

HOUSE NEEDS TO CONDUCT HEARINGS TO EXAMINE ELEMENTS OF PROPOSED TOBACCO SETTLEMENT

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Congress should not rubber stamp the recently proposed tobacco settlement that benefits the tobacco industry more than the public. As I understand it, the settlement will give tobacco companies immunity from liability, enable companies to prevent disclosure of potentially revealing documents, provide a financial windfall for company executives through increased stock options, restrict future Food and Drug Administration regulation, and not adequately accomplish the goal of reducing teenage smoking.

Mr. Speaker, today my Senator from New Jersey, Senator LAUTENBERG, launched a campaign to gain access to tobacco industry documents that could remain under wraps if the agreement gains the approval of Congress. I support that effort, and I think the House also should support that effort.

Much work needs to be done, and I think that Congress, and particularly the House, needs to move forward with hearings to further examine the elements of this tobacco settlement. As it stands now, the settlement is a winner for the tobacco industry and a loser for our children. Let us work to change that outcome.

SUPPORT SCHOOL CHOICE AND EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, education funding has been on the rise for years, but we have not seen improvement in our public schools. SAT scores are down, and dissatisfaction is growing among teachers, parents, and students. Still we just keep throwing money at a broken wheel. It is time to fix the wheel and stop putting taxpayers' dollars in a bottomless pit.

Two reform measures, school choice and education savings accounts, can help get America's education system back on track. These ideas give parents the freedom to choose the best schools for their children's education and to save for their children's future. School choice and education savings accounts are the reforms we need to finally begin to fix education in America.

Mr. Speaker, these ideas are the free-market solution to a very serious problem. These solutions are right for parents and children throughout our Nation. For the sake of education in America, I urge my colleagues to support school choice and education savings accounts.

RIGHT ON, MRS. BARRON

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, on the advice of their accountant, the Barrons of New Hampshire took an \$80,000 investment loss. Years later, the IRS came in, they said no, and they hit the Barrons with a \$330,000 tag in penalties and interest; \$330,000, unbelievable. The pressure was so great Bruce Barron killed himself. After the death, the IRS took the home, took everything they had.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker.

Under a new law, Mrs. Barron is suing the IRS, and I say, right on. I hope the IRS gets their assets kicked all the way up to their gestapo tactics. The IRS, after all, has deserved it; the IRS has earned it.

Think about it, Congress, and I yield back all the rest of that IRS loan sharking and ripoffs of interest and penalties.

OPPOSE H.R. 1270, THE NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, while Members of this House were in their districts during the August recess, ABC News reported to a national television audience just what I have been saying in this very well for the past 8 months, that despite numerous scientific evidence to the contrary, the Federal Government is going to find Yucca Mountain, NV, as a suitable site for nuclear waste storage.

The news report highlighted that despite problems with fragile rock formation, migrating groundwater, volcanoes, and active earthquakes, Federal agencies always find a way to ignore them first by lowering the standards and then by lowering the safety standards to the site suitability. More than \$3 billion has already been spent on Yucca Mountain, and the site has been found to be scientifically unsuitable.

Later this year, Congress will consider a bill that proposes we spend billions more of taxpayer dollars to fund another study that will tell Washington bureaucrats just what they want to hear. This is not just a Nevada issue; this is an issue of safety for all Americans. I urge my colleagues to get the true facts and oppose the H.R. 1270.

KOREAN AIR FLIGHT 801 TRAGEDY

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, while the rest of the Nation has turned its attention to other matters, we on Guam are still reeling from the worst air disaster of our island's history. On August 6, 1997, a Korean Air 747 en route from Seoul crashed into a hill 3 miles short of the runway of the Won

Pat International Airport on Guam. The jet carried 254 people, with 227 having perished.

I rise today to express the condolences of the people of Guam to the victims' families. We share their pain most intimately not because the crash occurred on Guam, but also because the people on that plane were not entirely strangers. Amongst the dead, eight were returning Guam residents of Korean decent. Amongst the survivors, there were four returning home.

I would also like to draw this body's attention not only to the grieving families, but also to the men and women who spent countless hours in search and rescue efforts as well as family assisting actions. The NTSB's efficient investigation of the airline's crash is exemplary. However, a tragedy of this magnitude leaves many questions unanswered. I strongly urge a public hearing on the crash of KAL 801 to be held on Guam.

URGING CORRECTION OF FEDERAL JUDGE'S DECISION REGARDING FORESTS IN EAST TEXAS

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

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Speaker, during the district work period this August, my wife and I spent a few days among the beautiful forests in our national parks, but I am deeply disturbed by a decision, another out test decision by a Federal judge in Beaumont, who decreed because he disagreed with how our Forest Service is managing parts of the lands in Texas, he called and ordered an injunction, halted all logging among our east Texas forests.

This action, irresponsible and damaging, not only causes the Federal Government to fault on our contracts to small businesses, it has stopped our small businesses in Texas affiliated with lumber and timber. It is hurting the counties, 12 east Texas counties. They rely upon that \$4 million to help balance their budget every year. And, in fact, it is an impediment to those of us who seek a balance among our environmental assets, who seek to have a forest and parks and lands in our country that is properly managed. It is a disturbing action by a Federal judge and one we ought to take action to correct.

