

Mr. FOGLIETTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for, first, giving me this opportunity to speak and, also as importantly, giving this House a right to revote the controversial issue of yesterday afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I come from the city of Philadelphia. I represent the First Congressional District, and in the heart of that district stands Independence Hall where the Constitution of the United States was written and adopted. The majority and minority leaders both spoke of matters dear to them. Let me say that the Constitution of the United States of America is also very dear to me.

The majority leader stated the facts as he knows them. However I was the subject, and I was here. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that I entered the Chamber. The gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] was standing toward the rear of the aisle, and, as I passed Mr. OBEY on my way to the well, Mr. OBEY yelled out to the Chairman, "One more vote, one more vote," which, according to custom over the years, has always allowed that Member to cast his or her vote. Mr. Speaker, I was denied that right.

We are talking about the amount of time that was involved. The Washington Post timed the vote and found that the vote was called 15 seconds prior to the expiration of 17 minutes. I ran to the well, wrote out my card, handed it to the Clerk. The Clerk actually had the card in his hand, and I was then denied to have my vote counted.

Mr. Speaker, that Constitution of which I spoke gives us as Americans some basic inalienable rights. One of the most important, one of the most basic of those rights, is the right of every American citizen to cast his or her vote, and, as importantly, it was the right, or is the right, of every American to have his or her Congressperson vote on their behalf in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that yesterday afternoon over 1 million Americans were denied their right to have their Representative cast votes on their behalf. One million Americans were disenfranchised by, I consider, a disgraceful display of arrogant, unconstitutional abuse of power.

Mr. Speaker, we might try to determine why this occurred. As you well know, the vote would have turned had I and the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] been allowed to vote. That is one of the reasons. The second reason I was not aware of until I left this Chamber is, as I left the Chamber, I walked out in front of the Capitol and there saw my colleagues from the majority side boarding buses to take them to the airport to take them to New York City for a fundraiser. Strangely enough, the New York Post, owned by one Rupert Murdoch, states in its column that the GOP went to great lengths to make sure that its Members got to the Big Apple on time. Was one of those great lengths to which the

GOP went the denial of Members of the right to vote and the denial of American citizens, of over 1 million American citizens, to have their Representative cast votes on their behalf?

I appreciate the fact that we are going to have a revote, and I would hope that this incident brings home the message to every Member of this House that what we do here is an important part of the American way of life. What we do in this body is a right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, and that constitutional right should remain inviolate no matter what the circumstances.

□ 1100

I would hope that after this incident, every Member will have the right to cast his or her votes on behalf of his or her constituents, the American citizens.

VOICE OF FREEDOM STILLED ON FLOOR OF HOUSE

(Under previous order of the House, Mr. HILLIARD was given permission to address the House for 5 minutes and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the floor of this House the voice of freedom was stilled by the forces of repression. The strong arms of the Republican army flexed their mighty parliamentary weight and refused to duly elected Members of this body, myself and the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOGLIETTA], the opportunity to vote before this Congress. In doing so, the Republicans crushed the very voice of democracy.

This is not Caesar's Rome, this is not Hitler's Germany, and this is definitely not Stalin's Russia. This is where the voices of freedom should reign. This is the birthplace of democracy.

This is America. We all must protect its democratic institutions, and especially its foundation, the right to vote. Our right to vote supersedes any party vote on any issue. We must preserve the integrity of the vote, and we must in this body aggressively champion the right to vote.

A revote is good. It does not show good faith. To me, being a politician for 22 years, it tells me that you are out to achieve your objective at any cost. Yesterday you could not win because there were two votes in this Chamber that would have made the difference, and there was no third vote, even though I realize that you have created one now. Because you did not have the votes yesterday, and because you have twisted arms last night and you have the votes today, you are ready to revote. To me, that is not good faith.

You, because you are the majority party, have a greater duty to preserve and protect this institution, and I suggest to you that you have failed to do that. The procedures of this institution must be protected at all costs. It should be beyond and above any objective of any party.

This morning, the Washington Post stated that you cut off the vote by 15 seconds. I heard you state that 10 seconds had elapsed. By our count, we had more than 30 seconds. By the Washington Post, which I would think would be independent of the Republican count or the Democratic count, you cut off and denied over 1 million people the right to vote by 15 seconds.

This is not democracy. In Alabama we do not even do this. Never do we openly take the rights of anyone to vote, and I would hate to think that this body is below that level. It cannot be, it should not be.

I suggest to you, because you have the votes and because you have been using the clock to manipulate that vote, you hold it open when you do not have the votes, you close it when you do, you win, the Republican Party wins. But I also suggest to you that every time you do it, democracy loses.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The Chair will accept fifteen 1-minute requests from each side.

DENYING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

(Mr. BONIOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, we have always known that the Republicans were willing to go to great lengths to pass their extremist agenda. I never thought that I would see the day when they would actually deny Members of this body the right to vote, but on the floor yesterday, a Democratic amendment was one vote, one vote, shy from victory. There were 15 seconds left. Two Democrats who had not voted were trying to vote, and they were cut off, denying 1 million people in this country representation.

Mr. Speaker, this is the most egregious and arrogant abuse of power that I have seen on our House floor. To top it all off, when Democrats tried to question the ruling, the Republicans adjourned early and jumped on buses. You know why? Where did they go? This poster points out where they went. They went to New York, by plane, got on a bus, took a plane, and raised \$1.7 million at a fund raiser.

Now, the Republicans are willing to shut down our voices, shut down our votes, and adjourn the House early, all so they can raise \$1.7 million from the special interests and the wealthy corporations. Welcome to the Gingrich revolution.

