

It soon became apparent some students needed to know more about the subject of their protests

Republicans are doomed if they don't get it together

Another week, another round of Republicans attacking each other. This time it was over the Ukraine funding bill that was passed by the House and ultimately became part of the big military aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan that Congress passed this week.

The Republican controlled House, led by Speaker Mike Johnson, passed the Ukraine funding bill after what seemed like years of delays by a vote of 311-112.

All the "no" votes came from Republicans and Johnson had to rely on Democrats to get the bill over the finish line.

That, of course, raised new cries for Speaker Johnson's ouster from the suicidal wing of his own party.

Many House Republicans voted "no" on the military aid bill because they wanted Johnson to include money for Southern border security in the bill.

I get it. We need to take care of the Southern border. I live in California and see the consequences of Biden's immigration fiasco every day.

But attaching money for border security to the military aid bill would have been a poison pill that would have killed it immediately.

How do we know that? Because the HR 2 immigration bill that came out of the Republican House last year has never been voted on by the Democrat-controlled Senate — and never will be.

And the so-called bipartisan immigration bill that the Senate passed a few weeks ago will never get voted on in the House.

Attaching border security money to the foreign aid bill was always a dumb idea.

It would have meant Israel and Taiwan would not get the military help they need. And Ukraine would not get any more of the help it needs from us to defend itself — and which was promised years ago by two presidents.

The reality is, people, we are morally and militarily obligated to Ukraine.

Presidents Clinton and Obama each guaranteed Ukraine's leaders that if they gave up their stockpile of Soviet Empire-vintage nu-

clear weapons, which they did, the United States would protect and defend them.

That obligation to protect Ukraine is what we have been doing with money and weapons since Vladimir Putin started the war by sending in his tanks and artillery.

It doesn't matter how corrupt Ukraine's politicians are or whether Ukraine should or should not become a member of NATO. Two U.S. presidents guaranteed the country's safety and protection if they gave up their nukes and we should honor that guarantee.

So the political reality in Washington is that it is wrong to blame Johnson or the other House Republicans for doing what was needed to keep our promise to Ukraine.

Money for the Southern border was a totally separate issue that should never have been attached to the Ukraine military funding bill.

Speaker Johnson is a smart guy. He did it the right way by keeping Ukraine aid and the border security issue separate.

If we Republicans want to take care of the Southern border, then, damn it, I would suggest we elect a Republican president, a Republican Senate and a Republican House on Nov. 5, 2024.

That's the only way we will ever be able to fix the border and fix our hapless immigration system, which has remained broken for decades because both parties have been too weak, too afraid and too stupid to fix it.

If Republicans in Congress continue to fight with each other the way they have been since Biden was elected, the American people have every right to ask, "Why in the hell would I want to elect one of these people to lead when they are incapable of working together?"

It's very simple: If the Republican Party can't find a way to unite, it doesn't deserve to win anything in 2024.

And if Hakeem Jeffries becomes Speaker of the House in 2025, it won't be because the Democrats did such a damn good job in the election.

It'll be because the Republicans screwed up. Again.

Two lawmakers who never agree on anything are taking a stand

John F. Kennedy won the Pulitzer Prize for his book "Profiles In Courage," a series of essays that focused on eight senators throughout U.S. history who — despite serious pressures from their colleagues and constituents — did what they believed to be the right and moral thing.

I have always been fascinated with people who find within themselves the ability to defy expectations, anger their presumed allies and follow their own conscience.

It is a rare quality, rarer still in this current climate of tribalism. But last week, two men showed up on my radar screen, polar opposites in their demeanor and their politics.

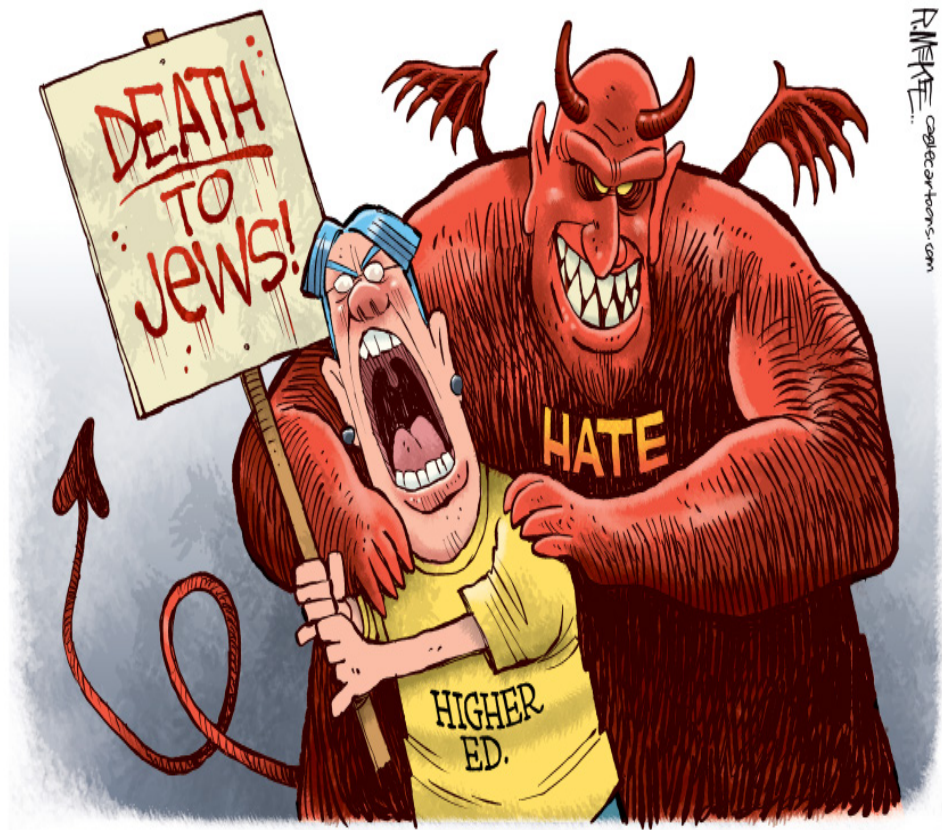
Their courage derives from a refusal to accommodate the blatant antisemitism that is infecting our streets, our media, our campuses and our hearts in the wake of Oct. 7. Pennsylvania's junior Sen. John Fetterman has shown immense integrity, wrapped in Western Pennsylvania grit, by confronting the pro-Palestinian advocates who regularly demand that he condemn Israel.

