

Pastor	Saxton	Thomas
Paul	Scarborough	Thompson (CA)
Payne	Schaffer	Thompson (MS)
Pease	Schakowsky	Thornberry
Pelosi	Scott	Thune
Peterson (MN)	Sensenbrenner	Thurman
Peterson (PA)	Serrano	Tiabrt
Petri	Sessions	Tierney
Phelps	Shadegg	Toomey
Pickering	Shays	Towns
Pickett	Sherman	Traficant
Pitts	Sherwood	Turner
Pombo	Shimkus	Udall (CO)
Pomeroy	Shows	Udall (NM)
Portman	Shuster	Upton
Price (NC)	Simpson	Velazquez
Quinn	Sisisky	Vento
Radanovich	Skeen	Visclosky
Rahall	Skelton	Vitter
Ramstad	Slaughter	Walden
Rangel	Smith (MI)	Walsh
Regula	Smith (NJ)	Wamp
Reyes	Smith (TX)	Waters
Reynolds	Smith (WA)	Watkins
Riley	Snyder	Watt (NC)
Rivers	Souder	Watts (OK)
Rodriguez	Spence	Waxman
Roemer	Spratt	Weiner
Rogan	Stabenow	Weldon (FL)
Rogers	Stark	Weldon (PA)
Rohrabacher	Stearns	Weller
Rothman	Stenholm	Wexler
Roukema	Strickland	Weygand
Royal-Allard	Stump	Whitfield
Royce	Stupak	Wicker
Rush	Sununu	Wilson
Ryan (WI)	Sweeney	Wise
Ryun (KS)	Talent	Wolf
Sabo	Tancredo	Woolsey
Salmon	Tanner	Wu
Sanchez	Tauscher	Wynn
Sanders	Tauzin	Young (AK)
Sandlin	Taylor (MS)	Young (FL)
Sanford	Taylor (NC)	
Sawyer	Terry	

NOT VOTING—14

Buyer	Hilleary	Porter
Deal	Jefferson	Pryce (OH)
Fattah	Jones (NC)	Ros-Lehtinen
Goodling	Kaptur	Shaw
Hastings (FL)	Kingston	

□ 1300

So the motion was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. HILLEARY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 410, I was inadvertently detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 410, I was inadvertently detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees: Messrs. CALLAHAN, PORTER, WOLF, PACKARD, KNOLLENBERG, KINGSTON, LEWIS of California, BLUNT, YOUNG of Florida, Ms. PELOSI, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. SABO and Mr. OBEY.

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 417, BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 1999

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 283 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 283

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 417) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to amendment. All points of order against the amendments printed in the report are waived except that the adoption of an amendment in the nature of a substitute shall constitute the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my very good friend, the gentleman from Dallas, TX (Mr. FROST), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 283 is a fair rule which provides for the consideration of H.R. 417, the Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1999, under a structured rule. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate divided equally between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration. The rule makes in order 13 amendments which were printed in the report accompanying this resolution. Ten of the amendments are perfecting amendments debatable for 10 minutes each.

After the disposition of those amendments, the rule makes in order three substitutes by the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE), the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) which are debatable for 40 minutes each. The Doolittle and Hutchinson substitutes were reported without recommendation by the Committee on House Administration and the Thomas substitute was favorably reported.

The rule waives all points of order against these amendments except that the adoption of an amendment in the nature of a substitute shall constitute the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment which, and I will underscore this, Mr. Speaker, is the standard amendment process in the House. So this process that we are going to be proceeding under will be regular order.

Mr. Speaker, 26 perfecting amendments and three amendments in the nature of a substitute to the Shays-Meehan bill were submitted to the Committee on Rules. All three substitutes were made in order. Of the 26 perfecting amendments, only one was submitted by a Democrat, and that amendment was in fact made in order in this rule.

The rule also permits the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill and to reduce voting time to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

I would like to commend Speaker HASTERT for his very judicious handling of what obviously has been a hotly debated issue over the years. Earlier this year, he gave his word that the House would consider campaign finance reform in September under a fair process. Today, the Speaker has again demonstrated his leadership and good faith by bringing this measure to the floor under this rule. I also want to recognize the hard work of the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) who held weeks of hearings and reported out four competing proposals. His committee did a tremendous job in framing the debate that we will have here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, free speech, particularly free political speech, is a cherished right enshrined in the first amendment to our Constitution. For democracy to flourish, a free people must be able to express their political views without government restriction. Our Founding Fathers recognized that this is in fact the fundamental precept of democracy. Without free political speech, our great American experiment cannot continue to thrive into the next millennium.

I do not believe that the current problems with the campaign system are caused by too much political

speech. They are caused by the outmoded rules and regulations which currently restrict speech. Although I commend the authors of the Shays-Meehan bill for their good intentions, I believe they are taking the wrong approach. Adding more layers of rules and regulations, more bureaucracies and barriers, to an already flawed system is not the answer. It is increasingly clear after 25 years of living with the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974 that the current Federal campaign laws are fundamentally flawed. Just as the current Shays-Meehan proposal is the product of good intentions, the Campaign Act which we now live with was also the product of people driven to do what was right. It was praised for eliminating the possibility of another Watergate, lowering the costs of political campaigns and reducing the advantages of incumbency.

It is ironic that 25 years later, many of the law's same supporters are urging Congress to pass another campaign finance reform bill to accomplish what the Federal Election Campaign Act has failed to do. Limiting the amount of money spent and contributed in Federal campaigns will not lead to increased competition. Nor will it cause the influence of large contributors to wane or make politicians more accountable to their constituents. The Federal Election Campaign Act places limits on contributions and expenditures, but since 1974 campaign spending has more than tripled in real dollars. Incumbents have enjoyed huge advantages raising campaign funds, and they have generally had an easier time getting reelected. While history shows that limits do not work as advertised, the focus of reform continues to be on new contribution restrictions and suspending the free speech rights of grassroots organizations and their members. We are even looking at the prospect of regulating the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web for political purposes. Mr. Speaker, this is not the right way for us to go as we try to focus concern for first amendment rights.

To reduce the advantages of incumbency, I believe that contribution limits should be raised, at least to account for 25 years of inflation, and tax credits should be reinstated to encourage more individuals to participate in the electoral process. I will be supporting the Doolittle substitute which will encourage individuals to exercise their free speech rights more effectively, free political candidates from their frequent fund-raising activities, and reduce the advantages of incumbency. Rather than trying to regulate the Internet, a hopeless effort in the long run, I believe 21st century technology should be used to increase political openness. I support the establishment of electronic filing procedures and requiring that Federal Election Commission disclosure information be published on the Internet. With information related to political giving freely available in an

understandable format on the Internet, Americans will no longer need to rely on special interests and the media to interpret the Federal Election Commission data for them.