TRAMPLING DEMOCRACY

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday our Republican colleagues were in a rush to get to a big bucks fundraiser up in Manhattan, and democracy was trampled in their stampede to get to those big dollars. You can look at today's New York Post. You can see what it was all about. An all-star list of corporate bigwigs was slated to attend, the same corporate bigwigs that are being benefited by the tax shift to the superrich at the expense of people who want school lunches and the protection of Medicare. It is more of the same thing.

But it is a dark day indeed for democracy in this country when the rights not just of two Members, but over 1 million Americans to have their voice heard in this House, are trampled and cut off. And, amazingly, only moments before this occurred, in the Committee on Science on which I serve, in an incredible display of arrogance, there was an attempt to force people to vote there or vote here.

This is a true setback for democracy.

ADJOURNING EARLY

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, in my 13 years as a Member of Congress, I have never experienced what happened yesterday in this House. Instead of doing the people's business, this House adjourned yesterday at 3:50 in the afternoon, in the middle of a workday afternoon when most Americans are still on the job. Why? Money, and millions of dollars of it. That is right. Congress adjourned early yesterday so that Republican Members with Speaker GINGRICH at the helm could fly to New York to attend a GOP fundraiser aboard the Intrepid Sea and Air Space Museum, where wealthy givers paid \$1.7 million to hobnob with Republican Members who did not work a full day yesterday, but were not docked for their pay.

During the first 2 months of this year, the Republican Campaign Committee has raised over \$11 million. That is over \$123,000 a day. Maybe it is time to ask ourselves who is fighting for America here in Washington, and should not those Members who left early be docked on their pay?

GOP ABUSE OF POWER

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it seems only yesterday when the Republicans rode into town promising reform, but those days are long gone. Instead of reform, the new Republican majority has carried favor with the special interests, gagged debate, and yesterday denied Members of this body the right to vote.

Why did Republicans close a vote while two Democratic Members were

waiting to cast their ballots? Because they had a fundraiser to go to. Yes, the buses were idling outside waiting to squire them to the "Salute to Newt" fundraiser, featuring GOP poster boy Rupert Murdoch. The article in the Post today says "the GOP went to great lengths." Indeed, they went to great lengths to make sure that their Members got to the Big Apple on time.

Last November, the American people were promised that Government would be returned to them. But yesterday hundreds of thousands of American people were shut out of the people's House when their Representatives were denied the right to vote on their behalf. What we are seeing in this body is an arrogance of power, one of the most egregious abuses of power in our Nation's history.

THE FACTS BE DAMNED

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. My goodness, such self-righteous indignation over those big-money interests. It is a concept that the other side of the aisle has known nothing about for 40 years. But who for the past 40 years has been the champion of PAC money and collecting special interest money? It has not been this side of the aisle. It has been the Democrats. And yet now that the Republicans dare to have a fundraiser, a concept that the Democratic Party has never thought of one time in their life, we are destroying the work of the people's House. We are subverting democracy.

Dear Lord, there were two Democrats that were going to vote yesterday, but they were shut out. Be damned with the facts. Get behind us, facts. There was a Republican in the Chamber also, and the majority leader explained this yesterday. The Democrats would have lost.

But instead of sticking to the facts, they are relying on demagoguery, talking about Rupert Murdoch and other things that have absolutely nothing to do with the facts of what happened yesterday.

How absolutely irrelevant to what has been going on yesterday and what has been going on since we got here on January 4, 1995.

MEMBERS' RIGHTS MUST BE PRESERVED

(Mr. OBEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, in response to the previous statement by the gentleman who just spoke, let me say the issue is not whether the Republican Party held a fundraiser or not. That happens all the time on both sides of the aisle.

The issue, however, is whether it is in the democratic tradition, big American democratic tradition, not party, for the majority party to shut down this House and cut off an individual Member's right to vote so that they can get to a fundraiser in New York on time. The article in Mr. Murdoch's paper says the GOP "went to great lengths to make sure its Members got to the Big Apple on time."

This is the issue. Not whether you had a fundraiser, but whether you were so anxious to go grab the money, that you were willing to shortcircuit the democratic process in the doing. That is the issue.

CRYING LACK OF FAIR PLAY

(Mr. MCINNIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, first of all, in response to all this money-raising garbage, frankly, that I have been hearing this morning, how interesting it is that the President of your party tonight kicks off his fundraising. Do you want to dock his pay? One of your people just proposed you dock the pay for the time they spent. Take a look at that.

Second of all, to my colleague that was just preceding me, who talked about the cutoff of voting rights, why do you not bring the videotape up here and set up the TV camera? To my colleague, the videotape does not lie. They were in violation of the rule. They were not down here in the well. They had gone beyond the 17 minutes.

Do not cry lack of fair play. Bring up the video and show the American people the truth. Are you afraid to do that? Of course you are.

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A BAD DAY FOR THE CONSTITUTION

(Ms. ESHOO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, this morning I think that we should recall the words of a great woman of many, many years ago, Barbara Jordan, during the Watergate hearings, when she intoned the Constitution.

Yesterday was a bad day for the Constitution. Yesterday was a bad day for this card that we each have that the people of our respective congressional districts graced us with, the power to speak for them, the power to represent them with our vote. The Constitution. The Constitution.

Yesterday was a good day for fundraising. Yesterday was a bad day for democracy and for the Constitution and the power that the people gave us in the House of Representatives to cast our vote and to speak for them. Shame on those that would chip away at the Constitution.