

Today we call on them to join with us, to join with leaders on both the Republican and Democratic side, in support to reform, in cleaning up this mess, so that we can move forward to address the real issues that concern the American people.

THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN MAKING THE CASE FOR THE REPUBLICAN TAX RELIEF BILL FOR MONTHS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, a few thoughts on the President and our tax relief bill. If we listen to what the President has been saying, we will see that he has actually been making the case for this tax relief bill for months. The President says he supports seniors. So do we. That is why the Republican tax relief plan walls off and locks away Social Security trust fund monies for America's seniors.

The President says he supports America's farmers and ranchers. So do we. That is why the Republican tax relief bill eliminates the death tax for farmers and for small businesses so that they can pass the family farm or business on to the next generation.

The President says he supports working families. So do we. That is why the Republican tax relief plan reduces the marriage penalty tax.

The President says he is for reducing the Federal debt. So are we. That is why the tax relief bill pays down \$2.2 trillion of the public debt. It also encourages savings and investments with other targeted tax cuts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President to listen to his own rhetoric, to join the cause in reducing the tax burden, the national debt, on all working Americans. Next year is an election year. Mr. President, this is the year for your opportunity to do something with bipartisan support.

THE BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, today we will be debating a piece of legislation that could more than any other single act put an end to the troubling cynicism of the American electorate, the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act. In our Nation, the birthplace of modern democracy, our citizens are less likely to vote than any other country in the rest of the industrialized world. While there are other factors that influence this disturbing trend, the perception that our elections are bought and sold rank at the top.

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The numbers are staggering. In 1998, over \$781 million was contributed to us,

we, congressional candidates. In the last presidential election, the Clinton and Dole campaigns spent a combined \$232 million. What has this got to do with free speech?

The time has come to restore some sanity to our electoral process. The leadership of the House is again trying to submarine the Shays-Meehan bill by making several poison pill amendments in order. That is why we must take the courageous decision today, Mr. Speaker, and pass the Shays-Meehan bill.

REAL REFORM COMES FROM OBEYING EXISTING LAW

(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, to hear my colleagues on the left talk about it in concert with other folks at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, it is very interesting to hear all of these calls for campaign finance reform, because, in fact, mindful of these pleas at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue I would equate them, Mr. Speaker, with Bonnie and Clyde in the midst of their crime spree calling a press conference to call for tougher penalties on bank robbery.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, real reform first comes by obeying existing law. That is the problem this administration has never come to grips with in a variety of different areas. It would be good to obey existing laws. That is why they are already on the books.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the President enjoyed his round of golf today in the South Pacific. He came here in January and gave a State of the Union message and the next day went to Buffalo, New York and told the American people they could not be trusted with their money, and yet last week, he said he would trust the word of Puerto Rican terrorists and grant them clemency. How curious, Mr. Speaker, when the President of the United States will not trust the American people with their own money and yet trust the word of terrorists.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM REQUIRES TRUST OF THE PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, political consultants say campaign finance reform, in their words, does not poll. The opponents of campaign finance reform legislation think that if they prevent or water down this legislation, no one will notice. There will be no price to pay.

There will be a price to pay, Mr. Speaker. We face a crisis of trust in our Government.

America cannot deal successfully with the tough problems that face this

legislature, taxes, Social Security, Medicare, unless we have the trust of the people.

The Shays-Meehan legislation on campaign finance reform is a very good and excellent first step in restoring trust in government.

ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WACO

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, in 1993, the tragedy in Waco, Texas left many unanswered questions for Congress and the American public. One question remains, of course. What happened? Where does the responsibility lie?

In 1993, in April, Attorney General Janet Reno said, quote, "The buck stops with me," end quote. She took responsibility then for the Waco tragedy, but of course, now, it is shifting blame. Where is her responsibility for the information supplied to Congress and the American people?

It was reported in the Washington Times that the Justice Department omitted in its December 1993 report to Congress the one key page of information quote, "documenting the use of 40 millimeter tear gas project tiles at Waco," end quote. Now, it appears the Justice Department is saying they gave this information 2 years later, in 1995.

This latest revelation and other ones that will probably follow are just an indication that the Justice Department is not handling this situation well. There is incompetency in her department, and much of the information provided is not accurate. So I urge my colleagues to look at this question of responsibility and help us to get to the bottom of this matter.

Attorney General Reno should take full responsibility and not try to shift blame.

VOTE FOR SHAYS-MEEHAN AND DEFEAT POISON PILL AMENDMENTS

(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, we have an opportunity today to take an important step towards returning control of this Congress to the people and away from the special interests that have a disproportionate influence in Congress. This will be the Shays-Meehan bill that we will debate later today that will close two of the most gaping loopholes in our campaign finance system: soft money and sham issue ads.

Let us be clear about what opposition we face today. The leadership of this House has arranged for amendments to be offered that are very innocuous, but will have the effect of depriving the

House of Representatives from voting on Shays-Meehan. This is a disingenuous way to conduct the debate. We need to see through it today.

This is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue; this is an American issue. Senator MCCAIN is leading the fight in the Senate. We need to come together as Democrats and Republicans today. We need to have an open and honest debate on campaign finance reform and defeat the poison pill amendments that will be offered on the bill.

