

by then-Senator Barack Obama in 2006 when our debt was \$3.4 trillion. We had an \$8.4 trillion debt in 2006, and the President of the United States then said, "We have a leadership failure. The buck stops here. America deserves better."

Well, if \$8.4 trillion was a failure of leadership, what, Mr. President, is \$14 trillion of debt?

The debt isn't Republican. The debt isn't Democrat. It is both Republicans and Democrats that have put us in the position that we are in today, and this Congress, our obligation is to clean up the mess.

□ 1100

We're told, though, by the White House that we are to raise the debt ceiling—in effect to "do as I say and not as I do," according to the President.

It is irresponsible to take the steps of increasing the debt ceiling without finding solutions to our spending problems that put us here in the first place. I continue, along with my colleagues, to look for those solutions.

We've passed a budget to cut spending and to get our deficit under control. Speaker BOEHNER is negotiating in good faith. But what do we hear from our colleagues in the Senate who have failed to pass a budget for 756 days? They have failed to pass a budget for 756 days. "There's no need to have a Democratic budget," Senator REID said.

The President talks about caps but no real cuts.

The debt ceiling is exactly that. It is a ceiling. It is not an arbitrary number that should simply be moved whenever it's easy to do so. The debt ceiling has been raised 10 times in the past 10 years. That's too much for something that was intended to be an actual check on government spending. If the debt is to be raised again, this country needs and deserves an honest effort to control spending and make sure that we are not in the same position in the future.

The past Congress spent a lot of time dealing with credit card reform to help American consumers. Well, perhaps it's time that we treat the Federal Government itself to a little bit of credit card reform to make sure that the Federal credit card doesn't continue to increase over and over without an end.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am concerned that the future job growth in this country, unless we reel in our Nation's debt, unless we address the deficit, is DOA—debt on arrival.

America deserves better, Mr. President, it certainly does, and we are here to work with you to make sure that it gets better policies, a better future, and that we protect America from future economic catastrophe.

THE GOP VERSUS PUBLIC SERVANTS

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise regretfully this morning and sadly this morning to discuss what I believe is a true transgression that took place in our House yesterday.

I was appalled by the behavior displayed by the chairman of the Subcommittee on TARP and Financial Services. After repeatedly changing the time of yesterday's hearing with Professor Elizabeth Warren to discuss the Republican majority's efforts to terminate the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau just weeks before it was to be born, the chairman began the hearing with a petty partisan swipe alluding to whether the witness may or may not be running someday for the U.S. Senate. As if, Mr. Speaker, political ambition is taboo around here.

While the overall tone of the hearing was contentious, that's to be expected. After all, the goal of the hearing was, for my colleagues on the Republican side, to paint the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau as something that is bad for consumers. Why? Because this new consumer bureau's mission is to make Wall Street play by the rules. What a novel idea. But, you see, Wall Street believes that it can take care of itself.

As it turned out, the hearing was a wonderful opportunity for Americans to see not only how far the influence of financial institutions reaches into Congress, but also how competent, confident, and unflappable a public servant Professor Warren is.

Were it up to me, the President would just appoint her to head the CFPB and let her get on with leveling the playing field for American consumers when they borrow or invest their hard-earned money.

Mr. Speaker, Professor Warren answered every question posed to her for the entire hour for which she was asked to testify. When members were called to the floor for two votes, the chairman asked her to stay and wait, and Ms. Warren politely responded that she was told she'd be released at 2:15 and had another meeting at 2:30. What followed was a scene that, had it happened in a junior high student council meeting, would have been stopped by the faculty adviser. Unfortunately, though, our subcommittee is without any kind of adult supervision.

The chairman repeatedly made the same request ad nauseam of Professor Warren, who answered the same each time. She explained that the majority staff had changed the meeting logistics several times, including a 9 o'clock call the previous night to move the hearing from 1:30 to 1:15 to accommodate the congressional calendar. Professor Warren, through her staff, agreed to the change and was told that she would be done at 2:15. Pretty simple, right?

This is when the chairman crossed the line and told Professor Warren, "You're making this up." That's right. He called her a liar. A witness at his committee who juggled her schedule to accommodate him, an adviser to the

President of the United States, who was given an oath at the start of the hearing to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. He called her a liar.

Mr. Speaker, I ask today that the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) immediately and sincerely apologize to Professor Warren. I also believe he should apologize to the members of the subcommittee—both in the majority and the minority—for denigrating the proceedings of our body and pledge to never allow the political agenda to interfere with the common decency and respect that the rest of us understand is absolutely necessary in order to do the people's work.

However, I won't hold my breath, because this is part of a much larger strategy by my colleagues on the Republican side to paint everyone in public service as liars, cheats, or otherwise as despicable.

On the same day, the chairman of the Oversight Committee did virtually the exact same thing to Mr. Hayes, the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior, advising him not to answer a question because he's under oath, implying that certainly anything the Deputy Secretary might say would be untrue.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do better. Regardless of political affiliation, the American people demand it. Civility and common respect are not signs of weakness or capitulation. They are hallmarks of a functioning democracy.

An apology probably won't be forthcoming, but civility must be restored to this House—or at least school monitors to prevent spitballs from being thrown around in committee hearings.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Rev. Gene Mills, Louisiana Family Forum, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, offered the following prayer:

We bow our hearts before You, the great and Mighty King.

May today's deliberations be pleasing in Your sight. Let our heart's desire honor each of Heaven's treasures—faith, family, and freedom.

Father, let Your grace touch each need present here today. May every family member represented know the love of the Father, the presence of His