

serious matter which should be a legislative priority in this House, because as you have just heard from the gentleman from Connecticut, it strikes at the very heart of what reform is supposed to be all about.

One of the first statements I made on this House floor last January was a support of House Resolution 40, which seeks to ban gifts to Members and staff from lobbyists and lobbying firms. This legislation would ban all meals, entertainment, travel, legal defense fund contributions and other gifts. It would get at the question of these weekend junkets to so-called charity tournaments.

I have personally pledged to follow the provisions of this gift ban whether or not it passes, and I have been doing so. The gift ban that 47 other Members and I have signed is far more stringent than the other body's proposal, and I still hope that other Members of this body will follow our lead by signing the gift ban. However, adopting the other body's proposal would be a strong first step, and it would tell the American people that we are serious about reforming the way the Congress operates, and that we are serious about restoring accountability to this House.

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Our counterparts in the other body have taken appropriate action and have passed the much needed gift ban and lobbying reform measures which ban gifts to Members and staff. However, as of today, the House has not voted to limit the value of gifts that a Member or staff can receive to \$100 a year. This House voted not to limit individual gifts, including meals, to \$50. This House has voted not to prohibit Members from accepting free travel to charity events such as golf and ski trips.

This House has not voted to narrowly define exactly what constitutes a lobbyist and require lobbyists to receive at least \$5,000 from any one client to register with the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate. These are things that this House has not done but needs to do.

In his State of the Union Message, President Clinton stated that what we do not need is a law for everything, and I agree with that, but, Mr. Speaker, today we have been given clear and convincing evidence that not all Members will take these actions voluntarily. I think, therefore, that we must enact proper legislation for those who are unwilling to do it on their own.

The time is long overdue for the House to pass real lobbying reform and gift ban measures and restore the people's trust in this body. The legislation passed in the other body is a strong first step and we should follow that example. I hope that this afternoon, when the amendment is offered, it will be ruled in order. I hope that with the rule not including the opportunity to offer this amendment, that the rule will be defeated. Now is the time for

meaningful lobbying reform and gift ban, and I hope that we can take this time to do it.

INFLUENCE OF LOBBYISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. BILBRAY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, it is quite invigorating to see Members of Congress coming back from time in their districts. It is as if they have gotten a breath of fresh air of reality every once in a while. And I guess that is the best thing about Members of Congress going back to their districts. They leave the stifling air of Washington, where people start believing their own lies, and they go and really touch base with the real people who make this country operate, not those of us that stay within the beltway.

I have to say, though, it is sort of interesting to see how fired up Members are at this time and then watch how it tapers off. I was quite interested in the gentlewoman from Colorado stating that somehow this Congress is not moving its budget agenda along quick enough, and that how previous Congresses had done it so much more quickly. Well, Mr. Speaker, I just wish to point out that the fact is, yes, previous Congresses have moved along the budget, but when you move garbage fast, it is still garbage. An unbalanced budget is an unbalanced budget.

We may be taking a little more time because we are doing something that has not been done in too long a period, and that is we are going to have a balanced budget design for the next 7 years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk about influence of lobbyists here in Congress. But I was here a year ago, and now I am here as a Member of Congress, and there is a big difference, and I want the members of the public to understand. You watch what is said and talked about here on the floor, but it is what happens off this floor that you really have to be aware of.

Those of you that are in the gallery, if you come down on this floor now you do not see the floor lined with lobbyists, you do not see Members of Congress having to run a gauntlet of influence peddlers trying to get to a Congress Member before they vote because the new majority, the new Republican majority has done what the Democratic majority refused to do for 40 years: Tell the lobbyists to get off this floor and leave it for legislation.

So all this talk about reducing the influence of lobbyists I think sounds great on the floor, but actions speak louder than words. And for those who want to come to Washington to see the difference, as a citizen I was shocked at how many lobbyists were on this floor a year ago. And as a legislator I am proud of what NEWT GINGRICH and the

leadership with Mr. ARMEY has done to make sure we straighten this out.

