Constitutional Amendment 1 to invest in New Mexico's children and ensure that every single child across our State has access to early childhood education and care.

Last week, New Mexicans showed up across the State in every city, in every county, in every community. From Mescalero to Mountainair, from Albuquerque to Anton Chico, from Sandia Pueblo to Santa Rosa, and from Rio Rancho to Roswell and Ruidoso, over 70 percent of New Mexicans voted to invest in early childhood education and care.

New Mexicans believe in our people, they believe in our communities, and they believe that every single child should have what they need to thrive. But we have one more hurdle to cross to make this a reality, and that sits with our body here in Congress.

Because of antiquated laws that were put on the books over a century ago, we must provide concurrence so that our communities are able to tap these funds and make historic investments in our kids.

Today, I urge every single Member of this body to hear our voices, to hear the voices of New Mexicans and our children. New Mexicans want our kids to be able to access the resources they need. They are ready to lead the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this body to pass this concurring language now without delay and invest in New Mexico, our children, and our future.

□ 1515

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 8454. An ACT to expand research on cannabidiol and marijuana, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 94–201, as amended by Public Law 105–275, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress:

Natalie Anne Merchant of New York.

THE END OF AN ERA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, the House will be leaving town today, heading back to our States, heading back to our districts. Obviously, this will be a week of thanksgiving and, obviously, I wish all of my colleagues well and safe travel. We have much, of course, for which to be thankful in this great country.

But there are great concerns that we face. Today, obviously, we had the speech and the news about the future of Speaker PELOSI. The outgoing Speaker has had a long career in this body, and I wish her well. I wish her the best in the next chapter of her life.

Some are saying it is an end of an era; and I would say that it is only an end of an era if we choose to make it so.

Speaker PELOSI ran this Chamber not terribly unlike her Republican predecessors, and I don't necessarily mean that to be the right way to do things; bills that are cooked up in small rooms among leadership staff and Members of leadership; thousands of pages of legislation dropped on Members at the 11th hour; key pieces of legislation that are shuttled through committee without significant debate and then dropped on the floor.

Sometimes we have what is called suspension votes, where we suspend the rules and we have votes on the floor with no Members here to debate it or discuss it; just take the word of the committees on which I don't serve; amendments on the floor of this body restrained since May of 2016, under both parties' leadership.

Some people refer to this as a cartel. Some refer to it as the swamp. What it is, regardless of branding, we know that it takes power away from the legislators and, thereby, takes power away from the people who sent their legislators here to represent them.

The only way we are going to make this the end of an era is if we change the way we do things, and we should. I am saying this now that there is a Republican majority about to take the gavel. I believe we have to change the way this town works. I believe we have to change the way this body works.

The reason that I introduced the Article I Act in the first Congress that I served in this body, while President Trump was in office, to reclaim power from the executive branch, to say that we must have a voice in these ongoing emergency declarations, some of which date back to the 1970s. The reason that I did that was because I believed it, even though it would have taken power away from a Republican President.

I am wondering now if some of my Democratic colleagues will think, well, maybe that is not a terrible idea if we look ahead. I don't know.

Here, in this Chamber, I am, as a Republican, calling on a fundamental change in the way we do things here; how bills get to the floor.

Most people might not understand that the default rules that would go back to the Jefferson Manual and the basic rules of parliamentary procedure would be that I have the right to be able to offer a bill; and that then you would have the right to amend the bill here on the floor of this body; this being the floor of the House of Representatives.

But what the American people don't know is that every Congress we come in and we vote on new rules, and we vote on rules that, then, restrict the power of every Member of this body to be able to represent their constituents.

We restrict the power of a Member to offer a bill, to bring that bill to a vote, to have debate on that bill, to amend that bill here on the floor of the House of Representatives. That is the way it works.

Then we even go further. Every week, we fly in and then we have votes on rules, rules that are cooked up among 13 Members of the House of Representatives who sit up in a committee up here, behind these walls, and they vote a new rule, and send it down here; and then the body votes on the rule that then structures debate for the week.

Then can I offer an amendment here on the floor? No. You know why? Because people are afraid to vote.

Members of this body, sent to vote on legislation and to represent their constituents, are afraid to vote. Can you imagine, in the founding of this country, the establishment of this body, the people's House, to go get reelected every two years, to go seek re-election, that we are afraid to vote?

Do you know how many times if I bring up opening the process and opening up the floor of the House, colleagues on my side of the aisle, the other side of the aisle go, well, you know, don't you know that means somebody could bring up a really tough vote.

Well, if you vote ''no'' on a whole lot of tough votes, like I tend to do, you get kind of used to it, and you get used to what you have to do, which is go explain to your constituents why there ain't no free lunch.