Mr. Speaker, just as free trade encourages vitality in our economic markets, I believe free speech fosters a stronger democracy based on competition in a free market of ideas. Therefore, I will choose more freedom over more regulation.

This is not an unorthodox rule. It does not stack the deck against the Shays-Meehan bill. The rule does not make in order so-called "poison pill" amendments as some have suggested. The fact is this rule provides for a debate and amendment process closer to regular order than any campaign finance rule that has been debated in the past decade. If the proponents of Shays-Meehan have the votes, they will prevail.

Now is the time to cut through the rhetoric and approve this rule so that the House may work its will on this issue of campaign finance reform. This is a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker, that demands very serious thinking. I urge my colleagues to support the rule.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on the road to a vote on real campaign finance reform, our friends in the Republican Party have set up an ambush. In this Congress, the Republican leadership has accommodated supporters of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance proposal by scheduling the bill for consideration, but appearances can be deceiving.

First, the rule reported by the Republican majority on the Committee on Rules gives opponents of campaign finance reform the opportunity to wound the bill by taking pot shots at Shays-Meehan. Then, when the bill is down and bleeding, the rule allows opponents to bring out the heavy artillery to try and finish it off. This rule may not give Shays-Meehan a clean vote. And, Mr. Speaker, unless Members of the House stand up and vote against the amendments designed to wound and weaken and eventually kill real and meaningful campaign finance reform, the Republican majority will once again, through a cynical exploitation of the process, stymie the efforts of those Members who are dedicated to reforming how Federal campaigns in this country are financed.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 283 makes in order a series of 10 amendments to Shays-Meehan. This series includes amendments that would, in essence, take away the ability of labor unions in this country to represent the views of their members in the political process, while others would allow individuals to increase their contributions to candidates from \$1,000 to \$3,000. There is even an amendment in this mix that puts limits on the campaign of the First Lady in the State of New

York. These amendments are, by design, intended to seriously maim and wound Shays-Meehan.

The rule then provides for the consideration of three substitutes. These substitutes are intended to inflict mortal wounds. Should any one of them be adopted, Shays-Meehan will be declared DOA. While we can speculate that the first two substitutes, those offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON), will not pass, the third substitute, which is a proverbial sheep in wolf's clothing, stands a good chance of passing the House and killing Shays-Meehan.

That substitute, to be offered by the chairman of the Committee on House Administration, embodies a number of reforms to the operations of the FEC but does not affect the financing of campaigns. The Thomas amendment is indeed campaign reform. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that it is not campaign finance reform. The intent here is quite clear and very obvious. This rule is designed to ensure that the House will never get a straight up-or-down vote on Shays-Meehan.

All that being said, Mr. Speaker, Democrats are not going to oppose this rule, for we know full well if this rule is defeated, that means the end of any discussion on the subject of campaign finance for the remainder of this Congress. In the last Congress, Shays-Meehan passed this body by a vote of 237-186 after the Republican leadership set up a series of roadblocks designed to keep the House from getting a vote on that bill. We can only hope that a majority in the House remains committed to campaign finance reform and will find a way to foil this ambush of the only proposal that fits that description.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject the amendments made in order in this rule.

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

□ 1315

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL), my very good friend.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chairman of the Committee on Rules, my good friend from California, for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin with a note of gratitude to the Speaker of the House. Last year we tried to get this bill up for a vote, and it took a discharge petition, with Republicans and Democrats together, to make it happen. That was under a different Speaker. This Speaker, by contrast, promised that we would have a vote on the floor in September. He has fulfilled that promise without being forced to by a discharge petition. There were many skeptics who said that it was a subterfuge; they were wrong. He deserves to be honored for keeping his word.

On the merits, as I see the rule, and I intend to support the rule, it allows a

fair discussion of Shays-Meehan and legitimate alternatives that colleagues wish to put forward. I intend to be supporting Shays-Meehan throughout today's debate. I intend not to be agreeing to amendments that would kill Shays-Meehan. But other people have their reasonable attitudes about their own approach, and it is simply fair to allow them to present their alternatives. There is nothing unfair in a rule that allows this House to debate alternatives.

I am going to use the remainder of my time just to identify one very important thing we will do today, when we pass Shays-Meehan.

A television ad that was run in the last campaign stated:

Head Start, student loans, toxic clean up, extra police protected in the budget agreement, but the President stood firm. The President's plan: Politics must wait, balance the budget, reform welfare.

Almost the identical words appeared in a similar ad, the first one, however, by the DNC with soft money on May 31, 1996; the second, by the Clinton campaign, on June 2, 1996.

What we have today is a huge loophole in campaign finance. We run the exact same ads almost, but we run them as soft money ads through a political party, and anybody can contribute any amount of money to finance those ads.

Mr. Speaker, if we intend to have a system that limits how much people can influence the system to prevent corruption, then we must not allow a loophole as large as this whereby we can run almost exactly the same ads and have them excused because it is soft money rather than hard.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), the author of the legislation.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding this time to me.

Members of the House have a unique opportunity today to make a real difference and to pass campaign finance reform, legislation that is long overdue.

As my colleagues know, we have had lots of disagreements between Democrats and Republicans about how to determine tax policy, what to do with the surplus, a patients' bill of rights, education reform and what to do to improve education across our country. Finally today we have an issue that Democrats and Republicans can agree on.

There were 50 to 60 Republicans who supported this legislation in the last Congress. We got 251 votes from Members of this House in the last Congress. This is our opportunity today to pass real comprehensive campaign finance reform, to make soft money illegal, illegal because it is a loophole that came out of the Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1974 and has had a corrupting influence on presidential elections in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough to just stand up and have hearings and spend millions of dollars talking about the abuses in the last campaign and then do nothing about it. It is just not good enough to have hearings and create an environment where Democrats attack Republicans, Republicans attack Democrats, on the abuses in the last campaign and then do nothing about it. Today is the day. Today is the day when the votes are going to be counted and we are going to determine who is for campaign finance reform and who is not.

During the course of this debate there are a number of what we call "poison pill amendments," amendments that are designed to do nothing but kill this unique coalition that has been established. I urge the Members of this House to see through these amendments and recognize them for what they are, nothing more than an attempt by the opponents of campaign finance reform to kill this legislation.

Let us kill these amendments, and let us pass comprehensive campaign finance reform today.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA), my good friend, and neighbor and classmate.

(Mrs. ROUKEMA asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, certainly I rise in strong support of this bill that is finally bringing Shays-Meehan to the floor, and I might say better late than never. Nevertheless, I do express appreciation to the Speaker for fulfilling his promise that we conduct this debate.

