

I'm not going to lie: the first time I saw "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," I missed half of lunch so I could finish the film in my eighth grade U.S. history class. Feeling all patriotic and teary-eyed afterward, I had a whole new respect for black and white movies, Jimmy Stewart and dare I say it — politicians.

Unfortunately, since then my interest in politics has dwindled while seemingly everyone else has become more and more passionate. Perhaps it's because both sides can spin their point of view for the better, or maybe it's because there is so much judgment and hatred between party lines. But most of all, it's because I'm sick of the inefficient and bull-crap bureaucracy of it all.

Instead, I spend my time discussing sports, following the teams that I love, drawing encouragement from the awe-inspiring stories and moments and conversing in friendly banter and fantasy competition. Except for a bit of occasional disconnect with political science majors, I have never experienced a problem with this life choice... until now. The joke that "the opposite of pro is con, so what's the opposite of progress?" has never rang so true.

In the U.S, it is a tradition for national championship teams to go meet the president at the White House. Since UC Irvine men's volleyball won the 2009 National Championship, they were due a trip to Washington D.C. But the House of Representatives had other ideas, apparently.

Californian Rep. John Campbell wrote the resolution to honor Coach John Speraw and his team. The shoo-in resolution however, was shot down by Rep. George Miller, who chairs the Education and Labor Committee. This because Campbell, as part of 168 other GOP dissenters, voted down Miller's completely separate Bay Area water recycling project.

In other words, Miller thought it was reasonable to retaliate at Campbell, voting down a resolution not because of its validity or merit, but because of a personal vendetta against the resolution writer.

Caught in the middle as an innocent bystander of everything is UCI captain Ryan Ammerman and the rest of the championship team. They are insignificant pawns in a battle for water crisis and fish preservation.

When questioned on his actions, a representative of Mr. Miller stated, “Mr. Campbell voted against Mr. Miller’s bill and helped defeat it. Mr. Miller believed that Mr. Campbell violated a basic element of courtesy among Members for purely partisan political reasons. Mr. Miller is objecting for the time being to Mr. Campbell’s bill being considered by the House. Perhaps the well-deserving UC Irvine Volleyball team should appeal to Mr. Campbell to get his priorities straight.”

The ludicrousness of the above statement is alarming. Didn’t anyone ever tell Mr. Miller that an eye for an eye makes the world blind? In any case, to turn down something so blatantly right —honoring a youthful championship team — is completely different than voting down a bill that Campbell legitimately did not wish to pass.

Miller is basically telling all the children in the world that it is completely fine to kick your sibling in the shins because they didn’t let you have a bite of the ice cream that you wanted so badly. What happened to mere reasoning, debating and proposing revised resolutions?

I have always heard that Congress was generally slow and caught up in formalities, but I have never heard something so childish and blatantly irrelevant. Even though UCI’s men’s volleyball team is not the most important thing in the state, who knows what other matters are falling by the wayside because of these silly actions from our Congressmen?

This sequence of events just fortifies my preference not to discuss political matters or be too invested in government issues. “The Payoff Pitch” is making an exception this time because the UCI volleyball team deserves better.