

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 10, 2002]

CRASH KILLS TWO IN STERLING

Two people were killed after a two-car crash involving a drunk driver last night in Sterling, Virginia. State Police said.

The crash happened on Route 28 near Route 625 about 8:30 p.m., police said. The victims were believed to be a man in his sixties and a boy.

One of the drivers was also injured in the crash and was flown to an area hospital, police said.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, not surprisingly in this political city the debate over campaign finance reform has taken the shape of people talking about which party would be advantaged, but there is a more profound issue, more profound even than the kind of subtle corruption that campaign money takes. It goes to the nature of democracy.

We have two systems in this country. We have an economic system, capitalism, which is based on inequality. It is inequality which drives that system which has been so productive of wealth and which is so broadly supported. If people are not unequally rewarded for their labor, if people are not unequally rewarded for the wisdom of their investment decisions, if people are not unequally rewarded because they respond to consumer demand, capitalism does not work. So inequality, some of us want to keep it from getting excessive, but it is at the heart of that system.

We also have a political system, and the heart of that political system is equality. That was the genius of the American Constitution, not fully realized at the time, a goal that we have been striving towards with some success ever since. What we have in our public policy is a tension between an economic system built on inequality where people are unequally rewarded and unequally powerful and a political system in which people are supposed to be equal, in which people's preferences are supposed to count each equally one for one.

What we have in America today is a corruption of that system in the broadest sense. As money has become more and more influential in politics, the inequality of the economic system has damaged the ability of the political system to function in a way that carries out equality. We cannot allow the inequality that is a necessary element of our capitalism to swamp the equality that is supposed to be the element of our political system.

That is why the Shays-Meehan bill is so important. It reduces the role of money. Soft money is a way that the unequal part of our system gains undue influence over the place where it is

supposed to be equal, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the profound philosophical reason why campaign finance reform ought to reduce the role of money, ought to reduce the extent to which inequality undermines formal equality.

Interestingly, some of those opposed to the bill have implicitly acknowledged this. I have heard people say, on the Republican side mostly, we cannot go ahead with that kind of a forum; if we get rid of soft money, the next thing we know, labor and environmentalists and all those people will dominate the election. We have, in fact, had people almost explicitly say that the danger in campaign finance reform is that the people will have too much to say.

Well, that is the way it is supposed to be in the political part of the system. The financial, the economic system has inequality, but in the political system people are supposed to have equality. That is also the answer to those who say that somehow this violates freedom of expression in the first amendment.

I should note, Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat interested to see Members that I have served with for a very long time who for the first time in their careers have become champions of free speech. That is, there are Members who have supported virtually every restriction on free speech, including censorship on the Internet and other rules that the Supreme Court has thrown out, and they have voted for them cheerfully, but when it comes to the power of money to swamp the equal part of our political system, suddenly they become advocates of free speech. Indeed, it seems that many of them are for free speech as long as it is not free. They are for free speech when it costs money, when they can buy it.

In fact, if we look at the purpose of our Constitution and our political system, if we look at the role that equality is supposed to play, we understand, because we do not just interpret the Constitution in the abstract, we interpret it in its context, our political system is meant to be one in which people are equal, and what we are doing with campaign finance reform is restricting the ability of money to swamp that equal sector.

It does not impinge on free speech as we have ever understood it. Everyone in this country will be as free as they ever want to say what they want to say, to speak out. We do say that they cannot use money, they cannot use the inequality that has accrued to them through the capital system to undermine the electoral system.

So, for that reason, precisely because the very heart of the democratic political system is at stake, I hope that we will pass the campaign finance reform bill in an appropriate form, in a form that can go right to the President's desk, because it is essential that we vindicate the equality principle against those who are the beneficiaries of inequality who are seeking to erode it.

TRIBUTE TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is February 12, 2002, and on this calendar date 193 years ago today, just scarcely two lifetimes ago, came into the world the 16th President of the United States of America, the father of the Republican Party, the leader who ended slavery and at the same time saved the Union.

□ 1245

I speak, of course, of President Abraham Lincoln, born humbly in Kentucky, raised proudly in Indiana, who then moved and pursued a public and adult career in Illinois.

The Bible tells us, ‘If you owe debts, pay debts. If honor, then honor. If respect, then respect. I thought today, in the midst of all our debates about other pressing national issues, as now having the privilege of being able to call Abraham Lincoln, the Congressman Abraham Lincoln from 1848, a colleague, that it would be all together fitting to rise today and remember the occasion of his birth, and to do so, Mr. Speaker, with his own words.

Abraham Lincoln spoke of many issues, but of course freedom and the abolition of the evil of human slavery were chief among them.

April 1859: “Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.”

August 1858: “As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy.”

July 1858: “I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created equal.”

And in June of 1858: “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the union to be dissolved, I do not expect the House to fall, but I do expect it to cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”

Abraham Lincoln was also a man of very profound faith, which inspires many millions to this day, writing: “I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day.”