I do think that without question, as already has been stated here, the American people believe that we have a rigged and corrupt system, and perhaps with good reason, but we have a good opportunity today to really put that behind us and vote this reform. This will put us on the road to reestablishing our credibility.

I must say that with the campaign costs skyrocketing candidates and incumbents, as the American people have seen, find themselves devoting more and more time and energy to fund-raising and the reach and influence of special interests has grown out of control, and as a consequence, people do believe that their elected officials are bought and paid for; and it is at the core, I believe, of the voter cynicism that is leading Americans to drop out of our political system and the political process of our democracy.

We have here today the opportunity, without question, to address one of the most corrupt, corrosive developments in our system, the explosion of soft money; and that is what we are about today. If we do nothing else, we must lay the foundation and take this giant step for correcting this problem and ban soft money. It will not do everything, but it will be the foundation and a giant step forward, and we must do it.

The American people are cynical; they are disgusted. Let us take this first giant step to restoring faith in our democratic process. Support the rule, and support Shays-Meehan, the soft money ban, outright. It is a strong ban, a hard ban, on soft money.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and would like to begin my remarks this afternoon by saying: "better late than never."

I have been part of a bipartisan group of Members who have been seeking a full and a fair debate on campaign finance reform.

We should have had this debate last Spring.

As a result, America will be forced to witness another general election conducted under rules the American people think are rigged and corrupt.

But we are finally having it now and I thank the Speaker for fulfilling his promise to conduct this debate.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of fundamental change in our campaign finance reform is one of Congress' most significant failings. Clearly, our campaign finance system is out of control. The signs of impending disaster dominate the headlines every day. Campaign costs are skyrocketing. Candidates, incumbents and challengers alike, find themselves devoting more time and more energy to fundraising. The reach and influence of special interests continue to grow. As a consequence, many people believe elections are "bought" by those organizations with the most money! And is at the core of voters cynicism leading to Americans dropping out of the political process of our democracy.

Without question the most corrosive recent development has been the explosion of so-called "soft money"—donations from wealthy corporations, labor unions and individuals to the major parties.

Of course, there are many critically important issues that we will examine during the course of this debate—the so-called paycheck protection amendment, issue ads, independent expenditures, and others.

But if we do nothing else—let's ban soft money. My Colleagues—soft money was at the heart of each and every one of the scandals of the last Presidential campaign today—nights in the Lincoln Bedroom, White House coffees, alleged contributions from the Chinese military to the DNC, and more.

The American people are cynical and disgusted. They should be.

Support the rule. Then, to ban soft money outright, support Shays-Meehan.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago in *Buckley versus Valeo*, the Supreme Court said, and I quote, "To the extent that large contributions are given to secure political quid pro quo from current and potential officeholders, the integrity of our system of representative democracy is undermined. Of equal concern is the danger of actual quid pro quo arrangements and the impact of the appearance of corruption stemming from public awareness of the opportunities for abuse inherent in a regime of large individual financial contributions."

Twenty years ago the main problem was unlimited individual contributions going for undisguised campaign ads. Today the problem is different. It is unlimited contributions from individuals and groups going for campaign ads that are disguised transparently as issue ads.

So this is the real question. Will it take a Teapot Dome scandal to get action under this dome on campaign finance reform?

The Annenberg study says the abuse of sham issue ads is growing. I read for my colleagues this campaign ad from last year:

"Linda Smith on education: I have decided the U.S. Department of Education is not necessary. That explains why Smith cosponsored a bill to eliminate the Department of Education, voted to cut Head Start and student loans, voted against testing standards to make schools accountable. Linda Smith even voted to slash safe and drug-free schools in half. Linda Smith puts her narrow political agenda ahead of our schools. Tell her to stop voting against kids."

If the words had been used "defeat Linda Smith," under our campaign laws, instead of the word "tell" which was used, that was clearly a campaign ad. Games played with language using the word "tell" instead of the word "defeat" should not thwart the law.

Corruption by money of the democratic process is not freedom.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), my good friend.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this rule of course, but against final passage of Shays-Meehan. Let me make one thing clear at the outset of this debate. There is no public clamor for this legislation. I have been in almost every corner of my 24-county district during the last month, and not once did a single citizen bring up the issue of our campaign finance laws. No, the hue and cry for this bill is occurring inside the Beltway of Washington D.C. largely by those who would receive a special advantage by this proposed tilting of the playing field.

Mr. Speaker, I am proudest of this House when it works in a bipartisan manner, but this is not what we will have today. There may be high-sounding tones in the media about the winds of reform, but for its liberal advocates this bill is really about party politics, and here is why. The big labor bosses use the forced dues of their union members to further their political goals, and that usually means support only for Democrats. This bill would do nothing to stop that practice.

Shays-Meehan takes no action to limit another of the most significant abuses of the liberal labor bosses, and that is the in-kind, unreported use of union employees for get-out-the-vote, organization efforts, and other political activities. These actions benefit

one party exclusively and, frankly, are beyond the scope of anything we can do as a Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this debate should be about freedom of speech, freedom of expression, the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Look at this diagram, Mr. Speaker. We should shudder to contemplate the arcane, complex, Rube Goldberg limitations on American expression which are contained in this bill. This is the convoluted process that the courts and the FEC, candidates and citizens will have to go through in order to make sure their advocacy is permissible under Shays-Meehan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have friends on both sides of the aisle who legitimately believe that there is too much money in campaigns today, and I will admit that there is a certain nostalgia for the one-on-one campaigns of yesteryear; but this bill, Shays-Meehan, does not get us there. When I was a youth growing up in Mississippi, there was always a huge crowd around the court square on a Saturday morning. A candidate could come into town with a loud speaker on top of his station wagon and get his point across to a large percentage of the voters. But those days are over. We live in the days of malls and cable TV with 99 channels, the Internet, not to mention radio, direct mail and the print media. Those are the methods we use in the United States of America to convey information today, and it costs money to buy that form of advertising.

Freedom of speech is worthless if no one can hear it. The truth is that it takes funds to amplify our political discourse to a level which reaches the public.

Mr. Speaker, there are solutions out there to rectify the most unpleasant aspects of campaigning and raising funds to do so, but that will not occur today. It will not occur as long as one political party believes it can achieve a significant and unfair advantage under the guise of reform.

I urge passage of the rule and defeat of Shays-Meehan.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise reluctantly to support this rule because it remains the only way that we will get real campaign finance reform on the floor for a vote. The underlying Shays-Meehan bill is strong, bipartisan legislation that deserves the support of every Member of this House. It is the only bill that shuts down the soft money system and reins in the phony issue ads; but in order to get to Shays-Meehan, this rules forces us to navigate a minefield of poison pills, killer amendments and substitutes introduced by many Members who have absolutely no intention of voting for the underlying bill.

