

In my 19 years of serving in the House of Representatives I have worked in a Democratic majority and minority, and under both Republican and Democratic presidents. In that time I have never seen the brand of Tea Party partisan politics that today have brought our nation's capitol to a halt.

Compromise has been labeled a dirty word. The defeat of any of President Obama's agendas has been made priority number one. Tax cuts for the wealthy have been favored over programs that serve seniors and working families.

This is the partisan agenda that has held our government hostage, and set the stage for partisan theatrics that have done nothing to address the dire issues facing our nation. For the past year, this environment has made this Congress one of the least productive—all while the unemployed continue to struggle to find work and families fight to get by.

As a result, frustration has grown and hope has faded—a state that is simply unacceptable. The bottom line is that every member of Congress was elected to govern and solve problems. We were elected to place our nation before personal agendas and politics. Now more than ever, Americans are looking to their government to step up and do something about the dire state of our union.

A divided government is not an excuse for inaction, because time will not stand still for seniors waiting for their benefits, veterans seeking assistance, homeowners looking for a fair shot at staying in their home, or unemployed workers scraping to get by. Time will not stand still and wait for Congress to get their act together.

People need help now, and they deserve help now. For that reason, while the partisan mudslinging continues in Washington, I am proud of the work my district offices have done to maintain one of our fundamental responsibilities: solving problems.

They say all politics are local, and by that standard there is nothing more important than addressing the individual concerns of our community. A partisan debate taking place 3,000 miles away seems irrelevant when your mortgage is underwater, your social security check is missing in the mail or a love one is in trouble overseas. We are problem solvers, at home and in Washington. Yet this perspective has been lost on many of my colleagues.

As we get ready to welcome in a new year, I am encouraged and hopeful that we can continue to successfully address the issues important to our communities. We cannot stop time, and we cannot afford to wait for the end of partisan politics.

Our communities are ready for progress, and I am eager to stand with you.

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