

There is even a bill proposing a constitutional amendment to put limits on campaign spending.

Clearly, the membership of this House is ready to tackle the issue of campaign finance reform and get a bill passed by July 4, the deadline set by the President. It is my sincere hope, Mr. Speaker, that the leadership, the Republican leadership, are ready to meet the President's challenge because I think it is clearly one of the most important issues facing this Congress this session.

HOUSING HOPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized during morning hour debates for 1 minute.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, Housing Hope is an organization founded in 1987 by a consortium of churches concerned about homelessness. From its humble beginnings 10 years ago, it has now become a leader in providing affordable housing to homeless families in Everett, WA, in my district.

Working cooperatively with churches, labor unions, banks, corporations, and government agencies, Housing Hope has launched a \$3.2 million housing development to provide transitional shelter for the homeless, child care facilities, and permanent homes for low-income families. This public-private partnership is a model for the rest of the Nation.

In 1995, for their volunteer efforts on Housing Hope, I nominated members of a union in my district for an award. I am gratified that the President saw the vision Housing Hope is building and presented the union with a Presidential Point-of-Light Award.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking.

Last week in this very Chamber, the President called for Congress to pass campaign finance reform by July 4. The President and, most importantly, the American people are committed to meeting that deadline. That is only 143 days away. History shows us we have the support to meet that deadline if the people in charge of the schedule do not drop the ball.

In the 103d, the 102d, and the 101st Congresses, the Democrats were able to corral enough votes in both Chambers to pass legislation to fix the system. A Presidential veto stopped us once, a veto threat stopped us another time and a Republican filibuster in the Senate stopped it a third time.

The burden now rests with the current Republican leadership to keep

campaign finance reform on track. All of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, have a golden opportunity to at long last correct problems that have plagued this system for far too long. Let us not lose it because of stalling tactics or partisan political games.

The American people are looking for results. Their confidence in our election system depends on it. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking.

COMMENDING MILLER WILLIAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commend a distinguished Arkansas writer and teacher, Miller Williams, who recently composed a poem for President Clinton's reinauguration ceremony.

Mr. Williams, a professor of literature at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville is the author of more than 20 outstanding books of scholarship and poetry. I can add little to the national chorus of praise his colleagues, students, and readers have already offered. His peers have recognized his talent with such prestigious awards as the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Prix de Rome.

In composing a poem for President Clinton's inauguration, Mr. Williams joined the select company of two other great American poets: Fellow Arkansan Maya Angelou and the New England poet Robert Frost.

In his inaugural poem, "Of History and Hope," Mr. Williams celebrates the American tradition of memorializing our past through stories and songs. I congratulate him for his own lyrical and provocative contributions to our Nation's understanding.

I also wanted to say that the people of Arkansas are proud of this contribution. But I also commend him for his contributions to our youth. Mr. Williams has spent nearly 30 years helping students to examine themselves and the history they will inherit. As he suggests in his poem, we cannot control the future. We can only hope to equip the next generations with resources that they will need to make the right decisions. For helping us in this endeavor I offer my thanks and gratitude to Mr. Williams.

MORE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, last week the President of the United States came to this Chamber, and he challenged us to give him a comprehensive campaign reform bill by July 4 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I responded the next day by introducing the campaign finance reform bill, H.R. 600. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you are committed to campaign finance reform, as your handshake with the President a year ago would lead us to believe, then I would urge you to take up this call and this bill and bring it to the House floor.

Daily we are greeted with headlines in newspapers with stories about questionable campaign practices. Regularly we are confronted by our constituents asking for sanity in the election process.

Always we are faced with the burden of our own campaign needs and how to meet them in a way that does not destroy the faith in the political process. We need campaign finance reform, and we need it now.

H.R. 600 is one of the bills introduced in this House. It embodies comprehensive reform, and it meets the principles of reform that we can all embrace. First it is fair. Real reform does not favor one party over another or one candidate over another.

Second, it reduces the influence of special interests. Political action limits, limits on large donors and the elimination of soft money can accomplish this.

Third, it must be a level playing field. That is, campaigns are made to be competitive by enhancing spending limits.

Fourth, there must be access to this body and to this system by nontraditional candidates. Women and minority candidates should be able to run as easily as anyone else.

Mr. Speaker, many of us wrote you a letter requesting action on campaign finance reform within the first 100 days of this session. The President would like to sign the bill on July 4.

You can make it happen if you are committed to reform. I am. The question is, are you? What day will we vote on campaign reform? The Nation is waiting for your answer.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IN 105TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues who preceded me in the well have pointed out, one of most important items on the agenda of this Congress is campaign finance reform. Until we are able to reform this system, we will not regain the confidence of the American people that there is a level playing field in the Congress of the United States for the average American and the special interests.

