

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.

□ 1230

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.)

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I hear this call for campaign finance reform. We can pass all the laws in the world, but if some people are not going to live by the laws on the books, what point is it to change the law?

Now, it was not the Republicans that invited people into the White House at \$50,000 a pop for the Lincoln Bedroom. It was not Republicans who dealt with arms merchants, foreign agents, and narcotics dealers, and had their pictures taken for massive amounts of money. All of those things are against the law. It was not Republicans that made phone calls out of the White House, against the advice of the counsel to the White House.

And yet they say they want to change the law. For what purpose? It is time they obeyed the law on the books.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2016, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2016) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, disagree to the Senate amendments, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. HEFNER

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. HEFNER moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 2016, be instructed to insist on the House position with respect to funding for Family Housing, Dormitories and Barracks for military personnel serving worldwide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER] will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from California [Mr. PACKARD] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER].

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, when the House passed the military construction bill, it included funding for many important projects for family housing, barracks, and dormitories. By a vote of 395 to 134, we agreed to place a high priority on the quality of life of our men and women in the military and their families as they serve us around the world.

The other body, however, does not seem to feel as we do; \$145 million was cut for family housing and \$65 million was cut from barracks. We give them the best training in the world, but with

the lack of decent housing, we cannot get them to reenlist in the services.

These young men and women are sent to the far corners of the world, but we cannot provide proper care and a proper place for them to live. Whether it is a base near your district or in Korea or Germany, these people deserve adequate housing.

My motion, Mr. Speaker, provides specific direction to the conferees to make certain that in resolving the differences between the House and the other body, a high priority is given to the quality of life of the men and women serving us in the military.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2016, and that I may include tabular and extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on the motion to instruct, I wholeheartedly agree with the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER]. We have made a very, very significant step forward in the House bill to emphasize quality-of-life issues, housing, barracks, day care centers, hospitals, dental centers, and a variety of other areas to make life more pleasant and agreeable for our men and women in the services. So we have built our bill, the House bill, around these basic concepts of emphasizing quality of life.

This motion to instruct simply restates what we agreed to do in our committee as we wrote and marked up our bill to this point. I deeply appreciate the efforts of the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER] to continue to emphasize these quality-of-life principles as we go to conference. I hope the Senate will agree with our concepts of what is important.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with the motion to instruct and recommend that it pass.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER].

The motion to instruct was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

Messrs: PACKARD, PORTER, HOBSON, WICKER, KINGSTON, PARKER, TIAHRT, WAMP, LIVINGSTON, HEFNER, OLVER, EDWARDS, DICKS, HOYER, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2158, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2158) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, disagree to the Senate amendments and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. STOKES

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. STOKES moves that the managers on the part of the House be instructed to insist on the position of the House regarding the total funding level provided for the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Hazardous Substance Superfund' account.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] will be recognized for 30 minutes and the gentleman from California [Mr. LEWIS] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES].

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, nearly one person in four in this country lives close to a Superfund site. We know all too well what the result of that fact is: too many reported cases of cancer and other diseases caused by breathing, eating, and drinking too many hazardous contaminants.

This motion is pretty simple. If you want to be on record for doing as much as possible to clean up Superfund sites around the country and reduce the amounts of hazardous pollutants to which your constituents are exposed, you vote for this motion.

Supporting this motion does not bust the budget. Although the budget resolution assumed funding for the Superfund program at the enhanced level of \$2.1 billion, the level called for by the administration as part of the so-called Kalamazoo initiative, the House level is still \$600 million below that.

The total Superfund spending in the House-passed bill is \$1.5 billion, compared with \$1.4 billion in the Senate. The House amount is definitely superior to the Senate's recommendation in several ways: The House version provides \$28 million, or 14 percent more,