

and change it or to go to conference, but a 37th vote that will go nowhere. And everybody who knows that to be the case is on the floor this week. How sad.

RETURN THE POWER BACK TO
THE PEOPLE

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

Mr. RADEL. Mr. Speaker, in this great country of ours, since our founding, we've always had a distrust of government. And, quite honestly, I think that's a healthy thing, most especially today as we learn about what both the Department of Justice and IRS have done.

What we are learning is that this is a threat to your First Amendment: freedom of speech. And let there be no question the order of importance. It is your very first in your Bill of Rights: freedom of speech.

I believe that these rights are so sacred, so precious that I'm introducing the Free Flow of Information Act to protect journalists from the prying eyes of this Federal Government. It is my hope that Republicans and Democrats alike will support this just like then-Senator Obama did in 2007.

A select few in these agencies represent the worst when it comes to a heavy-handed government working to shut down your basic right to speak out as an individual or report the news as an organization. Now is the time that we stand up and say, Our society is not about I, the Federal Government; it is about we, the people. And to quote my generation's music from Public Enemy to Rage Against the Machine: "We gotta fight the powers that be; we gotta take the power back."

In other words, we need to stand up and say that we see the abuse from a few in Washington and we must return the power back to the people. After all, Washington works for you. Not a party. Not an ideology. Your government—elected and unelected—works for you, not against you.

But now we clearly see that both the IRS and the Department of Justice are working against you, working to stifle, to shut down your God-given right of freedom of speech, that freedom often carried out by the press.

In the United States, we are so unique and so powerful because we really share a common belief of some pretty simple things. You should be able to speak your mind. Again, it's called "freedom of speech." And journalists should be able to do their job and do so without the fear of a heavy-handed tyrannical government threatening or stifling them. It's called "freedom of the press."

But now we see an entire culture of government acting on their own behalf, not even beholden to an administration, party, or even a belief. These are rogue agencies that we are talking about, unelected, unchecked, without

boundaries, without ethics, and without a shred of respect for the Constitution or you. These individuals are some people on some floor of some building named after some dude that you've never even heard of messing with your life.

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And if you don't think that wiretaps or IRS audits are going to hit you, think again. Two groups from my home in southwest Florida were hit so hard by the IRS that they quit. They shut down their groups. That was it; enough is enough. This is the clearest example of how the government is coming after you to strip away your most basic rights. These groups were made up of hardworking Americans just like you. Their goal: to teach people about the Constitution. Think about that for a second. They wanted to teach people about the very document that tells you you have the right to say what you want. They're now gone.

And let's look at the Department of Justice wiretapping, seizing and prying into the lives of journalists. I worked as a journalist for almost 20 years, living with what I thought our government also believed in—freedom of the press. The freedom to investigate, share, and speak out on injustice.

And from journalists to partisan pundits, Rachel Maddow to Bill O'Reilly, they're coming for you next. Sean Hannity to Chris Hayes, you'll be tapped next as you try to shed light on truth, on injustice, or just try and get some answers.

Where does all of this end?

Well, this is where the so-called far left and far right need to embrace each other. Whether you are a Tea Partier or part of the Occupy movement, this is about you. Whether you are an evangelical Christian wanting to share the word of God or an atheist simply asking for a more secular society, this is about you. This is about you—your freedom of speech, your ability to express what you believe in. This is about you.

Washington insiders should not be dictating your life. The more it's about them, it's not about you. The more government grows unchecked and unbalanced and out of control, the more it's about them and not you.

I believe in you. Stand with me and let's take the power back and return this government to we the people. I promise to stand with you.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

PROTECT BANGLADESHI FACTORY
WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, little more than 100 years ago, a New York State assemblyman

was an eyewitness to one of our Nation's worst industrial tragedies—the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire. He recounted how he saw girl after girl appear in the reddened windows, pause for a terrified moment, and then leap to the pavement below, to land as a mangled, bloody pulp. He said it went on for what seemed like a ghastly eternity, and described how the firemen's life nets were torn by the impact of falling bodies.

This inferno at a sweatshop garment factory in New York City employed mostly poor, immigrant women. One hundred forty-six workers died that day because it lacked proper stairways, fire escapes, and managers had locked all of the exits. This tragedy shook our Nation and led to lifesaving workplace safety reforms.

A century later, I recently met a young Bangladeshi garment worker named Sumi. She, too, jumped from a window of the Tazreen garment factory. She survived, but 12 of her co-workers who jumped with her did not. More than 100 others who never had the opportunity to jump were found inside of the factory dead. This haunting tragedy has many parallels to the Triangle fire: exit doors were locked; fire extinguishers were not working; fire codes went unenforced.

We don't tolerate those workplace conditions in the United States anymore, but those are deadly conditions that are tolerated in other countries that make the clothing that we wear. These tragedies have moved from New York to Bangladesh, driven by the business models and global supply chains of the world's leading retailers and clothing brands. But now Bangladesh has had what might be its own Triangle Shirtwaist fire.

On April 24, more than 1,100 people died as Rana Plaza and its garment factories collapsed. Some 2,000 more were injured, and rescuers are still pulling bodies out 3 weeks later. There have been an additional 40 fires, explosions, and other incidents between the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza tragedies. It's simply a matter of time before there is another one.

These incidents shocked people around the globe and laid bare the need for bold action. The lives of 4 million workers in these factories are counting on bold action. But not everyone has been shocked. Major American retailers and clothing brands have refused to change the way they conduct business in Bangladesh, the second largest garment producer in the world after China. They are hoping instead that the heightened attention will pass without having to change their business model. That business model pits sweatshop against sweatshop, country against country, in a race to the bottom to rake in billions of dollars in profits while paying as little as 22 cents per shirt.

In Bangladesh, American and international companies flourish in this system, companies we all know like