This isn't the United States House of free stuff. You can't just keep passing bills to spend money we don't have to buy off votes. You can't keep voting for bills that have a nice title so that you don't have to go back and explain why you voted, as I did, against burn pit legislation for veterans who need support and help for burn pits. But you vote against it because you don't need another $675 billion mandatory spending item.

Yet, bipartisan support for a bill because nobody wants to go say no. Nobody wants to go look in a veteran's eye and explain the hard reality of what we need to do in this body.

Nobody wants to say no to a bill that says ALS research. Nobody wants to say no to a bill that says something about helping animals or helping old people or helping kids. You put a nice title on there, then everybody has got to vote for. It doesn't matter which side of the aisle you are on; you have got to vote for it because there is no spending limit. There is no restraint. There is no responsibility.

There is no leadership. There is no check on unrestrained power of the executive branch by this body because this body keeps funding the very tyranny of the executive branch that many campaign against. That is the truth.

My colleagues on this side of the aisle just went out and sought election, where we took the House back. My colleagues on this side of the aisle went out and campaigned against unrestrained Federal power in the Federal Bureau of Investigation; a Department of Homeland Security that refuses to secure the border of the United States; labeling of parents as domestic terrorists.

They went out and campaigned against an energy policy of an administration that is destroying American energy; driving the price of gas up; driving the price of electricity up; destroying the grid of the United States; making us more dependent on China, on Venezuela, on Russia, on Saudi Arabia, on Iran.

It is absurd. We ran against all that stuff, but you know what? A whole lot of my colleagues vote to fund all that stuff; have no problem writing a big old check, both sides of the aisle.

You know why? Because they always have something they want that they are willing to just sign off on a monster piece of legislation, irrespective of the debt that is piling up around the ears of their kids and their grandkids, the destruction of the American Dream that is happening because of that, or the funding of the very bureaucrats that are undermining the freedoms of the United States people every day.

Come to the floor. It has got a National Defense Authorization Act. You come to the floor, and you have got something you must pass. We have to pay for the pay raise for our troops. We must pay for some more planes and bombers and helicopters and missiles.

Don't you know, CHIP, that we have got to go stand up against China. We have got to fund Ukraine. We have got to stand up against Putin.

Great. Let's have a debate on this floor about those things. If you are talking about war, maybe we should declare it. If you think that there is a proxy war with funding, maybe we should debate it on the floor of this body.

Maybe you shouldn't just keep writing blank checks and never have a debate about guns and butter. But that is what we do.

This is where I have got to have a little tough talk to my colleagues on this side of the aisle. What, pray tell, have you heard out of anybody on this side of the aisle that will change any of that?

Yesterday, we had all sorts of conference meetings, debates about our internal workings. I tend to like to keep those meetings confidential and private, but half my dadgum colleagues are tweeting that stuff out in real time.

The fact of the matter is nothing changed. The status quo remains because people want their power. They want their committee chairmanships. They want their gavel. They want the ability to control the power and the purse strings, but they don't want to look in the mirror to fundamentally change a broken town, a broken House, a broken body, a broken Federal Government that is stepping all over the dreams and the hopes and the future and the prosperity of the American people.

There is not a remote indication that my colleagues on my side of the aisle understand what time it is in America; understand what we are facing. It is not just a campaign statement. It is not just something to go rile up the American people to get elected; to get elected, to get power, to get on a certain committee.

You know what every conversation that has been had in this body, at least on my side of the aisle, since last Tuesday? Hey, what's going on in the Steering Committee?

Hey, who is going to get Ways and Means?

Hey, who is going to get on what committee?

Hey, did the freshmen have their votes? Who is going to be the head of the freshman class?

Hey, who is going to be the Speaker? Who is going to be the whip?

I don't know. Let's figure out what we are going to do; who is going to have power. Who is going to have power; who is going to have power?

The answer is, anybody but the American people. The answer is, anybody but the rank-and-file Members of this body.

The answer is the status quo. That is why people ran—that is why President Trump, by the way, did well in 2016 running against the swamp.

Say what you want about President Trump. He represented a large block of this country that were sick and tired of this town, of this place, of this body, of the people in this room, and it is high time we do something about it.

Stop kissing each other's rear ends, asking and begging for some slot on a committee. We didn't come here to be on committees. We didn't come here to get a title.

The titles around this place, who is in leadership? Leadership. Isn't leadership something you recognize and follow? It is not something you elect.

I didn't come here for second place. I didn't come here—I don't leave my family, I don't say goodbye to my son and my daughter and my wife every Monday and fly up here and spend, 3, 4, 5 days up here and fly back every week, just because I want to earn Southwest points.