Mr. Speaker, I have here an edition of Surfer Magazine that was given to me by a surfer, \$35. It was a gift because they wanted me to read the environmental issues that surfers are concerned about. At the same time, a political action committee can donate almost \$10,000 to me politically every cycle. For the minority, the Democratic Party, to sit and say they want to limit the influence of lobbyists and special interests by talking about what kind of gifts we can take, when they are actively protecting the right of special interest groups to load money up into political action committees and drop thousands of dollars on us that an individual could not do, I think is really cynical.

I will leave this challenge to the new minority: That if you really wanted to limit the influence of special interest groups, let us support the Wamp Congress Act, ZACH WAMP's proposal, which means a political action committee can only give as much as an individual can give.

Let us empower individuals to influence Congress as much as we empower the political action committees and the special interest groups. Let us have the guts to really talk about it. You talk about the donation to this Member, but the fact is that \$10,000 around being pumped into a Member has a hell of a lot more influence than what anything we are talking about. I do not play golf, so I am not worried about this issue, but I do worry about the influence of political action committees.

I call on you to join with Members on both sides of the aisle in limiting the level of contributions that political action committee can make, and make it equal to what an individual citizen of the United States can make to a Member of Congress. Let us raise the individual contribution to \$2,000 for an individual and let us lower the political action committee's contribution to \$2,000, and then we can talk about what kind of influence the political action committees and the lobbyists have on this Congress.

We have cleared this floor of the lobbyists, let us clear the air. Let us not be self-righteous at this time and talk about a contribution from a surfing magazine. Let us talk about the thousands of dollars that political action committees pump into our campaigns, and let us all work together to limit that and encourage individual contributions, individual influence, not lobbyists' influence, not PAC influence.

LOBBY REFORM AND A GIFT BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to accept the challenge of the

last speaker, the gentleman from California. If he does not see enough lobbyists on the floor of this Congress or at the edges of this Congress, it is because in too many cases this new Republican Congress, instead of moving along fast enough, has moved along too slowly and has actually turned over the operation of some of the key parts of this Congress to the lobbyists.

In one case, in which I personally observed, the staff attorney for our committee was unable to respond to questions from members of the committee without turning over his shoulder and getting the answers from the lobbyists for the bill that was under consideration.

In one committee, the new Republican majority staff actually turned over computers, paid for with public expense, to the lobbyists who were writing the legislation. In another committee, a Republican lobbyist actually took the dais along with the Members of Congress that were considering the measure.

In fact, it has gotten so bad, a recent column in the Wall Street Journal was entitled "Special Interest or Feasting at the Congressional Trough." It is because we have not made enough progress in controlling lobby domination of this Congress and continued to not have sufficient change in this Congress that it is important today that opportunity has actually knocked a second time.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the leadership, to the continued leadership of my colleague and friend, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BRYANT], who spoke a few minutes earlier, we will have an opportunity today to consider again lobby reform and a gift ban. The first time that opportunity knocked at this Congress was that old Congress last year, and the Congress responded at that time in a bipartisan response, almost a three to one vote, in favor of a gift ban backed by Congressman BRYANT.

Today we will have an opportunity to consider a similar measure as opportunity knocks a second time. It is time that this Congress accepted that opportunity; and, indeed, Members on both sides of the aisle have said they want a gift ban. In October 1994, last year, on "Meet the Press," then-Congressman NEWT GINGRICH said, I quote, "I am prepared to pass a bill that bans lobbyists from dealing with Members of Congress in terms of gifts."

Unfortunately, Mr. GINGRICH did not say when he was prepared to pass that bill, but the when should be now. It should be today.

Since 1994, the Senate has, this summer, approved the very type of gift ban measure that it killed last year. It has approved a measure to plug the loopholes in an almost 50 year old lobby registration act, and it has approved a gift ban that is quite similar to that that Congressman BRYANT offered last year. It is long past time, in view of that Senate action, for this House to

act and send a message to those who come bearing gifts and bearing golf junkets, that things have really, in fact, changed in this Congress.

