

MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a very proud cosponsor of the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act. It was one of the first bills that I cosponsored in this House because it puts people first.

Earlier this week, I had the privilege of standing with our colleagues, Senators McCAIN and FEINGOLD and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), at the birthplace of one of America's truly great reformers, President Teddy Roosevelt. We stood together in a bipartisan call for campaign finance reform, united in an urgency to restore faith in our democracy.

In his day, President Roosevelt said this: "One of the fundamental necessities in a representative government such as ours is to make certain that the men to whom they delegate their power shall serve the people by whom they are elected and not the special interests."

Mr. Speaker, today is literally the moment of truth in this House on campaign finance reform. We can keep our promises for reform, or we can pretend to keep our promises. The only true reform is known by McCain-Feingold and Shays-Meehan. Let us pass that today.

OPPOSE THE RESTRICTIONS ON
FREE SPEECH IN SHAYS-MEEHAN
MEASURE

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

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, this body is on the verge of a very important vote today, a vote that at its essence is really a vote on whether or not to uphold the constitutional right Americans have to free speech.

The restrictions in the Shays-Meehan bill are an affront to the Jeffersonian values of individual liberty and freedom that form the foundation of our country and its rule of law. Individuals, organizations, and businesses in our great land should be able to support the viewpoint and the party of their choice. If we place burdensome restrictions on how citizens are allowed to participate in our electoral process, we begin to undermine the basis of our Government by the people, a government to which citizens must be able to contribute freely.

As we cast our vote today on campaign finance reform, I urge my colleagues to remember the most essential reform is to ensure that everyone in America has the right to decide how to contribute to our system of democracy.

SUPPORT REAL CAMPAIGN
FINANCE REFORM

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of real campaign finance reform.

Why is this so critical? Why is it so important to us today? There is far too much special interest money in our political democracy. Special interests are drowning out the voice of the American people, and they are sick of it.

In my race in San Diego, my opponent and I were outspent by special interests by a ratio of 4 to 1. Special interests' television and mailers flooded the 49th district constituents. All of this soft money made it virtually impossible for the candidates to communicate directly to the voters. Voters were frustrated with a lack of honest information. There was so much information coming from so many undisclosed sources that they did not know whom to believe and what was coming from whom.

Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that voters are the center of our democratic election system. They deserve nothing less. So I urge this House to pass strong and effective campaign finance reform today, to do it without games, and to do it in an honest and straightforward way. The American public is depending upon us.

MINNESOTANS WANT REAL
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, Minnesotans want real campaign finance reform. They want it now. My State has led the Nation in how we run our elections. From our voters registering on election day to limiting our campaign spending, Minnesota campaigns have a reputation of being open, honest and competitive; and we consistently lead the Nation in voter turnout.

One of the reasons why I ran for Congress was to work to help to restore the public's trust in our elected leaders. The Shays-Meehan bill is the first good step in cleaning up our campaign finance system. By eliminating soft money, Americans' confidence in our electoral system will be restored.

Mr. Speaker, this bill helps to control the amount of money contributed in campaigns, but we need to go farther. We must take control of how much money is spent on elections. I will work to take the next step on campaign finance reform by limiting the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on our elections. However, we must begin now. We must begin today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support Shays-Meehan and begin the process.

DEFEAT CERTAIN AMENDMENTS
TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM
BILL

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today we have a very important issue before us: campaign finance reform. I want to talk about two amendments that are going to be coming up before us.

One is known as the Linder-Schrock amendment, and it bans the use of funds that unions and corporations would give to communicate with their members and stockholders. How ridiculous.

In California we had a similar proposition, and it failed miserably; and that proposition was known as Prop 226. I am glad to say that the residents and those that voted in that election defeated that overwhelmingly. Let us make sure that we defeat that amendment here also.

Another amendment that I believe is egregious would also restrict and limit legal immigrants from making contributions to Federal candidates. Again, we are limiting their ability to voice their opinions. This is known as the Bereuter-Wicker amendment, which would preclude individuals from communicating with people and ideals that they support.

If this is truly America, then we have to stand up for all legal immigrants that are tax-paying, that serve our country, that are playing by the rules, and that are maybe one step away of becoming citizens. Let us do the right thing and defeat these two amendments.

OPPOSE THE RULE ON CAMPAIGN
FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am anxious, we are all anxious, to begin campaign finance reform and to begin it by making our rules more fair. Unfortunately, we need to oppose the rule that is coming before this House this morning. It is a rule that tells the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) that they cannot present their bill to this House in the form that they want to present it. Instead, the manager's amendment is chopped up into 12 pieces.

This is unprecedeted. This is unfair. This is not reform. This is not the way this House should conduct its business. A vote on Shays-Meehan should be a vote on the bill that the authors would like us to vote on, not an old draft from 3 or 4 weeks ago. If we have a manager's amendment that comes before this House, it should be one amendment, not chopped up into 12 time-wasting pieces.

Vote “no” on the rule.

TIME TO END CORRUPTING INFLUENCE OF MONEY ON PUBLIC POLICY

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the corrupting influence of money on public policy is evident in this House every day. It is evident not only as a principal concern that arises here on vote after vote, significantly influenced by who, gave how much, to whom, when, but it is also particularly evident in the silence on critical issues of public policy, on what is never discussed. When we are unable to consider critical issues of public health because of the soft money contributions from Philip Morris and the tobacco industry; when we are never able to debate the outrageous price discrimination against our seniors on their pharmaceuticals because of the millions of dollars that the pharmaceutical companies contribute, and by the multiple issues never considered that impact our children, who make no campaign contribution.

Today we have an opportunity to consider a very modest, a very incomplete and imperfect answer to this troubling predicament through bipartisan legislation. This legislation represents our best hope to begin to correct this outrage and restore our democracy to the people.

PASS MEANINGFUL CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Ms. DELAUR^O asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the time has come to pass meaningful campaign finance reform. What it will do, what the bipartisan Shays-Meehan Campaign Reform Act will do is to take the soft money out of politics, take the special interest money out of politics. It will help us to restore the integrity to our political system. It will help us today to restore the confidence that the American public needs to have in people who serve in public life, restore their confidence in our government that, in fact, we can act on behalf of the interests of the people that we represent and not the interests of the moneyed interests in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation here to pass meaningful campaign finance reform so that, in fact, we can get about the business of making sure that we have a Patients' Bill of Rights, which is a bipartisan piece of legislation; that we have a prescription drug benefit so that we can bring some relief to people who are struggling with the high cost of drugs in this country; that we can have a clean and a safe environment.

That is what this bill is about. It is a bipartisan bill. It is authored by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN). This bill has passed twice in this House before, and we should take today that opportunity to make it a law.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the pending business is the question of the Speaker's approval of the Journal of the last day's proceedings.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 362, nays 50, answered “present” 1, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 222]

YEAS—362