The most dangerous of these is the Thomas substitute. It would strengthen the FEC, a cause I have long cham-

pioned. Along with my colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP), we introduced an amendment that would incorporate the Thomas substitute as a perfecting amendment, as many of us did with the commission bill of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRANKS) and others last year. But, Mr. Speaker, this was rejected.

I urge my colleagues, vote for the rule, against all substitutes, all killer amendments, and for campaign finance reform.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), the lead author of the campaign finance reform bill which brought us to this point.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me, and I thank this Congress for debating this issue.

This is legislation that clearly has bipartisan support. It is a team effort, and it has probably been one of the more satisfying activities that I have been involved in.

□ 1330

I just want to say that I disagree strongly with the gentleman from Mississippi talking about it being one party. It is not about one party, and it is not about freedom of speech because we retain freedom of speech. It is about ending corrupt politics. That is what it is about.

It has been against the law since 1907 for corporate treasury money to be used in campaigns, but it happens. It has been against laws since 1947 for union dues money to be used in campaigns, but it is happening. It has been against the laws since 1974 for foreign nationals to contribute to campaigns but they are, and they are because of two loopholes: Soft money, the unlimited sums of money from individuals, corporations, labor unions, and other interest groups; and the sham issue ads which are truly campaign ads.

We do not prevent those ads for money. We just call them campaign ads. What that means is, out goes the corporate treasury money, the union dues money, and the foreign national money. That is what this debate is about. It is about having a fair system, where everyone has a right to speak out, and where we enforce the 1907 law, the 1947, law and the 1974 law.

I would want to just end by saying this is a fair rule, but it is a fair rule that gives the opponents of our legislation seven shots to kill us as amendments and three shots to kill us through substitutes. It is still a fair rule. It is a rule, though, that does not allow for one amendment, and that is the Thomas amendment. We wanted it as a perfecting amendment rather than as a substitute because it is a very good piece of legislation, but it is process, not reform, in our judgment.

So I salute sincerely the chairman of the Committee on Rules for making sure we have a debate that will not go on for months, giving us time limits,

letting us know what is coming, and I thank him for doing it; and I thank our Speaker for living up to his word.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant support of this rule, in strong support of the Shays-Meehan bill, and in opposition to the poison pill amendments. Today's votes present clear choices. If one is a Member of this House and they like spending more and more of their time raising money, vote for the poison pills; but if they prefer working on issues important to their constituents, support Shays-Meehan.

If one works for a corporation or a labor union and they like getting hit up for soft money donations again and again, support the status quo; but if they prefer to invest money in their own organization, support Shays-Meehan.

If one is a TV viewer and they like endless streams of deceptive anonymous issue ads in election years, oppose reform; but if one prefers honest and less frequent ads, support Shays-Meehan.

If one is an American and likes their voice being drowned out by special interests, big money, support the DeLay-Doolittle coalition; but if one wants a greater say in how our laws are made, support Shays-Meehan.

I urge approval of the rule, defeat of the poison pill amendments and passage of the underlying legislation.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise in support of the rule and I do rise in support of Shays-Meehan and in opposition to the amendments. There has been a lot of fussing over the rule here today. I do not think there is anything unexpected there. That is what the majority of the majority parties wants, to have a certain limited circumstance. I think, in fact, the Committee on Rules and the leadership deserves credit for letting us vote on this at all; and because there has been so much attention paid to it, I think we all know exactly what we have to do on the individual votes under this particular rule so I do not think that is a problem.

I hope that all of us will support it.

I hope everybody will consider very carefully what we are doing here. It should concern every one of us that there are corporations, there are labor unions, there are organizations out there which are contributing to the political parties in soft money a quarter million and more, perhaps something less than that. And if anyone believes they are doing it because they believe in good government, I would tell them to look at the underlying legislation that those groups are interested in.

The bottom line is that I think we need to do something about it. I am for

individual contributions. I am for complete disclosure of all contributions and all expenditures which are made. I think we have to limit the special issue groups so that is obviously not in order. And I think Shays-Meehan would do it, and I would encourage all of us to do it.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FORBES).

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule. I think it is clear in this body last year we made it known that a majority of the Members here believe, as the public does, that we have a need for campaign finance reform.

The people have lost faith in the current system, a system that should be of the people, by the people, and for the people. The people wonder actually, does it belong to the people?

The current system really makes it impossible for people who want to give voice to their issues to get into electoral office. They feel shut out. We need Shays-Meehan so that we can restore confidence in our electoral system and make this great democracy even greater.

Today we have a chance to change all of that. We can restore faith in this political system breathing democracy by passing Shays-Meehan. The proposed amendments only cloud the main issue, and the substitutes unfortunately seek to gut it. We need to send a clean bill to the Senate and represent the change that Americans want, starting here in the House.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON), the author of one of the key substitutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule being offered today. I believe it is fair. It will allow a broad-ranging debate on campaign finance reform. The rule makes in order four major alternatives, one of which is the substitute that I have offered, along with the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. HULSHOF), the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL), and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY). It is the Campaign Integrity Act which does three things that I think are very important.

One, it bans soft money to the national parties which is the most significant problem that we have on our scene.

Second, it empowers individuals in our system by increasing the information that is available to them through more disclosure.

Third, it raises the individual contribution limits to prevent the value of the small contributor from being eroded through rising inflation. Ours is the only substitute that does that.

As my colleagues examine which alternative is the right one to support, we should all ask a couple of questions.

First of all, what fixes the most significant problems?

Second, what can realistically get passed in the Senate?

Third, what is consistent with the Constitution?

I believe that is the framework for the debate as we engage in this under the rule.

The Hutchinson-Moran-Hill-Brady-Hulshof substitute accomplishes all three of these objectives. So I believe it is a fair rule that is being offered today.

The question has been raised, does the public support reform? I believe that they do. In fact, I believe the reform is more intense in the body politic in America than it is in this body, because we know the script; we know what is going to happen, and we know the Senate is not going to consider the same bill that they considered the last time.

So I think the public is wiser. They support reform, but they want good reform and they are willing to debate the substance of each proposal.

Alexander Hamilton in Federalist No. 15 said, why has government been instituted at all?

The answer is, because the passions of men will not conform to the dictates of reason and justice without constraint.

I believe that defines the debate on campaign finance reform, that reason and justice demands this type of reform and the rule will support that.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair how much time is remaining on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) has 9½ minutes remaining; the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), 19½ minutes remaining.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, if we sweep campaign finance reform under the rug, what legacy will we be leaving our children? Political mistrust, apathy? Or today, will we take a giant step forward in reforming a political system and leaving a system that our children can be proud of?

Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. The American people want campaign finance reform. They want it now.

The American people are weary of the glaring abuses and outrageous sums of money spent on political campaigns. The American people believe big money is destroying our political systems.

Campaign reform is not a Democratic or Republican problem. It is a Democratic and Republican responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to come to this House floor and honestly address

campaign finance reform. Let us do it and let us do it once and for all. Let us vote yes on Shays-Meehan. Let us vote no on all poison pill amendments.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY).

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully depart from some of my colleagues here who think that this rule is a fair rule. I suggest that this rule is, in effect, a somewhat hidden attempt to kill the only campaign finance reform proposal that probably has a chance of passing this year. We know that because last year when it was presented, it passed by 252 votes to 179. It had 61 Republicans on it. It was, in fact, a bipartisan effort. This year, instead of showing a willingness to either take a stand and be counted on the issue of banning unregulated soft money donations to parties, of regulating phony issue ads on television, and imposing new fund-raising disclosure rules, some are trying to use the rules, I believe, to obfuscate the issue, take 10 swipes either killing it with a poison pill or killing it by substituting suggestions that are unpalatable to most of the Members of this Congress.

In fact, the New York Times, in an editorial on September 13, I think, justifiably called these junkyard tactics of 1998. It is essentially the same tactics that we saw last year.

This rule, in a good world, would be defeated; but apparently it is going to pass because people fear that without this rule we will have no chance at campaign finance reform at all.

We should have that chance. We should vote for Shays-Meehan without all the other shenanigans.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. RIVERS).

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise with little enthusiasm for this rule but in great support for the Shays-Meehan proposal.

Mr. Speaker, I have a picture on the wall of my office that I purchased several years ago from a high school art competition in my district. It was produced by Jeff Vogelsberg, a student at that time in Belleville High School. It is a picture of a car made out of money that has lassoed and is towing away the capitol of the United States.

We have a saying in our language, out of the mouths of babes, which really recognizes the pure and perfect insight that children often possess, their ability to get to the nub of the issue; and in fact, Mr. Speaker, this is how our children see us, how the public sees us. Of course, it is the children who will grow up and write the history books of the future.

What do we think they will have to say about us and this Congress? How will history portray us? Will this Congress be portrayed as supporters of a system with integrity and honor, or

one of money that is so powerful it can pull the capitol of the United States from its very foundations? Support Shays-Meehan.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule because it is going to present an opportunity to the House of Representatives to vote on the merits of this very important bill that I am a cosponsor of, the Shays-Meehan bill.

It has been suggested earlier, there is not public clamor for us in Congress to take up campaign finance reform, and I think that statement alone really demonstrates what a problem we have here.

The public is leaving it to us to figure out the details on how to rid this system of its excesses. What they want from us, what the public is clamoring for, is simply independent judgment.

□ 1345

They want control over this political process returned to people. They expect us to judge each of the issues that come before us on the merits. If they were exposed to what we are exposed to, the incredible acceleration in the rate of soft money and sham issue ads pouring into the system, overshadowing their individual votes, they would expect us to take up this very bill today. We have to be on guard to defeat the poison pill amendments.

The Shays-Meehan bill is not a bill that favors Democrats or Republicans, it favors ordinary citizens who want their vote to count. We need to defeat the poison pill amendments, we need a straight-up vote on Shays-Meehan, we need to return control of our elections of this Congress to the people of the United States.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, we reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman from Texas prepared to yield back the balance of his time?

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I would respond to my friend from California by saying that we have additional speakers; however, they are not currently on the floor. We have Members who have requested the opportunity to speak.

Mr. DREIER. How much time is remaining on both sides, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) has 9½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) has 15½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, does my friend anticipate that he is going to fill that entire 15-minute period?

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, we have requests for that time, but the Members are not currently on the floor. It is our anticipation that we would use the time. We had planned to.

Mr. DREIER. So if I were to move the previous question, would the gentleman yield back the balance of his time?

Mr. FROST. Not at this point, Mr. Speaker, because there are Members who are in transit. There are Members who are coming to the floor who would like to speak.

Mr. DREIER. In light of that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRANKS).

(Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the rule that will help to deliver comprehensive campaign reform to the American people.

Last session, I was one of the authors of a bill to create an independent commission that would be empowered to make specific proposals that Congress would have been required to act upon. But today, the underlying bill before us combines the best of two approaches: the independent commission and Shays-Meehan.

While the old Shays-Meehan legislation addressed some of the most corrupting elements of our campaign finance system by banning soft money, reforming issue ads and imposing tougher FEC disclosure, it failed to address a variety of other legitimate concerns. But now, with the independent commission having become part of the Shays-Meehan proposal, the bill before us now has an added dimension. The commission created by this legislation will provide a means to address those issues that continue to breed public mistrust in our campaign finance system.

Today, Congress needs to face a harsh reality. Shays-Meehan, which now includes the independent commission, is the only real opportunity to deliver to the American people a campaign finance system that they can trust. I urge my colleagues to strongly support this rule.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as we rapidly use up our time on this side, leaving my friends with 15 minutes on their side, I am happy to yield 1 minute to my good friend, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 additional minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) for helping us out here.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, it is great to be loved by both sides here today.

I rise in support of the rule and in great appreciation for the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Rules who I think has been very fair and courteous through this process, and also in great appreciation to the Speaker of the House who is proving to all 435 Members of the House today that he can be trusted to follow through on his word; that we would, in fact, this week in September consider the issue of campaign finance reform

after an overwhelming success last year on basically the same decision, and that is, the underlying text of Shays-Meehan, which we have before us today.

Of the four major alternatives that the gentleman from Arkansas laid out a few minutes ago, three of them truly address systemic campaign reform, that is, the issue of money and influence on the federal process. One of those four alternatives, though, frankly, does not stack up to the level of significant campaign finance reform as the other three. And that one is the Thomas substitute.

Now, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on House Administration is a brilliant man in this House; we all know that. He understands all of these issues extremely well, but what he has offered and the Committee on Rules embraced as a substitute really is an amendment, and my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS), and I appeared before the Committee on Rules and asked that that amendment be ruled in order, not as a substitute or an alternative to the other three major provisions, but as an amendment so that it could be attached to our bill, because frankly, there is nothing in it that everybody would not desire as an amendment to any of the three major alternatives. Yet, it was chosen as a substitute.

Now, folks out there do not know what this really means, but what happens here is if it gets more votes than the rest of the bills, it goes forward; the rest stop, dead in their tracks, and therein lies somewhat of a gimmick in this whole process of today.

