

against bipartisan reform sponsored by Republicans and Democrats, and backed by most every good government organization in this country.

With that background, it is very troubling to hear now the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) announce in the first month of his speakership that he would put this vital issue on the back burner. We need an end to obstructionism and some real bipartisan reform.

LET US HAVE TRUE BIPARTISANSHIP AND TRUE REFORM

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise that my colleagues on the left want to posture in the name of reform. After all, they, and to tell the truth, all the American people, have been embarrassed by an administration that took campaign donations from the People's Republic of China. That is despicable. So we would ask in a bipartisan fashion that they join with us to get to the bottom of Chinese influence on our government and on our political system, and that is the real step to reform.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would ask my friends on the left to give the working men and women of America who happen to belong to unions the right to devote their union dues directly to collective bargaining, instead of going into the campaign coffers of liberal interest groups. That is another real step for reform.

Let us have true bipartisanship and true reform, quit the preening and posturing, and stand up for America.

TIME FOR MEANINGFUL AND TIMELY DEBATE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, during the last Congress the Republican leadership attempted to block the passage of meaningful campaign finance reform. But the freshman class of 1996, Democrats and Republicans, worked together on a bipartisan basis with the Shays-Meehan bill to force the issue. We ultimately succeeded in bringing an open debate on this issue to the Floor of the House.

We thought we had demonstrated the importance to the American people of taking up campaign finance reform, but once again the Republican leadership does not fully appreciate the magnitude of this issue.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Shays-Meehan bill. We must ban soft money and find a way to regulate sham issue ads. Soft money contributions are exploding. The amount of money contributed to both political

parties has grown at an enormous and unacceptable rate. In 1992 soft money accounted for \$86 million. By 1996 it had increased to \$260 million. In 1998, a nonpresidential election year, it increased to \$193 million, twice the increase the previous year.

We need to address this cancer. We need to sign the discharge petition, and have meaningful and timely debate on campaign finance reform.

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET AND THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, which dog is the tail wagging today? This chart shows one of the key differences between the President's budget and the Republican budget. The Republican budget pays down the debt by \$1.8 trillion over 10 years. The President's budget pays down the debt by much less.

Let us take a look at that again: \$1.8 trillion in debt reduction under the Republican plan, higher debt levels under the President's plan. Our budget does a much better job of paying off the debt. The President's budget leaves us in debt for longer periods of time. The Republican budget also provides middle class tax relief from future surpluses, and our budget puts away 100 percent of the retirement surplus for social security and Medicare. We put that money in a safe deposit box so that Washington spenders will put an end to their 40-year practice of raiding social security to pay for new government programs. It is a great budget and a budget to be proud of.

THE IMF PROPOSAL TO GIVE RUSSIA MORE MONEY

(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, a new report says Uncle Sam gives billions of dollars to Russia every year, and the money disappears into an offshore bank account. Guess what, much of the money is now reported stolen. If that is not enough to bust your balsam, check this out. The International Monetary Fund announced today they want to give Russia more money.

Mr. Speaker, I submit, the IMF has brains in their assets. I yield back all our wasted taxpayer dollars that are going to Russian fat cats partying with our dollars and not even supporting us in Kosovo. Members should think about that.

HCFA HOME HEALTH CARE ASSESSMENT UNDERMINES PRIVACY OF AMERICANS

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, now the big government bureaucrats in the Clinton administration have decided they do care about the privacy rights of the American people after all. Just 14 days before 9,000 home health care providers are to begin submitting the personal medical information of millions of Americans to the Federal Government, we learn in the Washington Post that the Health Care Financing Administration has decided to review the program's privacy implications, something which should have been considered long before this misguided regulation ever saw the light of day.

Is this newfound concern for privacy going to prevent the administration from prying into the lives of innocent Americans and creating a Federal database of their medical information? Sadly, the answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, is no. The administration is simply delaying the ultimate submission of the data to the Federal Government.

The home health care providers are still expected to conduct the 19-page assessment of each page, including private questions concerning the patient's sense of failure or socially inappropriate behavior. Let us put an end to this outrageous conduct.

CONGRESS MUST ACT NOW TO PASS CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM AND BAN SOFT MONEY

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, Congress must act now to pass campaign finance reform and ban soft money. We must act now in a nonelection year, before the strategic calculations of the election year money chase contaminate the debate on campaign finance reform. We must act now before unregulated, unaccountable soft money contributions drown out the people's voices in the 2000 election.

If we thought the presidential election year of 1996 was awash in soft money, 2000 promises to be a deluge. We must act now to give the Senate sufficient time to act. Campaign finance reform is too important to be held hostage to the anti-reform faction's policy of delay, delay, delay.

I urge Members to sign the discharge petition so we can pass the Shays-Meehan reform bill. If we combine last year's votes on the Shays-Meehan and Hutchinson-Allen bills, 352 Members voted to ban soft money. That is 81 percent of the House.