I didn't fly up here because I want to sit in rooms and go have a steak dinner and go talk to lobbyists about what needs to be put in a bill.

I didn't come up here to say, well, we have got to make sure we get—don't call them earmarks. No, don't call them earmarks. That is already bad out there. So we are going to call them community-directed spending. Okay, we will call them community-directed spending, the currency of this town.

How are you going to take care—how are you going to get a bridge back home? That is important. We have floods in Houston. We have floods in Louisiana. They need flood money, right?

We have tornadoes in the Midwest. Well, we need some tornado money.

Well, how do you think you get people to vote for all these appropriations bills that have left your country $32 trillion in debt?

□ 1530

By the way, 5 percent interest rates, do you know what is going to happen? I am sorry, interest rates going up where they are at 5 percent, do you know what is going to happen to the interest payments? It is going to be another $600 billion, $700 billion, $800 billion. You pretty much just bought a whole second Department of Defense, ladies and gentlemen, with money that you are printing.

How does that sound? Enjoy that, do you? And nobody here has any plan on what to do about it except more of the same.

We will have a lot of speeches about, ''Chip, don't you understand? Entitlements, mandatory spending, that is the problem. That is 70 percent of the whole thing.''

Well, as a technical matter, that is not incorrect, but we got here because we refused to deal with it. And that is not an excuse to write a blank check for discretionary spending.

Hey, we don't need to be responsible on discretionary spending because the actual problem is the rest of the spending, even though discretionary spending is still $1.5 trillion, $1.6 trillion, $1.8 trillion, $2 trillion, or is it $7 trillion? Does anybody know? Does anybody care?

Hey, we shut down the whole country under COVID–19, but hell, we will just write a $5 trillion check. Why not? That is what we do. We just keep writing checks that we can't cash.

So, what are we going to do? What are Republicans going to do to demonstrate that they get what time it is in America, that they get that there is $32 trillion in debt, that they get that our borders are wide open? That is not a political campaign speech; it is a reality.

Even Democrats who refuse to acknowledge that our border is wide open are panicked over the title 42 ruling by a district judge because even Democrats who want to ignore the 230,000 or 240,000 apprehensions in October, the 70,000-something got-aways, the 27 dead migrants, they ignore all that, but that 7,000 or 8,000 a day, they can just sort of barely process that.

You get rid of title 42—which, by the way, there is no pandemic reason for title 42 right now. It is literally a Band-Aid that Democrats are using as an, oh, my God. If we actually opened up the borders entirely, we can't deal with 17,000 a day. But that is the truth. That is the reality.

What are my colleagues on this side of the aisle going to do about it? ''Oh,

CHIP. We will pass a bill in January. I don't know if it will be H.R. 1, H.R. 2, H.R. 5, but don't worry. We will pass a border security bill.''

Well, one, I will believe that when I see it. We don't have a great track record.

Two, so what? Are you going to pass that bill and walk over and convince that great stalwart of defense of our border MITT ROMNEY that he should vote for it? Are you going to convince any of the 12 who just decided to redefine marriage and stomp all over religious liberty over in the United States Senate? Are you going to convince any one of them to vote for a strong border security bill? And even if you do, do you think that Joe Biden is going to sign it?

The question for Republicans is: Are you willing to use the power of the purse, articulated by our Founders in Federalist No. 58 and broadly at our founding, to stop what is happening and the destruction of our sovereignty with wide-open borders that are endangering migrants, killing Texas, having fentanyl poured into our schools, or are you just going to continue the fraud that is the United States House of Representatives?

That is what it is. We don't represent anything at all when it comes to the core values of the American people. We represent power. We represent the quest for power.

Are we going to use the power of the purse to secure the border? Are we going to deal with the National Defense Authorization Act that is currently being negotiated and likely passed out of the United States Senate and sent over to the House of Representatives?

Now, it is hard to hear the Republican leader, Mr. MCCARTHY, say that he thinks maybe the NDAA ought to be pushed to the next Congress. I agree with that. But then what? Then what?

Is the Senate going to pass the same thing right back over, an NDAA that is chock-full of all sorts of non-truly defense-related matters?

Are we going to have an NDAA that is sent over to us that drafts our daughters without so much as a single debate here on the floor about what it means to actually add our daughters to Selective Service?

Are we going to have an NDAA and are we going to support an NDAA that continues to advance vaccine mandates? How many of our men and women in uniform need to be fired? Oh, don't worry, CHIP. We took care of it. It is not a dishonorable discharge. Oh, really. Well, thank you for that grand leadership, GOP, because I am sure it really makes our men and women in uniform feel all that much better when they are forced to leave their service in the United States military with discharge—not honorable, discharge.