So there are issues that will be considered as we go through this day, and we are grateful for the opportunity that will not be what they appear on the surface, because people will be voting against things that are perfectly good so that the underlying bill, the Shays-Meehan bill, the bill with momentum, the bill that is the most significant campaign finance reform legislation to move through this Congress since 1974 can be considered on its own merits.

Now, today, as we go through all of this debate, Members are going to look for places to hide. I have seen this; this is my fifth year here. They look for some way to position themselves so that they can say I am for it, but. And the American people should say, the buts must stop now. You are for it, you are going to vote for it, you are going to move it forward. Soft money is the target. There are a lot of details that people will hide behind, but soft money is not defensible in today's environment. It is excessive, onerous, egregious, and should be removed.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to first thank my friend for his complimentary remarks and then to respond to a couple of points that he raised.

First, what he described as somewhat of a gimmick is, in fact, something called regular order. We are proceeding with the regular Rules of the House here. And to describe the Thomas substitute as a measure which should, in fact, be considered as an amendment and not a substitute would be doing a disservice to the chairman of the committee which will be managing this legislation as it moves forward, and in fact, the Thomas substitute was the only substitute that was favorably reported from the Committee on House Administration, so I think it is important for us to just clarify the record. Again, under this regular order procedure, we are allowing the Members the opportunity to consider a wide range of alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Long Beach, California, Mr. HORN.

(Mr. HORN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker. Speaker HASTERT told us in March, we will bring it up in September, and here it is September, and it is brought up. He is a person of his word.

I support the rule; I support Shays-Meehan. The question is, "Do we have the will to get a majority?" We had it last year; let us get it again this year. Will it stop current practices? Will it stop the auctioning off of the Lincoln bedroom? The greatest scandal in American history was the collection of foreign and domestic money for the 1996 presidential campaign. Shays-Meehan will stop that.

The time is now. Twenty-five years ago well-meaning colleagues thought that Congress was banning soft money. It turns out they were not. They had reform for individual candidates, but they failed when corporate money, union money, and very wealthy individuals' money, could be laundered through party organization committees of both parties and smaller parties. This flow of money was readily welcomed and the parties simply became great Automatic Teller Machines that one can push in at one end and millions of dollars come out at the other end. If we did that as candidates, we would be indicted. The parties are not. They had found a huge loophole. Shays-Meehan will end that.

Mr. Speaker, every right that we have flows to us in the governing of this country. We need to really reaffirm it by doing the right thing. We need to decide now whether our elections will be governed by law or manipulated by loophole. Let us do the right thing. Let us change the law. Let us make sure that people have faith in this institution and the institutions of government generally. If we do not do it, we will continue to see people as doubters about how ethically clean are legislators at the local, State, and the national levels. This is the chance to clean house. Let's do it.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the Democratic leader.

(Mr. GEPHARDT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today first to congratulate the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) for their excellent across-the-aisle, bipartisan work in bringing about this legislation. I might say that I hope that this bipartisan effort that they have put together with lots of Members from both parties is something that we cannot only win with today, but have repeated with other bills: the patients' bill of rights, education. We ought to be able to find a way to work across party lines to get things done for the American people. I want to congratulate both of them vociferously for the hard work that they have done day in and day out to get us to where we are today.

I would also like to recognize the work of our Democratic Blue Dogs and their discharge petition effort which forced the leadership to take our demands for a vote on campaign reform seriously. Because of their work, 202 Members of the House signed the discharge petition, urging the Republican leadership to bring Shays-Meehan to the floor, and we are able to be here today on the floor discussing this because of that discharge petition and the work that was done, again, in a bipartisan way to get this on the floor.

The truth is, some of the Republican leaders have done their best to prevent this issue from coming to the floor, despite the fact that a bipartisan majority of the House wants this vote. And they are still trying to kill reform with poison pill amendments and substitute bills. I hope that does not succeed. I hope the bipartisan majority for good campaign reform prevails.

This is a very simple issue. A vote for Shays-Meehan today is the best way and, in my view, the only way to begin to roll back the influence of wealthy special interests in government. It is the only way to focus the Congress back to the issues that the people I represent care about; to make our politics more responsive to their needs and not simply listening to wealthy special interests.

We have all seen what being bound to big money from special interests has done to our present legislative agenda. Republican leaders put the needs of powerful lobbyists ahead of average families and their needs. They killed gun safety legislation. They have tried to block a real patients' bill of rights, and they have refused to take action to make prescription drugs affordable to every senior.

Instead, they have introduced a tax bill which gives a small minority of wealthy Americans and corporations an \$8 billion tax break which threatens the economic growth that is the best I

have seen in my lifetime. We have gone from a government by the people, for the people to a government of lobbyists and special interests.

By passing Shays-Meehan we take the first major step toward restoring the trust of the people in their government, in their House of Representatives, and returning us all to the agenda of ordinary American families.

□ 1400

It is time to begin this process. It is time for Shays-Meehan to be the law of the land. I ask every Member, Republican and Democratic, refuse to vote for the amendments designed to kill this reform, reject the Thomas substitute, which will only distract us from what we are supposed to be doing and stand up today for Shays-Meehan, for real campaign reform. Return the people's Houses to the people of this great country.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the ranking member of the committee of jurisdiction.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule and urge its passage. What did he say? What kind of doublespeak is this? Is he speaking out of both sides of his mouth? I will leave it for the Members to determine, and I will discuss this rule and why I think it ought to be passed, and why I think it is an unfortunate rule in that context.

Mr. Speaker, there is a disease infecting American politics today. That disease is cynicism—cynicism towards our public institutions and our public officials.

The symptoms are plain to see: civic disengagement, voter apathy, detachment, disaffection, and erosion of trust. In my view, this cynicism is inextricably linked to our current campaign finance system.

In the 1996 presidential election cycle, less than one-tenth of 1 percent of Americans contributed the maximum \$1,000 per election for any candidate, according to the Advocacy Group on Public Campaigns. Yet, Americans cannot help but be awestruck by the so-called soft money contributions pouring into our politics. In the 1996 election cycle, the two major parties raised \$260 million in soft money. The same group predicts this figure will explode to \$750 million in this cycle.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a rare opportunity to attack this cynicism before it hardens into a more debilitating contempt. We also can show the American people that we indeed can work together in a bipartisan manner.

Just 13 months ago this House overwhelmingly passed the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill, 252 to 179, 61 Republicans, 190 Democrats. There is no reason that we cannot pass this important measure by even a larger margin today.

As we all know, Shays-Meehan would chip away at this cynicism by banning soft money contributions. In addition,

it would regulate issue advertising that is clearly aimed at electing or defeating a specific candidate.