I urge my colleagues to sign the discharge petition, pass Shays-Meehan, and ban soft money.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APRIL 15 TAX DEADLINE

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

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, it is that time of the year again, April 14th, the night before April 15th, the tax deadline. It is a bittersweet day for a politician. On the one hand, we are forced to confront the painful truth about how much the Federal Government takes from its productive citizens in the way of taxes. On the other hand, it is a tragic reality. It serves as an useful reminder to Republicans for what they stand for as a party.

To Republicans, taxes are a freedom issue. We believe that people should be entitled to the fruits of their labor. Slavery was a great evil because slaves were not entitled to the fruits of their labor. That was wrong.

The question for Republicans is one ultimately of choice: Who decides how to spend the money that Americans earn, those Americans or the government? We believe that people should have more power and more control over their lives, and the government should have less. That is the significance of April 15 to me.

THE SHAYS-MEEHAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM BILL IS AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill, and urge the Speaker to allow this important piece of legislation to get onto the floor for debate and a vote.

Shays-Meehan, which will stop large corporations and wealthy individuals from pouring hundreds of millions of dollars in soft money into both political parties, will not solve the crisis of campaign financing that we face today, but is an important step forward.

Mr. Speaker, one of the great tragedies of our time is that the American people are in large numbers giving up on the political process. In the last election, only 36 percent of the people voted, and tens of millions no longer believe that this Congress represents their interests. Rather, they believe, not without justification, that big money interests, through campaign contributions and lobbying efforts, develop the agenda here and call the tunes.

Mr. Speaker, let us tell the middle class and the working families of this country, the folks who do not contribute hundreds of millions, that we are listening to them. Let us pass campaign finance reform.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT COLONEL MANUEL FERNANDEZ, JR., UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

(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, today I rise to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Fernandez, Jr., upon his retirement from the United States Air Force after 22 years of distinguished service to our great Nation. An American hero, a decorated military aviator, Lieutenant Colonel Fernandez has served with distinction, including service as a squadron commander at several locations worldwide.

Most recently he served with honor and great distinction to the United States Congress as the deputy chief of the House Liaison Office. In this position Manny, who is known to his friend as Manny, excelled at providing information and service to Members of the House of Representatives. His intelligence, his charm, keen wit, and a can-do attitude made Manny Fernandez a pleasure to work with.

Because of Manny's credibility and good will, the Air Force and the Department of Defense will long reap the benefits of his tenure here on Capitol Hill.

On behalf of my colleagues, I wish Lieutenant Colonel Manny Fernandez and his wife, Susan, the very best as he enters retirement.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues today to support the campaign finance reform and the filing of this discharge petition. I am proud that my signature will be among the 218 needed to bring H.R. 417, the bipartisan campaign finance reform measure offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), and other measures as well, to the floor for a vote.

For me as a new Member of this House, this is a truly defining issue. The money chase must end so we, as servants of the people, can spend our time doing the people's business. I believe that it is what our constituents want from us. It is certainly what I would prefer to do.

Nine out of 10 Americans support campaign reform. Let them know we are listening to them. Now is the time to move forward. No more delays, no more bickering, no more excuses, just let us vote.

LET US SUPPORT NEEDED RESEARCH ON RETINAL DEGENERATIVE DISEASES

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, there is a saying, nothing is so strong as gentleness, and nothing is so gentle as real strength.

I can think of no better person who personifies those words as does my constituent and friend, Betti Lidsky. Yesterday, before the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, Betti testified about her experiences as the mother of three children, Ilana, Daria, and Isaac, who are stricken with retinal degenerative diseases.

Betti and Carlos, her husband, came to deliver a message that is not only close to their hearts, but close to the hearts of the millions of family members across America who have a loved one who suffers from this disease, for which there is no treatment nor cure.

Let us help give the Lidsky family and indeed those families across America who are impacted by this disease hope by supporting, promoting, and funding research through the National Eye Institute and the Foundation Fighting Blindness. Working together, there is a cure in sight.

URGING MEMBERS TO SIGN THE DISCHARGE PETITION TO ALLOW DEBATE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, there is a line forming down here in the well. Its purpose is to provide a discharge petition which will put on the Floor a fair proposal which will make it possible for this House to vote and to work its will on a piece of legislation to reform one of the great scandals in this country. I am talking about excessive expenditures in campaigns.

It will for the first time in years make a meaningful reform in terms of how money is spent and how much money is spent. It is something which will attack a problem that has been corroding the confidence of the American people in their government.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides to join together in signing this discharge petition, putting on the Floor of the House a piece of legislation which will enable the people to return their confidence to their government, because we will be eliminating one of the great abuses, excessive expenditures of money on public elections, something which is corrupting the public business of this Nation.

I commend the framers of the discharge petition, I join in signing it, and I urge all of my colleagues to do likewise.

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BUDGET RESOLUTION

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

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I come here to speak about the budget, but I cannot help but respond a little bit on campaign finance reform.