Day after day the press reports to us of special accommodations that are given to those with the most money invested in campaigns of Members of

Congress, Members of the Senate, members of the administration and members of the opposing party in the Presidential campaign. It is very clear that these reports are making the people even more cynical about our political system than they are today.

Our obligation is to report campaign finance reform from the House of Representatives to the Senate at the earliest possible date. The reason we must do that is that, time and again, the delay of consideration of campaign finance reform not only changes the likelihood that it will ever become law but, should it become law, it postpones it through one more cycle of campaigns.

If we do not do campaign finance reform very quickly in the House and in the Senate, pretty soon Members will say, it cannot take effect in 1998, it must take effect 4 years from now. And then we go through an entire new cycle of the outrageous sums of money that are being lavished on campaigns in this country.

That is why we are pleading with the Republican leadership and the Speaker of the House to schedule campaign finance reform. The President has asked that it be done by July 4. Over 100 Members of this body sent both the Speaker of the House and the minority leader of the House a letter asking that we do it in the first 100 days.

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Two years ago we saw a very aggressive legislative agenda for the first 100 days of that Congress. That Congress worked more hours, took more votes and passed more legislation in that 100 days, I believe than any other Congress in history.

Now we come to this Congress. Today is the 9th legislative day. We are in session today. We have no votes today. It is the 9th legislative day; however, today is in fact the 26th calendar day of the year. We have chosen to be in session 9 of those days.

If we comply with the President's request and pass campaign finance reform by July 4, it will be the 129th calendar day of this session, but under our current schedule it will be only the 63d legislative day of the year. I think we can start to see that the Congress is meeting less than 1 out of every 2 days.

If we ask that we do it in the first 100 days, the 100th day would be May 26 of this year. But if we go under the current schedule put forth by the Republican leadership, the 100th day will be October 14. That will signal that campaign finance reform is going to die.

We have got to do better than working every other day or every third day on behalf of the issue of campaign finance reform. Clearly this is an issue where people have studied it for many years.

As my colleagues have pointed out, there are many proposals, many of which Members of this body can live with, many which would improve the system, many of which would make the

system more transparent and open to public scrutiny. We ought to move on that agenda, and we ought to move with the dispatch of at least what the President asked for or what the Members of this Congress have asked for, in the first 100 days.

If we do not, if we do not, soon we will be talking not about campaign finance reform for the next election but we will be talking about it for the election after that. And what will happen if that happens is we will continue the corrosive impact of campaign contributions on the workings of this institution.

Very often the press likes to talk about a vote that has been taken and the money that has been given. But we all understand that there are a whole other series of decisions made. Some are public and some are not. It is not just about what we do, it is not just about the vote we take. It is about the issue not presented to the Congress, it is about the vote not taken, it is about the amendment not offered.

Today too many of those decisions are being influenced by the promise of campaign contributions or the receipt of campaign contributions in the past. We must take that away from this institution. We must return this institution back to a level playing field so that the average person in this country will have confidence that our decisions are made on the level, and that they are made on the merits and not based upon who received what money in what amount to vote one way or the other on a given issue or not to have an issue considered.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We are aware, O gracious God, that Your Spirit can minister to us in the depths of our hearts, that Your amazing grace can give us comfort and peace that passes all human understanding. We pray this day for all those who desire a full measure of Your blessings that they will receive all the gifts of faith and hope and love. May the fellowship of Your Spirit so live in the minds and souls of those who call upon You, that Your will may be done on Earth as it is in heaven. In Your name we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAPPAS] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PAPPAS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to section 103, Public Law 99-371 (20 U.S.C. 4303), the Chair appoints as a member of the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University the following Member of the House: Mr. LAHOOD of Illinois.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HARRY S. TRUMAN SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the provisions of section 5(b) of Public Law 93-642 (20 U.S.C. 2004(b)), the Chair appoints as members of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation the following Members of the House: Mrs. EMERSON, of Missouri, and Mr. SKELTON, of Missouri.

THOMAS ALVA EDISON

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

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, today is the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of our Nation's foremost technology pioneers, Thomas Alva Edison. In Ft. Myers, FL, the site of his winter home for some 45 years, we hold the annual Festival of Light celebrating his remarkable contribution to modern society.

With more than a thousand patents, Edison was certainly a prolific inventor, but more importantly his inventions revolutionized our everyday lives. The light bulb. The phonograph. Wax paper. An electronic voting machine that we use here in-house. As he put it, "I find out what the world needs. Then I go ahead and try and invent it." What a refreshing thought.

The enduring spirit of the independent inventor was brought to life by people like Thomas Edison. I join the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. GILLMOR] today in introducing legislation to authorize a commemorative coin whose