

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

proceeds will support the historical organizations dedicated to Thomas Edison's legacy. I hope all of my colleagues will support this bill.

COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, when the Republicans were in the minority, they would often challenge the Democratic leadership of the House to implement comprehensive campaign finance reform. We are now in the 3d year of the Republican majority, and the Speaker in fact has only brought one campaign finance reform bill to the floor, a bill, and I should mention that the Republican leadership knew would fail, and did in fact fail by over 250 votes. I guess the Republicans' fervent quest for reform has been tempered by the power of being in the majority.

Campaign finance reform again is not a new issue to this Congress by any means. In fact, the House had passed a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill when Democrats were in the majority, but, as I mentioned previously, this was vetoed by President Bush.

Last week President Clinton came to this Chamber and challenged this House to pass meaningful campaign finance reform. He made it a priority of his administration. He set July 4 as the deadline. I believe the House can certainly pass reform legislation by then. I think it would be a true test of our democracy, and it certainly is a challenge we must face this session.

CAPITAL GAINS TAXES

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

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, on my first day as a Member of Congress, I kept a pledge to the people of my district to introduce legislation that would improve the quality of their lives. My legislation reduces the capital gains tax by 50 percent and seeks to eventually eliminate it.

All over central New Jersey, I have been told that overtaxation is a huge problem. I have had people tell me that they are not going to sell their homes or businesses until Congress acts.

People and businesses create jobs, not the government. Lower capital gains taxes leave more capital in the hands of businesses, entrepreneurs and individuals who create and expand businesses and jobs.

A New Jersey painting contractor was quoted in an article in the Washington Post as saying:

You're looking at a poor man who thinks the capital gains tax is the best thing that could happen to this country, because that's when the work will come back. People say capital gains are for the rich, but I've never been hired by a poor man.

The growth of our Nation's economy can be vibrant and grow if we are only willing to allow it to happen. Pass capital gains tax reform.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

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

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, 1 week ago tonight the President underscored the importance of education. Education must be paramount and we must do whatever we can to help our children which is the wisest investment that we can make for tomorrow.

This investment has three callings for us: concern, commitment, and character. First, we should show our concern by contacting our local schools now and finding out how we can best help our teachers. Second, we should be committed. For the last 16 years I have gone into the classroom to volunteer and to work with our kids. Are we as business leaders willing to take the time to go and be role models for our children?

And third, we should be building character. Next week in our district we will have an electronic classroom that will go throughout the whole district to address children and to help bring them together with technology to talk about respect and responsibility, important ingredients for the citizens of tomorrow.

These are the three callings that we must answer. We must be ready with concern, commitment, and character and do what we can do now to help education on the local level.

RESPONDING TO PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, first let me salute all the many veterans that I have had the opportunity to see today who are expressing their views and pay tribute to them certainly for their service to their country. It is for that reason that I rise to talk about giving this House back to the people of this Nation.

Even though we have heard so much talk about campaign finance reform, the real question will be whether we will be serious as a bipartisan body to address this issue. Although I will say to you that most Americans will say just do a good job, recognizing that each individual Congressperson that represents their district does the very best they can and is assessed by the people who vote them in, but they do want us to come to the understanding that people control this House and not money.

At the same time I think it is important that those who want to express

their interest by supporting candidates should have the opportunity. I am glad to support the Farr bill which is a bipartisan approach to real campaign reform. It sets limits. It allows us to access the telecommunication highways, if you will, to communicate to the public. And, yes, it allows PAC's that represent people to participate. Let us come together by July 4 and give real independence and vote for real campaign finance reform.

Mr. Speaker, I come before the House this morning to urge my colleagues to respond to the President's call to enact comprehensive campaign finance reform by July 4 of this year. This House in which we are all privileged to serve, is the people's House. It belongs to all of the citizens of this Nation and these citizens are calling out to their congressional Representatives to restore their confidence in Congress' ability to act for the good of the Nation. During the congressional cycle of 1996 we saw unprecedented amounts of money spent on these elections, which only heightened public cynicism regarding how our democracy works.

If comprehensive campaign finance reform is enacted by the July 4 deadline set by the President, American citizens will truly be able to celebrate Independence Day. It will be independence from excessive fundraising by candidates running for political office. Independence from outside organizations having such a large and overwhelming impact on the electoral process simply because they have spent huge sums of money. Mr. Speaker, the people of the 18th District of Texas in which I am honored to represent want this House returned to the people. Let's have a real Independence Day this year. Let's not let partisan politics get in the way. Let's enact real comprehensive campaign finance reform and have a real Independence Day.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. AMBASSADOR CARL B. STOKES

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory and the accomplishments of U.S. Ambassador Carl B. Stokes who passed away in 1996 after a long and distinguished career as a political leader. The world will always remember him as the first African American mayor of a major American city. I will always remember him as a friend, a confidante, and a mentor who helped me navigate the rough waters of Cleveland politics.

Carl B. Stokes was born in 1927, the son of a laundry worker who died when he was 2 years old. His mother worked as a domestic. He and his brother, the Honorable LOUIS STOKES, who serves as Congressman, worked in neighborhood stores and delivered newspapers to help the family.

Over the years Carl Stokes excelled in many aspects of life: as a soldier during World War II; as a middleweight boxing champion in 1948; as an attorney and investigator for the Ohio Department of Liquor Control. In 1962, he