

I can recall a time, not all that long ago, when men and women of true principle and an honest sense of service to the people they represented filled the halls of Congress and worked side-by-side for the greater good. I knew them. My husband, Jim McClure, was one of them. Sadly, those days appear to be gone. Our nation's Capitol now seems to be consumed with partisan bickering and political game playing. It breaks my heart, as it would his.

Gone are the days when most Members of Congress knew one another's families, spent weekends together, traveled with one another and formed real relationships – regardless of party affiliation – so they were able to work together despite strong, differing opinions. Today, Members come home every weekend, are consumed by fundraising and the 24 hour news cycle, and don't spend time getting to know their colleagues or appreciating the diversity of opinion that is a hallmark of our nation. Rather than trying to understand one another, they seem to be yelling at each other when they should be discussing issues, solving problems and actually trying to govern our nation.

It's rare in Washington today to find someone willing to consider another's point of view. As Jim used to say, compromise is not a dirty word. Our leaders must have the courage to cast a tough vote when the nation's greater good demands it. Thankfully for Idaho, Mike Simpson has demonstrated the courage to do that.

I watched the most recent government shutdown and the flirtation with default on our debts with a great deal of frustration. I knew that when a final agreement emerged, as one inevitably would, the true statesmen in Congress would need to stand up and be counted instead of taking the easy way out and voting no on a bill they knew would pass anyway.

Mike Simpson put the country first by setting aside whatever political concerns he may have about his upcoming primary election and did what he felt was right for his constituents and our nation. The safe thing for him politically would have been to vote no and blame someone else for our troubles. Instead he did the right thing in the long term for our country, just like Jim McClure tried to do throughout his career.

The most recent crisis is not our nation's last. We must dig out of our \$17 trillion hole and work to create a sane and sustainable federal government. There are many more difficult votes to come, more compromises to be made, and more political grandstanding to be endured. We have huge problems as a nation and partisan bickering and one-upmanship can't solve them. We desperately need leaders who will do the hard thing when it is the right thing. Sinking the ship of state for the sake of principle is still sinking the ship of state after all.

I am grateful that Mike Simpson has the integrity to exercise leadership that will ensure that the long term interests of the people of Idaho and our nation are placed before his own. For that, I am enormously grateful. Jim would be proud.