I am sure that makes them feel great. I am sure they are sitting around the table this coming Thursday after they got fired because they refused to take a jab in the arm of a vaccine that Moderna and Pfizer made over $100 billion on with all sorts of questions by legitimate, mainline doctors about the efficacy of the vaccine.

In a hearing that we held just last week off the Hill, because my Democratic colleagues won't hold a hearing on COVID on the Hill, where all three doctors sat on the panel, we asked them: Is there any basis, any reason, for our men and women in uniform to be required to take a vaccine for COVID? The answer was no, no, no. Unequivocal no.

This doesn't do anything significant for transmission. This doesn't do anything to truly help and protect young, healthy men and women who are in the military. They are precisely the population who are the least impacted by COVID.

Yet, here we are today, sitting here in real time while we adjourn for Thanksgiving, and an NDAA is getting debated in the Senate to be sent over here. What will Republicans do about that? I don't know. I don't know.

Are we going to have hearings in this body on COVID itself, the reaction and response to it, the power of government being used against the American people? Are we going to have hearings about its origins, hearings about NIH funding, hearings about mask policy, hearings about what Fauci and Birx knew and when they knew it, hearings about the efficacy of the vaccine, hearings about the side effects of the vaccine, hearings about why only now some of our leadership of this country is going out and saying: Oh, sorry. My bad.

I think it really was just kind of something bad for old people and maybe we really didn't see that maybe we didn't need to freak out and lock down our economy and kill our economy and send our kids to the corners and mask them and shut down our schools and set them back a generation in education. Our bad.

These are real people's lives. This is the greatest economy in the history of the world, and you just shut it down. What in the world? Is anybody on our side of the aisle going to do anything about that?

I haven't heard anything yet. I haven't seen anything yet. All I saw today was a hearing, a press conference talking about Hunter Biden.

Well, that is great. But what are we going to do about Scott Smith, who was targeted by the Department of Justice, the National School Board Association?

What are we going to do about Anthony Fauci? What are we going to do to make sure the American people know and fully understand the collective power of the Federal Government being pointed at and used against the American people?

Because it is happening—COVID tyranny, nurses and doctors forced out of the workforce, the effort under OSHA to try to force employers to mandate vaccines, the CDC regularly pushing Twitter, Google, and Facebook to flag any dissenters who dared question the orthodoxy and all that the powers that be said that they thought we must know.

How about the CDC purchasing $420,000 worth of Americans' location data to monitor compliance with lockdowns? Is anybody bothered by that? Is anybody bothered by the government looking at our information, looking at phone records?

How about guns? The FBI secretly coerced Americans to sign forms to voluntarily relinquish their rights to own, buy, or use firearms and permanently register them in the NICS system.

In Delaware, the ATF showed up unannounced to a man's home without a warrant for a surprise inspection. Under Biden, the ATF has revoked 500 percent more Federal firearms licenses.

How about DHS? Documents reveal DHS plans to target inaccurate information on ''the origins of the COVID–19 pandemic and the efficacy of the COVID–19 vaccines.'' Facebook created a special portal for DHS and government partners to report disinformation directly.

How about the environment? A 77-year-old veteran was sentenced to 18 months in Federal prison and $130,000 in fines for digging ponds on his Montana property in violation of the Clean Water Act.

The power of government is being used against the American people and our citizens every day. I have heard lots of talk by my Republican colleagues about oversight. Oversight doesn't do any good if you have a handful of hearings and nobody in America knows what is going on.

That is why we should have a coordinated Church Committee-style direct effort to bring together the entirety of the Federal Government's assault on the well-being of the American people and bring that to light to the American people and then specific changes to deal with it.

But I am not sure how much confidence a lot of the American people have that we are going to change anything because you have to actually change something.

We have, immediately following the election, the recoronation of MITCH MCCONNELL in the Senate and the adoption of essentially the exact same leadership team on this side of the aisle.

What is the first thing that happens in the votes? What do Republicans do? In the Senate, 12 Senate Republicans voted for cloture just yesterday to codify other than marriage between a man and a woman and trample on the religious liberty rights of Americans to disagree. That happened yesterday.

MITT ROMNEY, Utah, Trump won 58 percent of that vote in Utah; CYNTHIA LUMMIS, Wyoming, a 70 percent Republican State; SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, a 69 percent Republican State; TODD

YOUNG, a 57 percent Republican State; ROY BLUNT, a 57 percent Republican State; JONI ERNST, a 53 percent Republican State; ROB PORTMAN; DAN SULLIVAN; LISA MURKOWSKI; RICHARD BURR; THOM TILLIS; SUSAN COLLINS—Republicans walking away from religious liberty, walking away from the definition of marriage. What better way to signal to the American people and your Republican supporters and voters that you got your personal thing pulled together and you are going to represent them and change what we are doing in this town? Hard to believe the American people are cynical. Hard to believe that.