While I am hopeful that we will pass Shays-Meehan once again, I am mindful that the path to victory is treacherous. That is because the rule governing today's debate in my view is designed to do one thing only, to kill Shays-Meehan. That is why I said at the beginning that I rise in opposition to this rule but urge its support, because I fear if it goes down, we will not have the opportunity to consider Shays-Meehan.

Here is what the Washington Post said about the 10 amendments made in order by this rule: "They were written and chosen either to vitiate the Shays-Meehan bill, or to poison it for Democrats who might then take the lead in killing it. Perhaps even worse, this rule pits noncontroversial Federal Election Commission reform, the Thomas substitute, against Shays-Meehan." If the Thomas substitute receives more votes than Shays-Meehan, the latter, of course, dies, and we will never even get to vote on it.

The substitute on FEC reform is not nor was it ever intended to be campaign finance reform. I ought to know. The Thomas substitute we will consider under this rule incorporates many of the provisions that I sponsored in H.R. 1818. But make no mistake, FEC reform is not campaign finance reform. FEC reform should have been on a suspension calendar or made as an amendment to Shays-Meehan. It was not. It was not because if it is adopted, it will automatically kill Shays-Meehan.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the Thomas substitute, which I support, but I support Shays-Meehan today, and we can support Thomas tomorrow.

I should note, too, that not one of our four committee hearings this summer, not one, was focused on FEC reform. Frankly, as best I can tell, their only real purpose was to try to discredit Shays-Meehan.

Finally, despite the fact that this is an unfair rule, as I said at the outset, I urge my colleagues to adopt it, to adopt it so that we can consider legislation critical to trying to allay the cynicism of which I have spoken.

Rules, of course, are not always fair, but there is no reason we cannot overcome the obstruction in our path, pass the bipartisan Shays-Meehan bill, and chip away at the cynicism toward American politics that exists today. I urge my colleagues to reject the poison pill amendments, to reject the Thomas substitute so we can adopt it on another day, to leave standing Shays-Meehan, and to vote in a bipartisan, overwhelming fashion to tell the American public that we are in fact, as our leader has said, going to return this House to the people.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to put this debate into a little perspective. When the United States became independent, when our Constitution was adopted, there were many skeptics who said that our new system of government would not last, a republican form of government, a democratic form of government. There had been many republics and democracies in the past and in antiquity, in Middle Ages, but they had not lasted. They all, every single one of them, degenerated into oligarchies or autocracies. Skeptics said this new democratic republic would not last, either.

There have been two greatest tests of our democratic system. In the Civil War, because of slavery, Lincoln quite correctly characterized it as a test of whether a government of the people, by the people, and for the people could survive.

Now we face a second great test, the increasing domination of our politics by big money. People are cynical, and rightly so. They believe that their participation, their voices, cannot count against the power of big money, and recent experience says they are right.

We all know the power of the HMOs, the pharmaceutical companies. We watched this Congress pass a \$50 billion giveaway to big tobacco companies. We gave away, not sold, not rented, gave away a \$70 billion spectrum to the broadcasting companies. Why? Because of the power of big money.

That power has corrupted both major political parties, and if we do not stop it, if we do not take this step, Shays-Meehan is the first step towards shopping it, when the histories are written, they will say the United States had a good 200-, 250-year run with democracy, and then it degenerated into an oligarchy and not a democratic system.

We must begin to stop it now. We must pass Shays-Meehan. We must reject the trickery and the conniving of the Republican leadership in putting all these procedural obstructions in its path. If we want democratic government to survive into the next millennium, this is the time to start saying so today.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to my very good friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD).

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding time to me, and I thank him, as well as the Speaker, for his fairness in allowing us to bring this to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of how we finance our campaigns overshadows and undermines every other issue we debate in this Capitol. It distorts our policy with regard to the national defense of our Nation, it distorts and skews our policy with regard to health care, it distorts and skews our policy with regard to environmental protection.

Reasonable men and women of this Chamber, friends of mine who come to

the floor and argue otherwise, they will argue that when unions or corporations contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars in soft money to the parties, that in fact that has no effect whatsoever on the policy that proceeds from this House.

I do not believe that, but reasonable people can differ. What is clear, though, is that the fact that there is this question before us undermines public confidence in democracy, and the public's confidence in our institutions of democracy is too important, far too important to act in any way but to err on the side of prudence.

Mr. Speaker, the standard for conduct in public office is not simply for public officials to avoid conflicts of interest. It is for us to avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest. Clearly, indisputably, the current system creates at least the appearance of conflict of interest, conflicts of interest between what is in the best interest of the American people and what is in the interest of those who donate such large sums to the parties.

Shays-Meehan allows us to transcend that conflict of interest. I urge its support.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO).

(Mr. VENTO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, this is a bad rule and a bad deal, but it is the only option we will get in this Republican controlled House.

The effort here is to try and defeat, and if not to defeat to undercut, any positive step to make a downpayment upon true campaign finance reform. The Republican leadership does not want to enact campaign reform. Their transparent behavior and actions speak louder than words, the Republican postponement of the Shays-Meehan bill so it will not likely reform the 2000 election cycle late in this session, and even then to float so many amendments, such wood decoys, as to distract and shoot down true campaign finance reform.

Today, hopefully, the House and the American public, will let them know it's not duck season, will avoid falling into this public relations trap and demand reform which will ensure the empowerment of voters.

Pass Shays-Meehan. Restore credibility. Empower voters, not just the special interests in this cycle. Restore confidence to the American public. Elections are at the core of our democracy. We need to take this step and pay an installment in terms of campaign reform.

Mr. Speaker, today the Majority leadership is trying to turn the old saying, "If it quacks like a duck, if it walks like a duck, it must be a duck" on its head. Under that strategy, they hope to put out enough wooden decoys to distract our attention and the attention of the American people. With such waddling around and a cacophony of quacking on campaign re-

form, they hope that they will be able to distract, to decoy the House from voting for a responsible change in our campaign laws and to avoid public accountability for their actions to block real campaign reform.

Mr. Chairman, that strategy will not work. The Members of this House, are working on a bipartisan basis for positive change within the limits of the Constitution. The American people know that today's system of political campaigns and how we fund them is broken. The American voter also knows that we have to enact meaningful reforms to return our political process to free our political process from the perception and reality of special interest control and empower the public interest as vital to a democracy.

The essence of this debate is returning our political process to the American people; clarifying the election process as inviolate and making certain that the people have a restored sense of control through their participation; making certain that their vote makes a difference. As campaign spending has skyrocketed and campaigns have come to rely more and more on paid media, paid phoners and paid consultants, the growing disillusionment of the American public has been evidenced by declining numbers at the voting booth across the nation. A simple review of the Federal Elections Commission compilation of national voting turnout reflect a steady erosion in turnout over the past 30 years. In 1960, over 63 percent of the U.S. voting age population voted. In the last Presidential election, only 49 percent eligible citizens actually voted. For non-presidential years, the percentage of voting age population who actually voted dropped by an alarming 11 percent.