THE FAMOUS AVOIDANCE GAME ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no more important issue for this Congress to address in the waning hours than the need to reform our corrupt campaign finance laws.

As my colleagues will recall, many of us have called upon Speaker GINGRICH to schedule a vote this month on legislation to ban the large, unregulated financial contributions to political parties known as soft money. These contributions of \$25,000, \$100,000, and even \$1 million from a single individual representing some particular special interest have helped to ruin our electoral and legislative process. Despite our repeated requests for a vote and despite the Speaker's own pledge of support, there has been no vote scheduled on a soft money ban or any other campaign finance reform.

My colleagues and our Speaker should be aware that we are prepared to use all our means at our disposal to force a vote this month. No more business as usual, Mr. Speaker. The famous avoidance game on this issue is no longer acceptable. Our ability to honestly represent our constituents depends on our success and reforming the campaign finance laws.

Already there is talk of adjourning the Congress as soon as possible to avoid addressing this issue. Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable. We will not accept such a cowardice position and the protectionism of special interests.

LEGISLATION TO ENSURE NO GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

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

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, very shortly now, September 30, the fiscal year, the current fiscal year, will end. For a decade now, I have been proposing legislation that when such an event occurs, and it has occurred too often without new appropriations taking their place, a new budget in place, a Government shutdown is in the foreseeable future.

The legislation that I have proposed would end that phenomenon by saying when at the end of the fiscal year no budget has been put in place, then last year's appropriations will automatically go into effect until a new budget takes effect.

We have had the Congress of the United States just a few months ago pass such legislation only to be vetoed by the President. It is now time to say, "I told you so; we're facing another Government shutdown."

The chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations will do all in his power, I am sure, to prevent such an event, but my legislation would provide insurance that no Government shutdown would occur.

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RETURN POLITICAL POWER WHERE IT BELONGS

(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, in the first half of 1996, the tobacco industry donated over \$1 million to the Republican Party. Last month Speaker GINGRICH and his Republican colleagues returned the favor. Republican Members snuck into the balanced budget bill a \$50 billion credit provision for tobacco companies, my friends, not a bad return on their \$1 million donation.

Yesterday's Wall Street Journal reported from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids that 83 percent of the Members from the other body took tobacco money last year, and they voted against increasing funding to crack down on illegal sales of tobacco to minors.

It is no wonder the American people have lost faith in their political system. It is time for Congress to ban soft money contributions to political parties and restore some integrity to our campaign finance system.

Democrats are asking Speaker GINGRICH to schedule a vote this month to ban soft money. The American people should not have to wait any longer.

We need to take this important first step. Let us take the influence out of the hands of the wealthy and the special interests. We need to return political power in this Nation to where it rightly belongs, in the hands of average working Americans.

BRING ABOUT CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM NOW

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, when I think of the unexplained delay in considering campaign finance reform, I am forced to ask myself the same question over and over again: Why is it taking so long to do what we promised the American people in 1996?

It is obvious that the American people want campaign finance reform. The President and the Speaker shook hands over 2 years ago committing themselves to reforming the system and, according to the rhetoric in Congress, many of my colleagues want the same thing. Yet, no campaign finance reform legislation is on the agenda, and many news reports indicate that after the consideration of the remaining appropriation acts, as early as October 11, the House will adjourn for the year. Roll Call says it will be the fastest session since 1965.

I think we still have time to consider this important issue. What we need is the commitment of the Republican leadership of the House. We can no longer tolerate the rhetoric without action on this issue.

The Speaker has left us no choice: We have declared September Ban Soft Money Month, and we will do everything in our power to raise this issue on the floor. We must do it before the 1998 election.

CLOSE SOFT MONEY LOOPHOLE

(Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to read in Tuesday's Congress Daily the top Republican lawmakers were not going to make passing campaign finance reform a priority this session.

It is time to recognize there are no more legitimate excuses why this body has not acted on this issue. The American people want it, the political process needs it, and we have a good legislative vehicle to make it happen, thanks to a recently introduced bill by a bipartisan freshman task force.

Our Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act would take an important first step toward reforming the political process by banning soft money contributions. Soft money contributions allow individuals, corporations, and other organizations to give unlimited amounts of money to influence Federal elections.

It is time to close the soft money loophole and pass meaningful campaign finance reform.

TIME TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT BANNING SOFT MONEY

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, before Congress departed for the August recess, I joined with 25 of my House colleagues in writing to Speaker GINGRICH demanding a vote this month on banning soft money contributions to political parties. In our letter, we warned that failure to schedule such a vote would cause us to use every tool at our disposal to force consideration of this all-important campaign finance reform.

Mr. Speaker, it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that our current campaign finance system is broken and needs to be fixed. Every day the newspapers are filled with stories detailing how unregulated soft money contributions have corrupted our political system and are threatening to undermine the very essence of our democracy.

Clearly, we need real, comprehensive campaign finance reform, and we need it now, but Speaker Gingrich has refused to give us a day to vote even on this most basic of reforms.

Mr. Speaker, give us a vote on real campaign finance reform, or at least give us a vote to ban soft money. It is the right thing to do; it is what the American people want.

LIVE BY LAWS PRESENTLY ON THE BOOKS

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