□ 1545

Yesterday, we had a bunch of votes on rules and procedures in the Republican Conference. It was a private meeting, despite the fact that my colleagues love to leak it out. I don't like to get into what specifically was done behind halfway closed doors, but I will just say this: There wasn't an overall warm and fuzzy feeling about change.

Very little changed. In fact, one of the things that did change was to just pull away from a 200-year-old precedent, dating back to Jefferson's Manual, about vacating the chair. It is my belief that sitting in the Speaker's chair, you would want to make very clear that you are confident that vacating the chair would never be a problem.

Yet, Republicans circled the wagons yesterday. You know why? It is about power. It is about the fear of losing power. It is about the fear of change. It is about the fear of empowering the body to do its thing. It is about the fear of open debate. It is about the fear of regular order. It is about the fear of votes. It is about the fear of taking tough votes.

I don't fear tough votes. But I will say something to my Republican colleagues. Don't talk to me about change or what you think is changing until you tell me about the process you are going to use to bring bills to this floor. Because if I don't have the right to amend it, if I don't have the right to represent my constituents, if I don't have the right to have a voice and you are going to come down and whip me and whip my colleagues to support a bill crammed down my throat by a Rules Committee that I didn't vote for or select, if you are going to tell me I have got to eat that vote, then that is not representative government and that is not the way we should do things.

When you bring a bill to the floor of the House of Representatives through the Rules Committee and it is told to us to be must passed—National Defense Authorization Act, which by the way is not must pass, but is always considered such. Appropriations bills—how many of my colleagues went to the microphone yesterday saying continuing resolutions are destroying our military; we need actual appropriations? You know what? I do not disagree. But when you offer a rule change to say, I tell you what, if our Senate colleagues will work with us to get the defense bill passed, then maybe we can consider the other things. They are saying: No, no, no, we don't want to bind our hands to the Senate. But that sounds nice, doesn't it?

The truth is, what they don't want to do is give up the ability to do what they always do, which is trying to jam through an omnibus spending bill, with backroom deals cut in order to try to drive up defense spending. I support our defense, I want them to be properly funded, but I don't want them to get more blank checks.

When are we going to have a debate about guns and butter? When are we going to stop spending money we don't have? When are we going to have an honest conversation in this body?

Is it when we turn off those dadgum cameras? Is it when we decide to actually offer amendments on the floor again?

You are not going to change anything if you keep doing the same stuff. That is the truth.

Two days ago, I stood up and nominated my friend ANDY BIGGS for Speaker of the House as the nominee for the Republican Party. Andy did not win that vote. He is my friend. My friend KEVIN MCCARTHY won that vote and earned over a majority of the Republican Conference. That news has been reported.

Virtually everything that we did in that meeting or said in that meeting was literally verbatim tweeted out in real time or leaked to the press in real time. That is the truth.

I have a rule when reporters talk to me about what happened in a meeting, that I tell them it is a private meeting, and I don't think I should talk about it. But when things leak out in real time about what is being said and what is being done, you at some point have to go explain to the people you represent, to your supporters, and people broadly, what you were doing. Because if you can't have a private debate and a private conversation among family and it is going to be made public, then you have got to go explain it.

So allow me to read the speech that I gave in the Republican Conference meeting nominating my friend, ANDY BIGGS. It went like this:

I rise in support of my friend and colleague from Arizona to serve as Speaker of the House. ANDY BIGGS is a proven leader who has demonstrated leadership here in D.C., as well as serving as president of the Arizona State Senate in a slim two-seat majority. He is a committed conservative and a good man.

Andy's candidacy is not an attack on Kevin, with whom a number of us have been engaging and will continue to engage in good faith.

Andy's candidacy is about his courage to stand here today willing to take arrows, the courage to offer a debate rather than a coronation; the courage to say perhaps, just perhaps, we should consider changing the way we do things in this broken Congress, in this broken town. A town to which our constituents sent us specifically to change it.

While there are many factors impacting last Tuesday's elections, the outcome is not so much murky as convicting.

Our voters, Republican voters, expected a reckoning, and in so doing, they gave us nearly 5 million more Republican votes in congressional elections than my Democratic colleagues.

Yes, redistricting can explain why we gained perhaps a smaller margin than anticipated, but it is not enough. What did we run on?

In the 1990s, we ran specifically on crime and a bold agenda to transform Congress. In 2010 and 2012, we ran specifically on cutting spending.

