

caught playing political games on multiple occasions. Every day, Democrats echo those same fatigued talking points, and you can't help but wonder if they realize that, in fact, they are the ones who have been wasting time all along.

Denial is a powerful thing, Mr. Speaker. At a time when the American people demand leadership and accountability from Congress, Democrats have leaned on their political playbook for answers.

At this point, are we really surprised? Let's recap what the Democrats have done to date.

They have passed the so-called HEROES Act, a \$3 trillion socialist wish list that was crafted behind closed doors without bipartisan collaboration.

They have undermined 200 years of precedent by implementing proxy voting.

They have held virtual hearings where their Members are not physically present in the Capitol, and even one of their Members decided to phone in his vote to the committee while he was on his boat.

Now, juxtapose that with the work we have taken up.

Republicans have fought for schools to reopen safely. We have placed a high priority on strengthening our Nation's economic recovery, and we have worked tirelessly to support frontline workers.

Let President Trump and the administration be an example as well.

Secretary Scalia of the Department of Labor recently came to my district to meet with frontline workers, educators, and members of the private sector to learn about North Carolina's progress.

Deputy Secretary Hargan of HHS visited Wake Forest Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem to see the work being done by medical professionals to treat and protect North Carolinians.

This week, President Trump traveled to North Carolina to meet with representatives of a biotechnology company that is currently manufacturing a promising coronavirus vaccine.

Mr. Speaker, the differences between the Republican approach and the Democrat approach are night and day. I have said this before, and I will say it again: Democrats are choosing posturing over progress. They have ample opportunities to work with us, but they are more interested in creating the newest media sound bite, further inflating the Federal bureaucracy and appeasing their far-left base.

This isn't an observation. This is a fact. When you think of progress, you think of frontline workers; you think of private-sector innovation; you think about the millions of children around the country safely returning to school; and you think of businesses reopening their doors to the public.

When Republicans think of progress, that is what we envision. Sadly, Democrats have become so entrenched in their own political narrative that they

have failed to recognize the true priorities of the American people. Republicans will continue to work on the pressing needs of our Nation without delay. We can only hope that our Democrat colleagues will come to their senses eventually.

#### THANKING CRAIG ROBERTS FOR HIS SERVICE AS CHIEF OF STAFF

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I have heard it said that being a chief of staff to a Member of Congress is one of the best jobs on the Hill.

It takes a special person to keep the staff performing at the high level required of them. Burnout could easily occur because of long hours, high stress, and low pay.

That is why I come to the floor to thank my chief of staff, Craig Roberts, for his 24 years of service to me, the people of Illinois, and the people of this country. Yes, you heard me right, Craig has been with me for 24 straight years. It really has to be some kind of record.

Craig was born and raised in the Alton-Godfrey area of Madison County. He was one of those kids who was drawn to politics as a young kid, volunteering for campaigns in high school.

While attending Western Illinois University, he continued his studies and political activities. He graduated with a degree in political science and was an active member of the College Republicans.

Craig easily was hired by the Republican House staff in Illinois. I may have met him then, but my first direct and consistent contact with Craig was back in 1991 when he worked for the secretary of state. He volunteered to take on the task of running my first congressional campaign against an entrenched incumbent.

Running for Congress is difficult. Running against an incumbent is even more difficult. Running against a powerful, well-entrenched incumbent is crazy. Well, I was a little crazy, and I am glad Craig was, too, as he started the task to win the race.

The district consisted of 19 counties. Neither of us had personal money, but we put a little bit of our own in. I paid for gas and my food. He ate the last month of his salary cost.

We lost in the Clinton landslide in Illinois, but Craig's involvement helped provide immediate legitimacy to the campaign and made it competitive.

In 1996, I ran again, and this time, Craig was involved as an unpaid adviser. This race, I won narrowly. Once I won, I knew I had to ask Craig to join me in D.C. and run my office.

I made many local Republicans mad by taking Craig away from Springfield. In his time there, he had become highly respected. That respect would be easily duplicated in D.C.

Craig's leadership style is uplifting and empowering. He softened my big-

hammer style and calmed the seas when storm Shimkus was billowing.

He is a mentor and a friend to all who come through his door. Team Shimkus staff members can be found all over D.C., from the executive branch to the Senate and the chief of staff of offices. They all stay in touch and reach out to Craig for advice.

I left the D.C. hiring decisions to Craig. My theory is, if you hire someone and it doesn't work out, you have to be the one to fire that person.

My office staff is known for being open, accessible, friendly—most of the time—hardworking, and knowledgeable. This is a tribute to Craig. Our limited turnover is also a tribute to him.

Craig is a father figure to a bipartisan group of chiefs of staff. Active in the Chief of Staff Association, he has helped Congress and Members work together. In the heat of Member battles, chiefs talking to chiefs can help work things out.

He is also a proud and active Republican. He is known for his knowledge, organization, and planning. He volunteers and is an active member of the Capitol Hill Club, which is a Republican club up here on the Hill.

But a good chief of staff has to be a confidential adviser to the Member. Members of Congress live in the governmental and the political worlds simultaneously. So does the chief of staff.

The chief of staff has to ensure that the ethical boundaries are known and obeyed. Action people take action and, many times, cross the line. Chiefs, and particularly Craig, pulls a Member—and that would be me—aside and keeps me away from the brink of doing something really stupid.

Craig was and is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Maybe upon my retirement, he can get some rest, but I doubt he will.

We both carry the political and governmental scars of 24 years of service. Some can be seen while others cannot be seen. It is those scars that will forever bind us together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Craig for joining me in D.C., thank him for staying with me, and thank him for being the best chief of staff on the Hill.

#### DO NOT LET DEATH OF ENRIQUE ROMAN-MARTINEZ GO UNSOLVED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to decry a tragedy that has pierced the heart of my community, a tragedy that continues to cut deeper with each passing day because we still don't know what happened. We still have no answers.

All we know is that one of our very best, one of our brightest, is dead. Our hearts are broken, and we demand answers. Army specialist Enrique Roman-Martinez was a Chino native who makes the whole Inland Empire proud.