

Senate, the policies of the New Freedom led to the creation of the Federal Reserve, the Federal Trade Commission, the Clayton Antitrust Act, the eight-hour workday, child labor laws and workers' compensation. Wilson was also able to appoint the first Jew to the Supreme Court, Louis D. Brandeis.

Even when the president became besieged with troubles, both personal and political—the death of his first wife; the outbreak of World War I; an increasingly Republican legislative branch; agonizing depression until he married a widow named Edith Bolling Galt—Wilson hammered away at his progressive program. In 1916, he won re-election because, as his campaign slogan put it, "He kept us out of war!" A month after his second inauguration, he appeared yet again before Congress, this time, however, to convince the nation that "the world must be made safe for democracy." This credo became the foundation for the next century of American foreign policy: an obligation to assist all peoples in pursuit of freedom and self-determination.

Suddenly, the United States needed to transform itself from an isolationist nation into a war machine, and Wilson persuaded Congress that dozens of crucial issues (including repressive espionage and sedition acts) required that politics be "adjourned." Wilson returned again and again to the President's Room, eventually convincing Congress to pass the 19th Amendment: if women could keep the home fires burning amid wartime privation, the president argued, they should be entitled to vote. The journalist Frank I. Cobb called Wilson's control of Congress "the most impressive triumph of mind over matter known to American politics."

In the 1918 Congressional election—held days before the armistice—Wilson largely abstained from politics, but he did issue a written plea for a Democratic majority. Those who had followed his earlier advice and adjourned politics felt he was pulling a fast one. Republicans captured both houses. With the war over, Wilson left for Paris to broker a peace treaty, one he hoped would include the formation of a League of Nations, where countries could settle disputes peaceably and preemptively. The treaty required Senate approval, and Wilson, who had been away from Washington for more than six months, returned to discover that Republicans had actively, sometimes secretly, built opposition to it—without even knowing what the treaty stipulated.

Recognizing insurmountable resistance on Capitol Hill, even after hosting an unprecedented working meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the White House, Wilson attempted an end run around the Senate: he took his case directly to the people. During a 29-city tour, he slowly captured public support. But then he collapsed on a train between Pueblo, Colo., and Wichita, Kan., and had to be rushed back to the White House. Days later he suffered a stroke, which his wife, his physician and a handful of co-conspirators concealed from the world, leaving Mrs. Wilson to decide, in her words, "what was important and what was not."

In March 1920, having recovered enough to wage a final battle against the Republicans, Wilson could have garnered support for a League of Nations by surrendering minor concessions. But he refused. The treaty failed the Senate by seven votes, and in 1921, the president hobbled out of the White House as the lamest duck in American history, with his ideals intact but his grandest ambition in tatters.

Two months ago, our current president, facing financial cliffs and sequestration and toting an ambitious agenda filled with such incendiary issues as immigration reform and

gun control, spoke of the need to break "the habit of negotiating through crisis." Wilson knew how to sidestep that problem. He understood that conversation often holds the power to convert, that sustained dialogue is the best means of finding common ground.

Today, President Obama and Congress agree that the national debt poses lethal threats to future generations, and so they should declare war on that enemy and adjourn politics, at least until it has been subdued. The two sides should convene in the President's Room, at the table beneath the frescoes named "Legislation" and "Executive Authority," each prepared to leave something on it. And then they should return the next day, and maybe the day after that. Perhaps the senior senator from Kentucky could offer a bottle of his state's smoothest bourbon, and the president could provide the branch water. All sides should remember Wilson and the single factor that determines the country's glorious successes or crushing failures: cooperation.

March forth!

Mr. ALEXANDER. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate a very special day in history—a day that inspires pride and gratitude in the hearts of the people of the great State of Texas. I rise today to commemorate Texas Independence Day, which was actually this last Saturday, March 2.

I will read a letter that was written 177 years ago from behind the walls of an old Spanish mission known as the Alamo—a letter written by a young lieutenant colonel in the Texas Army, William Barret Travis. In doing so I carry on a tradition that was started by the late John Tower, who represented Texas in this body for more than two decades. This tradition was later carried on by his successor, Senator Phil Gramm, and then by our recently retired colleague, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. It is a tremendous honor that this privilege has now fallen to me.

On February 23, 1846, with his position under siege and outnumbered by nearly 10 to 1 by the forces of Mexican dictator Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, Travis penned the following letter, "To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World:"

Fellow citizens & compatriots—

I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna.

I have sustained a continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man.

The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion. Otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken.

I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls.

I shall never surrender or retreat.

Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch.

The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days.

If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.

Victory or Death.

Signed:

William Barret Travis.

As we all know, in the battle that ensued, 189 defenders of the Alamo lost their lives. But they did not die in vain. The Battle of the Alamo bought precious time for the Texas Revolutionaries, allowing Sam Houston to maneuver his army into position for a decisive victory at the Battle of San Jacinto. With this victory, Texas became a sovereign and independent republic. For 9 years, the Republic of Texas thrived as an independent nation. Then, in 1845, it agreed to join the United States as the 28th State.

Many of the Texas patriots who fought in the revolution went on to serve in the U.S. Congress. I am honored to hold the seat once occupied by Sam Houston. More broadly, I am honored to have the opportunity to serve 26 million Texans because of the sacrifices made by these brave men 177 years ago.

May we always remember their sacrifices and their courage. And may God continue to bless Texas and these United States.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, last week, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement—also known as ICE—initiated a precipitous action to reduce the population of the illegal immigrants detained by the U.S. Government for, they said, "budgetary reasons."

Let me quote ICE spokesperson Gillian Christensen, who stated, "As fiscal uncertainty remains over the continuing resolution and the possible sequestration, ICE has reviewed its detained population to ensure detention levels stay within ICE's current budget." So the result was a release of a significant number of detained illegal immigrants and blaming it on the sequester's imminent budget cuts last week, when it appears ICE mismanaged its resources.

That is unacceptable. This was an unnecessary action. It has the potential to put communities at risk. It is ineffective, inefficient, and irresponsible government.

Let's be clear about something else that ICE points to as a reason for this action, "fiscal uncertainty." Fiscal uncertainty is what has defined our economy over the past 4 years because this government cannot get its act together. This government has failed to