Meanwhile, this year, bold conservative leadership outside of this city was affirmed enthusiastically by voters. No one better represents that than Governor Ron DeSantis' overwhelming dominance in Florida. But we also saw Governor Lee in Tennessee, Governor Kemp in Georgia, Governor Reynolds in Iowa, and Governor Abbott in Texas, and we saw our old colleague LEE ZELDIN's powerful run for Governor in New York where he fell short but helped flip four seats, because LEE ran on something, crime and the rule of law in New York.

DeSantis ran on something: Fighting COVID tyranny directly and fighting woke-ism directly. Governor Abbott ran on something: Securing the border ravaging Texas.

Meanwhile, in a midterm election against the most radical, leftist, and dangerous White House in American history, we left the Senate in Democrat hands, and we are looking at a three- to five-seat majority in the House of Representatives.

So what do we do? I hear a lot about unity. Amen. But it has to be real unity. If we just say we are unified, it will not do a thing if the Rules Committee jams a disastrous immigration and border security bill, like happened in July of 2018.

Or consider that, to the best of my knowledge, the House Freedom Caucus, which represents about 20 percent of the body, has one member of the Steering Committee, which has 30 people, one member of the 20 standing committee chairs, or respectfully, how about all the PAC money that was spent around this town in favor of leadership-tapped candidates, for example, RODNEY DAVIS over MARY MILLER, two incumbents. That is why I give you that example.

But it is not about any one person or group. It is about empowerment of the whole Republican Conference, not just a select few.

We say we are for limited government, we Republicans, but how do you expect to decentralize the power of

Washington if we can't even decentralize our own leadership structure?

Our Republic is on the edge. Americans and their families are being crushed by a weaponized government, radical wokeness, vaccine mandates, open borders, crime, inflation. Yet voters don't understand how Democrats, who have championed such destruction, still hold so much power and largely avoided the reckoning that we talked about.

We talk a lot about accountability. I ask everyone in this room, how can we hold them accountable if we cannot hold ourselves accountable when we come up short?

Today's voting date—this being two days ago—is an arbitrary date, rushed in an environment where many of our voters believe the system is rigged against them.

A vote for Andy is a vote to shout ''stop'' and to stand to thwart the status quo. It is a vote to pause and debate. It is a vote to empower every one of us to have a say and to have the ability to use our election certificate to its fullest. It is not a vote against Kevin, but a vote to force us all to the table to figure out how—not if—how we will come together as a party to reshape the Conference rules; rethink the makeup of steering and the very structure and operation of the Rules Committee; and most of all, to lay out a specific agreed-to agenda and battle plan to which we can unite and to inspire and win the minds and hearts of the American people.

Now, that is an internal debate among Republicans. I think it is healthy. I think it is good. The question will be: Will Republicans stand for change, or will Republicans stand up for the continuation of the status quo?

The status quo ain't working. It is not. That is an indictment of both parties. That is an indictment of this institution. It is an indictment of this town.

We come here called to represent the American people. We come here called to engage in debate and discourse.

As I have said before on this floor, how often have you seen a legitimate and robust debate on this floor?

I would ask all the staff who sit in the room to answer, but that is not appropriate. They are the ones sitting here all the time, along with a handful of C–SPAN viewers.

Everybody knows, most of the time, we are preaching to an empty Chamber. Most of the time, if there are a lot of people on the floor, it is only for votes and a lot of back slapping and a lot of ''Hey, when is our dinner tonight?'' and a lot of ''Hey, what are we going to do tomorrow? When are you leaving town? How fast can we leave town? How quickly can we get to the airport? Chip, don't demand another vote, dang it. I have got to get to my tee time back home.''

Yeah, but when was the last time you saw a rigorous debate? Yeah, okay, I know we sometimes have the majority leader and the whip go back and forth on a Thursday afternoon or a Friday for an hour. But it is all talking points, it is all posturing, it is all back and forth to say, let's go out on the steps and give our speeches.

When was the last time you had—let's sit here for 3 hours and let's debate Ukraine. All of us, let's carve out time, how about 5 days? Let's debate Ukraine. We have given them $70 billion, and now the administration is asking for $37 billion more.

Any of y'all got $107 billion sitting around? Well, guess what, neither do we. We are just going to print more money. We are just going to print more money, send it to Ukraine, allegedly for a helpful goal of trying to help Zelenskyy stand up against Putin.

Where is all that money going? Is any of that money going into the hands of certain companies who are then turning around and sending it to certain politicians here? Certain stories seem to indicate so.

Any of that money going to oligarchs in Ukraine? Any of that money getting into the hands of China? A lot of stories about all of that.