There is no need to explore in great depth, the causes for voter drop-off. Legions of political scientists have debated this matter in academic circles for over the past decade. And we, the practitioners of politics, also have our own preconceptions of what has brought about the decline in voter turn-out. For too many voters political campaigns have become too slick and too negative. The result, the voter just disengages from political campaigns.

Unfortunately, most of the options before us do nothing or too little to address the totality of this problem. Instead these proposals are new schemes designed to sidetrack this Body; to subvert the goal of campaign finance reform; and to embed in law special advantages and special interest control. In particular, I would like to draw my Colleagues' attention to the amendment to be offered by the Member from Pennsylvania, Mr. GOODLING. This amendment, masquerading as "campaign reform", in reality targets one segment of our society, labor unions, and gags them from communicating with the membership. This amendment ignores the fact that unions today are prohibited from using union dues in federal political campaigns and that individuals cannot be forced to pay funds that will be used for political purposes. This Shays Meehan legislation in fact treats unions the same as everyone else by clocking the use of "soft money" and closing the "express advocacy" loophole. Perhaps that is the problem with this legislation, it is too fair. It treats Democrats and Republicans, labor and business, the NRA lobby and gun safety groups alike. The opponents of this bill would rather have a bill that tilts the process in their direction. The inherent balance of Shays Meehan is the correct way to

go, not an approach that gives an advantage to any group.

By approving the Shays-Meehan bill, Congress will be taking the first positive step in campaign finance reforms in decades. This legislation will certainly not eliminate all problems. This bill will not stop negative campaigning. Nor does it bring all campaign spending under control. The Shays-Meehan bill will, hopefully, be the first step in restoring some sanity to our campaign process. By eliminating the infusion of "soft money" into campaigns and closing the "issue advocacy" loophole, we are taking important positive steps to regain control and public accountability into our political base. This foundation will hopefully lead to further positive legislation to restore the rightful role of the American people in our political process. Critics say it will not work because of the courts or that the only way to go is public financing. The fact remains that this bill addresses serious loopholes and presents a common ground basis to act today.

To restore the role of the people and to return campaigns to a debate on issues, not sound bites, we must defeat the distracting phony decoy ducks that the Republican leadership and other anti-reform groups have floated and pass the Shays-Meehan bill today, as installment payment to restoring voter confidence and credibility to the federal election process now not later.

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly about the need to reform the system that finances our elections on political parties. Far too much of the time of this Chamber is devoted to fund-raising. We as Members know it, and so do our constituents. It is not surprising that the current system has led to a serious erosion of public confidence in the democratic process.

Also, we know that all too often the policy has been shaped by campaign contributions. One needs look no further than what we have seen with the tobacco industry over time. The most egregious example I have seen since I have been in Congress was the \$50 billion tax break for the cigarette manufacturers slipped into the 1997 tax reform legislation unannounced.

This campaign finance legislation, authored by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), does not just improve our terribly flawed system. More important, it will break a logjam that has prevented reform.

It will show the American people we can deliver something that is good for the political process and good for America. It will help us clean up the political process and make other reforms easier and more likely. It will help us exercise the bipartisan collaborative reform tendencies that can have a huge impact on the people's business in this Congress and beyond.

I urge a rejection of the poison pill amendments, and to pass Shays-Meehan.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that campaign finance reform come to the floor and be voted on. For that reason, we will not oppose this rule, even though this is an unfair rule, an unusual rule, and a rule structured by the majority to provide the maximum opportunity for mischief and the maximum opportunity to deny the House a direct vote on Shays-Meehan.

This is not a good rule. This is not a fair rule. But the minority has no choice but to permit the process to go forward and attempt to frustrate the majority's mischief by uniting our side with Members on the other side who want true campaign finance reform.

We will support Shays-Meehan. We reluctantly agree that this rule should go forward so the debate may begin.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy, even though it is reluctant, to have the support of Members of the minority for this rule. But I have to tell the Members that they should be enthusiastically supporting it.

Why? Because it is in fact a very fair and balanced rule. In fact, the degree of fairness is greater than what it was when my friends on the other side gave when they were in the majority.

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This is something called regular order. Now, our regular order, in fact, says that the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), as chairman of the Committee on Administration, has allowed to move forward the one substitute that was reported favorably from his committee and have that considered as a substitute. We have also chosen to make two other substitutes in order.

As I said in my opening remarks, 26 amendments were submitted to the Committee on Rules. Of those, we have made in order 13. One amendment was offered by a Democrat, and that amendment was made in order. So my Democratic colleagues have had every amendment that they submitted to the Committee on Rules made in order under this measure.

So it is a very fair rule. It is what is known as regular order. There is no poison pill involved in here. We are following regular order, which is exactly what Speaker HASTERT said when he stood in this well on the opening day of the 106th Congress. So I urge my colleagues to support the rule.

I will say that I am one who does believe very, very strongly in the importance of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. I think that the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) is

right on target in trying to provide a wide array of information to the American people as they look at the prospect of choosing their leaders.

The issue of campaign finance reform is important. It is important for us to make sure that we do everything that we can to protect and nurture that First Amendment to the Constitution. That is the reason that I am supportive of the Doolittle substitute, and I will be supporting the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) in his effort.

I know there has been a lot of talk about what the level of public interest is in this issue, and clearly there are some people who want to spend a lot of time focused on it. I do not think that we should be legislating based solely on what is the highest rated poll item. But I will say this, the issue of campaign finance reform is not quite as important as some of my colleagues have said.

When the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) talked about this being such an important issue, a decisive issue, as we juxtapose it to the Civil War, it seems to me that there are a wide range of important things that have taken place betwixt the Civil War and today, ranking all the way from the Second World War to the civil rights legislation, which was very, very important for our country. As the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has just reminded me, we had a man who walked on the moon 3 decades ago. So there are lots of things that are important.

We are, because of the level of interest that exists in this body, proceeding with consideration of this campaign finance reform measure under regular order, and I look forward to a free-flowing and stimulating debate.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1655, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1999

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-317) on the resolution (H. Res. 289) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1655) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the civilian energy and scientific research, development, and demonstration and related commercial application of energy technology programs, projects, and activities of the Department of Energy, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1551, CIVIL AVIATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-318) on the resolution (H. Res. 290) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1551) to authorize the Federal Aviation Administration's civil aviation research and development programs for fiscal years 2000 and 2001, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). Pursuant to House Resolution 283 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 417.

□ 1420

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 147) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes, with Mr. HOBSON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) be permitted to control 11 minutes of my time and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) be permitted