Not only has he waved an Israeli flag at them, he's mocked them as they should be mocked.

My favorite incident involved an invocation of the Millennials' Sacred Temple, when he noted that "It is not appropriate or legal or helpful to advance your argument if you show up in a Starbucks with a bullhorn and start yelling at people."

Well-played, senator, well-played.

Fetterman has incurred the anger of progressives who are



HUMAN SHIELD

shocked that he has his own mind, and is unwilling to play the puppet for their myriad demands and confusing agendas.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, both sardonically and philosophically, is Speaker of the House Mike Johnson. Johnson seems to have tabled consideration of a bipartisan immigration plan, which angered this writer but which made the MAGA crowd happy enough.

That is, until he decided to defy the pressures of the woman I like to call the Gorgon of Georgia, Marjorie Taylor Greene, and brought the funding bill for Ukraine and Israel to the floor.

That made him persona non grata with the conservatives, and didn't make him any new friends among the Democrats.

Johnson is a man standing on his own tiny island. His own

companion on that island, apparently, is his conscience.

Last week, he went to Columbia University to stand in solidarity with the Jewish students who were being persecuted and harassed by the same pro-Palestine protesters who've been rightly ridiculed by Fetterman.

According to a Reuters report, Johnson's visit "was meant to support Jewish students intimidated by some anti-Israeli demonstrators [and] took place shortly after the university extended a deadline by 48 hours to Friday morning to reach an agreement to remove an encampment that has come to symbolize the campus protest movement."

Johnson stood there very publicly in his nerd-chic business attire and horn-rimmed glasses, looking like one of the prep school boys I used to teach AP

French to at the Haverford School, and made the same sort of statement Fetterman did in his hoodies: Don't screw with the Jewish students. Don't be a bigot.

Those two men could not be more different. But both have a core characteristic that unites them: integrity. At a time when far too many are afraid to say things that will anger their friends and provoke their enemies, John Fetterman and Mike Johnson are a shining example of what is possible when we ignore the screams of the tribal elders.

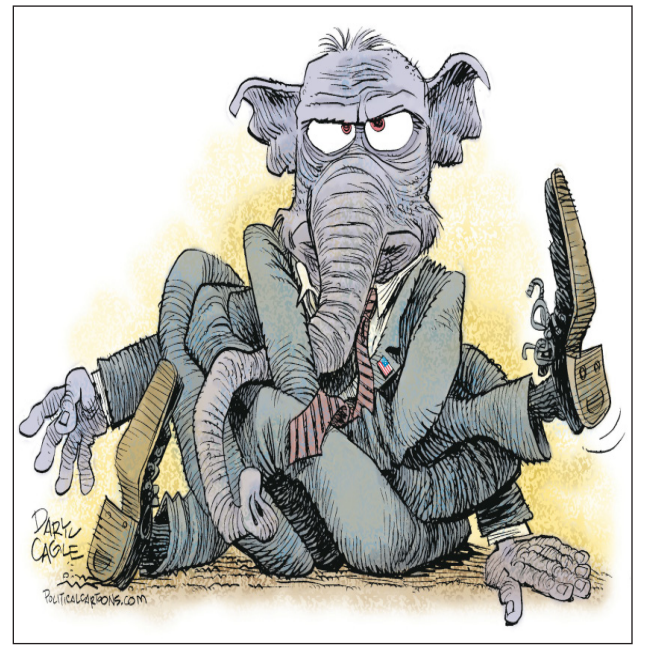
To me, they represent a hope for decency that I didn't quite believe still existed in this society.

As my father used to say, hope is the last thing to die.

It's on life support, but with these two, it's still breathing.

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