I am not even talking about accountability yet. I am just saying that if we are going to vote on another $37 billion for Ukraine, shouldn't we debate it? Are we at war, or aren't we? Do we have advisers there or not? Is it in our national security or not? Is it helping stability around the globe or not? Is it actually good for the people of Ukraine, bad for Putin's power?

□ 1600

And there is a lot of good debates around all that. The answer might be ''yes'' to some of those, ''no'' to some of those. I will just throw it out there. Has anybody seen a debate like that on the floor of the United States House of Representatives? I have not. And I am here. A few people have come down and given speeches. That is not the same thing. That is not the same thing as an actual debate.

The American people expect us to do our job. I expect and believe that Republicans will end the absurdity of a closed-down Capitol; the absurdity of magnetometers to go onto the floor of the House; the absurdity of proxy voting, proxy voting extended by the current Speaker until December 25th, when Santa Claus is going to bring home the magic day when COVID disappears. Obviously absurd.

Our goal and our intent is to open up this body and to restore the people's House. That has to be our goal. That has to be our mission. Our mission as Republicans cannot be power for the sake of it. I would ask or suggest to my Democratic colleagues that their mission should not be opposition just for the sake of it.

I am proud that I have one of the higher voting records against my own party than most of the people in my party. I believe that is attached to some amount of consistency and not attached to the whip or attached to the party power structure. It doesn't mean I am right. I mean, I think I am. But what it means is that I have got some guiding principles that I think ought to guide how I vote. And it shouldn't be just because we are in shirts and skins or, you know, red shirts-green shirts, blue shirts-red shirts. It shouldn't be that way.

We should be able to be united on taking power back from the executive branch and restoring it to Congress.

We should be united on sovereignty of our Nation and defense of our borders to ensure that cartels don't exploit them for human tragedy, sex trafficking, fentanyl pouring in and killing American people.

We should be united on a strong national defense used sparingly but forcefully, not entangled in never-ending battles, and not blank checks to countries representing proxy wars.

We should be united in trying to figure out how to solve our fiscal crisis that is killing our country.

Every one of us should wake up, we should literally not be going home right now. We shouldn't even go home for Thanksgiving. It is so bad and such a crisis; we should not leave here until we have a plan to stop spending money we don't have.

I will go ahead and say it right here, everything should be on the table. But we won't do that because if somebody brings up mandatory spending, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will run ads like they did against Paul Ryan saying, you are pushing granny off the cliff if you dare say something about Social Security or Medicare. You mean to say there is not a single dollar that we can save out of that without it being pushing granny off the cliff?

On my side of the aisle, they will not touch defense spending. If you do, it is sacrilegious. You cannot touch defense spending. Chip, we need more. It doesn't matter what we are going to do with that. We need more. You mean, there is not a single dollar we can't save at the Department of Defense? There is not a single dollar we can't repurpose? There is no way to make that run more efficiently, more effectively to have a strong military force that will kill bad guys and blow things up when necessary? I think we can do that. We should be united in that.

You can't keep spending money you don't have. You can't have open borders and a lack of sovereignty. You can't. If we can't unite on that, what in the world are we going to unite on?

This body is supposed to, even in our disagreement, stand athwart the executive branch extending beyond the powers given it in the Constitution. It is supposed to. Yet we routinely give the executive branch open-ended, long runways of power. And we both do it. And we know we do it. Why shouldn't we unite to restrain the executive branch if you actually believe in separation of powers?

I will say right here and stipulate, I don't care who is in the White House. I

don't want the President and the executive branch to have unlimited power. I introduced a bill under Trump. I will introduce that bill, and I have reintroduced it under Biden. I will introduce it again in January of 2025 if I am here, no matter who the President is.

We have got the American people right now trying to figure out what they are going to pass down to their kids and grandkids. I have got staff, 25, 27, 28, 30 years old saying, am I going to be able to buy a house? Literally. Look around the country. Pulling it up on maps, saying, how am I going to afford this? How do I afford a half million dollar house with 7, 8 percent interest rates? All the families across the country are trying to figure that out.

They are trying to figure out why they are increasingly concerned about their safety and well-being.

They are trying to figure out why kids in their schools are dying from fentanyl.

They are trying to figure out why we can't just agree that there are men and there are women, and we can acknowledge that we can build our society around that without that being hate.

These are fundamental truths, fundamental elements of our society and how we organize ourselves. We have got to find a way as a body, on both sides of the aisle, to bring back common sense, normalcy, and in this Chamber regular order. Or nothing will ever change.

I am strongly of the belief that we must change. I have tried to work with colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I have introduced legislation on a bipartisan basis. I have passed legislation on a bipartisan basis despite being, I think by any objective measure, on the more conservative end of the spectrum of this body.