TAXES TODAY ARE SIMPLY TOO HIGH

(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, taxes today are simply too high. The average American pays \$10,300 every year in taxes to all levels of government. That is more than the cost of food, shelter, and clothing combined. Yet President Clinton continues to reject tax relief for hard-working Americans.

If one is married and paying more in taxes than one should because of the IRS marriage penalty, the President says, tough. If one works hard all of their life to build a business so that one can pass it on to their kids only to fall victim to the death tax, he says, that is too bad.

Along with across-the-board tax cuts for all taxpayers, the Republican Congress wants to provide badly needed relief from the marriage penalty and do away with the death tax. But the President says he will veto that.

Rather than allow taxpayers to keep more of what they earn, he wants them to give more to Washington bureaucrats. By vowing to veto tax cuts, President Clinton is no longer rejecting badly needed tax relief, he is working his back on the hard-working American families.

A VOTE FOR SHAYS-MEEHAN IS A VOTE FOR A STRONGER DEMOCRACY

(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, when the founders created our democracy, they did not foresee soft money. They did not anticipate PACs, they did not know phrases like "lobbyists," "fund raiser" and "issue ad." They did not know they would become part of our political vocabulary. But what our forefathers did know was that the strength of our democracy would rest upon the courage of its inheritors. Today that courage is being tested. Mr. Speaker, today we are looking for men and women of mettle to pass meaningful campaign finance reform.

Campaign finance reform presents a very clear choice. Those who vote in

favor of Shays-Meehan, which passed this body by a wide margin last year, vote to eliminate soft money from our campaigns. Those who obstruct campaign finance reform and try to attach their poison pills turn their backs on the American people's desire for a political system that is built vote by vote and not dollar by dollar.

This is a bipartisan problem, and it needs a bipartisan solution. Let us make our founders proud; let us support and pass Meehan-Shays, remove soft money from our campaigns, and strengthen our democracy for future generations.

MANAGED CARE REFORM

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

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to clear up an area of misunderstanding that some of my colleagues have, as well as some of the business community has concerning the bipartisan managed care bill.

I recently had a CEO of a major corporation from the Midwest and his lobbyist come into my office and say, if that bill comes law, it would mean the end of ERISA. I said, how so? He said, we would not be able to do a uniform benefits package for our employees across various State lines. I said, you know what? There is nothing in that bill that deals with mandated benefits. Nothing, nada, zero. There would still be ERISA if we passed this law.

Businesses that operate across State lines would still be able to do a uniform benefits package, and they would still be exempt from State mandates. The only thing this bill does in ERISA that is of consequence is that it says that if a health plan makes a medical decision that results in the injury to one of their subscribers that they are responsible for that, just like any insurer in the individual market today already is.

REAL REFORM VERSUS SHOW ME THE MONEY

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, nine out of 10 Americans support campaign finance reform; nine out of 10.

The simple fact is that the cost of running for federal office today is so great that candidates are forced to devote far too much time and effort to fund-raising, rather than dealing with the issues of importance to their constituents. We can eliminate soft money entirely, rid our society of the pollution caused by sham issue ads, and increase public disclosure of who is paying for what. It is real reform versus show me the money.

This is the crux of the argument today as the House will undertake the serious debate of reforming our system

of financing political campaigns. The Shays-Meehan bill is real reform, eliminates soft money, increases disclosure and bans phoney issue ads.

The Republican leadership support the show-me-the-money approach. They argue for more money in the system and less reforms. Real reform versus show me the money. Support Shays-Meehan and show every American that the House supports real reform and not simply more money.

KUDOS TO SPEAKER HASTERT FOR BRINGING SHAYS-MEEHAN TO THE FLOOR

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

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Speaker of the House. There are many who said that this day would never come when we would get to vote on Shays-Meehan. But today, we will get to vote on real campaign finance reform. I was a fighter on the floor here last year for Shays-Meehan, and I will be that again today.

Let us give the Speaker of the House some credit. Remember, under the previous Speaker, we had to have a discharge petition to get this to the floor. This Speaker, by contrast, promised we would have a vote in September. He has kept that promise. And that is why we are here today.

One brief comment further on the merits. I only wish we could do more than Shays-Meehan. But what Shays-Meehan does that is so valuable is to plug two huge loopholes, one might even call them subterfuge, in existing law. The law says, an individual cannot give above \$1,000 to a campaign. But the law allows you to give all you have to a political party for soft money, and then the party takes the money and spends it so as to help a candidate. You would not know the difference between the kind of ads they run, and a candidate's own ads.

The other loophole concerns ads that are supposedly on public issues, but turn out to be nothing but campaign ads. They escape the law because they do not use the magic words, "vote for" or "vote against."

That is what Shays-Meehan does, it plugs two loopholes. I wish we could do more, but it is a great start; and I conclude by complimenting Speaker HASTERT once again for keeping his word and giving us the chance to vote on this today.

A UNITED FRONT BRINGS REFORM

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, like the previous speaker, I too want to compliment the Speaker for giving us this opportunity to debate what I feel is the most important issue that we are going