In September of 1864, he wrote: “In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book.” And in the creation of the very first proclamation of Thanksgiving and a national day of prayer in October of 1863, the President wrote: “I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe this last day of

Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly do to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and restore it as soon as it may be consistent with Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and union."

President Abraham Lincoln was lastly a man who understood and cherished liberty and knew where its threats would be presented. As he said in January of 1838: "At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never. All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth in their military chest, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a thousand years of trial. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer: If it ever reach us, it must spring up from among us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a Nation of free men, we must live through all time or die by suicide."

February 12, 1809, a day the world and America became richer.

WASHINGTON, DC, IS OPEN AND SAFE AND WAITING FOR YOU

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have just come from a fair I am sponsoring, along with the D.C. Chamber of Congress, called "Ask Me About Washington." It is a service we are providing to Members and staff, along with a free lunch, that we think may be especially needed this year.

The Galleries are empty, my colleagues. There is a reason. This is an election year. They should be full. But our constituents need information and need reassurance that the barricades and the ugly security do not send a message that we are trying to tell them something: stay away; your Member of Congress does not want to see you this year.

I do not think so, but that will be the effect unless we reach out and become more proactive. The fact is elected officials never want people to stay away.

We cannot help it that the security is not as it was. It is being fixed. We sympathize with the Architect of the Capitol and the police board, but we have to do something in the meantime.

I have distributed a fact sheet that I hope Members will send to their own constituents in their constituent mail simply telling them what are absolutely unknown facts for most of them: that Reagan National Airport will be 77 percent up by March 1; telling them everything is open, and all the rest. I think my colleagues will find it informational; and more than that, I think Members will find their constituents will find that they are getting word from Washington that they have not gotten in a long time, not since September 11.

The fact is we have been winging it because we have never had anything like September 11: ad hoc decisions; this open, this closed, this barricade up, this one comes down, a new one comes up. West front steps get closed down. Now that is something we need to hear more about. That is part of the great wonderful axis of Washington created by L'Enfant himself. We need to know more about that, because there ought to be ways to open that up if we just think a little harder.

Do not think I give short shrift to security. I live here 7 days a week, my colleagues; and 600,000 of my constituents live here. We want this place safe, and in fact we do believe it is the safest city in America because this is the Nation's capitol. We know that AWACs and those F-16s are up 24-7. Our constituents do not know. My colleagues' constituents do not know, that is. They need to be told that their Members of Congress want to see them this year, the way we want to see them every year.

Honestly, I do not believe that it is beyond American ingenuity to find ways to be safe and secure and open and democratic at the same time. We have to try harder. Some of the things we need to do are absolutely simple. I have been having conversations with the White House and have suggested that if people left their Social Security numbers, the way they have to anyway if they want to visit someone in the White House, that the White House tours could be open. And I am grateful the White House has decided to open tours to student groups.

So that means we are getting somewhere just because they have begun to think harder. The White House, after a great protest from the press and others when the Christmas tree lighting ceremony closed down, decided to open it up simply by putting the same glass around the President they use during the inauguration. Some of this is not rocket science, but it does require us to think a little harder than we did before September 11.

I will have a bill that I will ask Members to cosponsor called The Open Society With Security bill, because I think we need a Presidential commission to

step back and look at how we run an open society when there is global terrorism all around us. I think such a commission would help us get our bearings so that we would not be under the pressure we are under today to make decisions as we go along.

We are doing quite well. We can do much better. The White House is doing much better. The capitol tours are open. Washington is open. Only the monument, which was closed for renovations, is not open. A tour of the Pentagon can be arranged ahead of time. But our constituents do not know that.

I want Members' constituents to come visit Washington because, obviously, that helps my economy; but my colleagues want them to come for a reason which is equally important to them. We do not want a full year in which people think that this is an uninviting place and that this is not the year to come to see their Member of Congress. It is not only an election year; it is the year after September 11. It is a year when we want to make the point that terrorists cannot close us down.

We set the example in the Nation's capitol by opening ourselves up and sending the message that the whole country should be open.

HOUSE LEADERSHIP URGED TO CONSIDER ACCELERATED DEPRECIATION IN STIMULUS PACKAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today our Nation is at war. We are in a war against terrorism. We are working to build our homeland security, and we are suffering an economic recession. Our Commander in Chief, President Bush, is demonstrating strong, resolute leadership in the war against terrorism. We must not forget that the war against terrorism will last a long time, not just months, but likely years. The war against terrorism will not end in Afghanistan. The al Qaeda terrorism network has a presence in 65 nations, and tens of thousands of terrorists have gone through their death training camps.

Part of winning the war on terrorism is also getting our economy moving again. Clearly, the terrorist attack was directed at our economy. If we look back and remember 1 year ago this month, when President Bush was sworn into office on the east front in inaugural ceremonies, he inherited a weakening economy, an economy which was getting weaker and Americans were beginning to lose their jobs. He proposed a tax cut, a tax cut he said that would put extra money in the pocketbooks of America's consumers, giving them more money to spend at home for their families' needs.