I don't care whether there's a D or an R after your name, I am going to tell you what I think, and that is directed at my colleagues on my side of the aisle, running around back-slapping about getting the majority. The majority and having the majority is absolutely useless if we are unwilling to change. We have to change the way we do things around here.

We have to empower Members of this body to have a say in what is brought to the floor, to have a say to amend the legislation, a say in open and real and true debate that is driven by a desire to lead this country forward on the most basic of terms.

Open up the Constitution. Look at the powers granted in Article I, Section 8. Ask yourself whether what we are doing is connected to those powers, and then ask yourself if we are not a stronger, freer, better society if we can agree to disagree and push decision-making as close to the people and families and communities and local and State leaders so that we can actually have a Republic united around ideals and not at each other's throats because that is what we are, because we are trying to make decisions in this town for everybody. And that is both sides of the aisle.

Federalism is not just some quaint word you talk about. It is actually central to the health of this Republic. We cannot function if we can't agree to disagree, and you can only agree to disagree if you are not trying to solve every problem for every person and every family in every walk of life in this Chamber doing everything and actually accomplishing nothing.

The beauty and the structure of this Republic and its founding is in the diffusion of power away from any one person, any one entity, the diffusion of power across three branches of government, the diffusion of power among Federal, State, and local government. That is the greatness of this country.

It is the essence of the great American experiment, that we trust the people, that we allow the people to prosper according to their own work, that we help each other, that civil society matters.

But we fundamentally broke not just this institution, we are breaking our country because we believe that an unlimited checkbook gives us the right to buy votes with it. And by doing it, you are breaking the spirit of the country. You are taking away the value of work. You are taking away the value of responsibility.

It is not just a campaign effort to buy student votes by paying off student loans so you can be nice. You just destroyed the entire ethic of responsibility of a woman like my wife, the daughter of a single mom who went to college, made decisions about what college she would go to based on the cost of that tuition, who took on loans, who then took every step to pay them back, who drove a crappy little car in order to pay her loans off. What do you say to her and every other American like her who did it the right way? You just say, Here you go, we are going to pay off your student loans.

That is just one example of thousands, and my side of the aisle is just as guilty. Another blank check to solve something, a disease or an illness, another blank check because Ukraine, another blank check because you don't dare look a farmer in the eye when the farm bill comes up and say, look, man, I am sorry, but farm plus SNAP equals a whole lot of debt, and we can't keep writing a blank check.

How about another blank check for subsidies for unreliable energy? Here you go. Here is another check to buy off another company to destroy our grid, destroy our way of life, destroy American energy through a blank check.

We are literally destroying the soul of the country every day we walk into this Chamber, and that is not a good legacy. Everybody just walks around acting like, well, one day the think tanks and the world will come together, we will solve all the mandatory spending problems. That is the real deal. Stop writing blank checks. Actually have the responsibility to do your job.

I am optimistic about the American people and always have been, and there is a large bloc of the American people who are not going to just walk away from the Republic that they inherited from their parents and grandparents and those that fought, bled, and died for this country. They are not going to walk away from the American Dream for their kids and grandkids. But this body, every day that we meet, we make it harder for them.

Why don't we stop that? Why don't we agree together to sit down and do the hard work that is required of us to do it the right way? To spend within our means? To follow the constitutional order? To limit our affairs to the consequential things that unite our Republic rather than meddling in the affairs of every American and every State and every local government? Why can we not sit down and agree to disagree and push decisions of disagreement down to the people, where they belong, and do our basic duty step by step. That is our calling. That is our opportunity. When you have a change of power and a change of leadership, it is our duty to follow the constitutional order. It is our duty to do it the right way. It is our duty to use the powers granted in the people's House to stand up in defense of the people who send us here to represent them.

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

□ 1615

ISSUES MAINSTREAM MEDIA IGNORES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some issues that I feel the mainstream media is ignoring. If anybody is listening here today, please put them on page one where they ought to be.

The first issue I am going to talk about is Ukraine.

I have felt all along that this is a disaster. It is obviously a disaster for all the family members of both the military and the civilians who have died during this conflict. It has the potential to become a huge disaster for the other countries in Europe and the United States of America, given the potential of what Russia is able to do.

Nevertheless, until apparently very recently maybe, the Biden administration has not been looking for an end to this war. Now, maybe the United States cannot broker an end, but maybe France or Turkey or Israel can. They should be encouraged to go down that path.

Every day the war continues, more people die. Every day the war continues, it is more of an economic catastrophe to Russia, an economic catastrophe even more to Ukraine.