should watch this carefully as the populist waves of today now come ashore.

Lest I turn what would have been my talk here into a book, I will mercifully call it quits to my thoughts for the day. In doing so, I want to again express my thanks to all who have helped me on this journey and to once again encourage your embrace of free markets, limited government, and the institutional forces so vital to perpetuating this remarkably fragile gift of individual liberty. As you consider my charge, I would ask that you have the courage to walk humbly in advancing the ideas that we might share. Indeed, Micah 6:8 said it best in suggesting that we are to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly. Godspeed in the journey.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID ADKINS

HON. KEVIN YODER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2018

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, as I leave Congress at the end of this year, I am reminded that each of us have been fortunate to have careers in public service because of mentors who have helped us along the way.

One such mentor for me was my friend David Adkins. Long before I stood for public office I was an aide to State Senator David Adkins. David served as a talented and distinguished leader who helped guide our state on many issues. He helped me understand the importance of sound public policy, compassion and empathy for others and the need for levity on occasion to make governance work.

Although he was leaving public service as I was starting, David has remained a good friend who has helped provide mentorship and advice along the way. We don't always agree on the issues, but we always agree that our government needs leaders who are willing to step up and solve problems to keep our nation strong. More than anything David is a proud Kansas Jayhawk, who, like myself, served as Student Body President at the University of Kansas.

Now David serves as the executive director of the Council of State Governments in Lexington, Kentucky.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank David for his mentorship to me, his service to the people of Kansas, and to his lifelong dedication to creating good public policy to benefit our great nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 21, 2018

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, on the legislative day of Wednesday, December 19, 2018, I was unable to cast a vote on a number of Roll Call Votes. Had I been present, I would have voted: Roll Call No. 436—"YEA", Roll Call No. 437—"YEA", Roll Call No. 438—"YEA", Roll Call No. 439—"YEA", Roll Call No. 440—

“YEA”, Roll Call No. 441—“YEA”, Roll Call No. 442—“YEA”, Roll Call No. 443—“YEA”, Roll Call No. 444—“YEA”, and Roll Call No. 445—“YEA”.