It is time to let the people back home, whom we represent, know that our standard of integrity is high and that we are committed to seriously and diligently working to support the public interest, not just the interest with the person who has got the largest charge limit on their gold card.

Yes, Congressman GINGRICH said he was prepared to pass a gift ban, but where is Speaker GINGRICH on this issue? Well, we need look no further than the words again on "Meet the Press" in July, just after the Senate passed the measure this summer of the Republican majority leader DICK ARMEY, and he said, and I quote:

I intend to get a gift ban as soon as we can, but we are going to attend to the Nation's business first. When we have an opportunity, when there is room on the schedule, I want that up, but I am not sure I will find time this year.

I would submit that the gentleman has got the priorities all backward. How is it that we are ever going to get to a fair consideration of the Nation's business unless we have reformed our lobby and gift provisions to assure that the Nation's business is really the business of the people of this country rather than the special interests who have enjoyed too much power here in the Nation's Capital.

Yes, these Republican leaders talk and talk of gift ban and lobby reform, but it seems that all we hear is the whistle of some day. Some day over the rainbow they will get around to really taking action and doing something about meaningful gift ban and lobby reform. I believe that we do not need to go down the yellow brick road with them. What we need to do is to act today, and we will have an opportunity this evening, a second opportunity to do something about the gift ban.

As a new Member of this House, I am committed to constructive change, and my main complaint about the Republican majority, when it comes to the way this House operates, is not that they have changed too much the operation of the House, but they have changed too little. They have never really gotten to grips with the matter of campaign finance reform, lobby reform, or gift ban reform. They are setting the agenda. There is no reason that those items could not have been considered. Indeed, some of us sought to have them considered on the very first day of this Congress.

The time for action is now on meaningful gift ban and lobby reform. Let us get about the public's business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DURBIN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CONGRESSIONAL REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Welcome back, Mr. Speaker. First day of Congress everybody is back. Kind of like the first day of school, bringing your book bag, your pencils, your agenda, our schedule for the upcoming semester, but there is one problem. You look at the schedule and the schedule does not reflect what you may have heard in the district about what people think ought to be done.

You know, while I was home and participating in town meetings, and particularly a lot of talk shows, there are two questions that came up a lot. Why is there going to be a train wreck, and when the train wreck comes on October 1, because the Federal budget has not been approved and the 137 appropriation bills have not been approved, what is going to happen? That is No. 1. And No. 2 is, when is there going to be some real congressional reform?

Two questions: Why is there going to be a train wreck and when is there going to be true congressional reform?

What is going to be the first bill that this House takes up today to deal with that? It does not deal with the train wreck and it does not deal with congressional reform. The one bill that is going to pass and get sent to the President is a bill that keeps Congress operating. To heck with the rest of the Federal Government, to heck with law enforcement, to heck with the veterans, to heck with sending out the Social Security checks, the heck with health care, the heck with all of that. Keep Congress operating. Keep the Congress budget intact. That is the bill that is being brought to the floor today by the Republican representative illusionary leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I think that people think that Congress ought to stand in line with everybody else, and then if there is going to be a shutdown in Government, Congress ought to be affected in the same way that everybody else is, not putting itself ahead. However, that is bad enough, but if we could make it better, at least attach lobby reform.

I have been interested to hear some of the new Members from the other side of the aisle come down and talk about how they felt lobby reform was important or was not important. They failed to point out that last year lobby reform passed on this House and, as I recall, twice in a bipartisan majority, and sent over to the Senate where it was filibustered by Republican Members.

Let us give the Senate credit this time. They passed lobby reform about a month ago, 98 to zip. That is right, 98 to zero: lobby reform, banning gifts from lobbyists, reining in and stopping the free trips, the junkets and those types of things. They passed it.

What about this House of Representatives? They will not let it be on this