

reemployed. That is an absolute necessity for many of the unemployed because if they cannot continue that plan and they have a preexisting health condition, or their child has a preexisting health condition or spouse does, that individual's break in employment, break in health insurance means very likely that condition will not be covered when reemployed. That is why the COBRA benefit is so terribly important. Yet for those 2 million people, Congress has done nothing.

The tax credit that the President offers does not solve that problem for hundreds of thousands of families that are in that situation. Or for those people's whose spouses may have had a bout with cancer, or whose children who may have a childhood illness, that would not be covered.

Yet Congress insists it is going to take leave of this town, go home for 13 or 14 days, and we are going to fail to address the needs of these families. We must understand that these families are in dire financial straits. In dire financial straits. They are either adding up their debt because they are living off of what credit card debt they have available to them, they are borrowing from family members, or they are invading their retirement funds. Why in America should a working family that finds itself unemployed through no fault of their own, because of a terrorist activity or because of a downturn in the economy, they showed up and went to work every day, why should they lose all of their assets before we help them with health care or extend them some benefits?

Mr. Speaker, we ought to extend the 13 weeks immediately. If there is a break, and a worker has been working in the hospitality industry or low-paying jobs in this country, 2 weeks, 4 weeks without a check is a devastating event. Maybe Members of Congress cannot understand that, but when Members go home for the district work period, Members need to talk to these people. Then Members will begin to understand the desperate straits that millions of Americans find themselves in because of this Congress' failure to extend the unemployment benefits.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on campaign finance reform, legislation once again before this Chamber. I, like most of my colleagues, support some type of campaign reform. I know that reasonable and balanced reforms to our current campaign finance system is necessary. Unfortunately, the Democrat bill, the Shays-Meehan bill, does not strengthen or improve our campaign finance system as well as I think the Ney-Wynn bill does, which is a Republican alternative.

In fact, I think the Democrat bill does more to harm than help both the political process and the Constitution by hurting the ability of political parties to increase citizen involvement and participation, unconstitutionally limits free speech, and tilts the playing field towards one party or another. For this reason, I applaud the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) in their bipartisan bill for their efforts at sensible reform for our current system.

Proponents of the Shays-Meehan bill, which is support by the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), claim their legislation puts an end to soft money. That is false. None of the proposals before this body ban a complete ban of soft money. Even the most cursory of glances indicates there is no soft money ban in the Shays-Meehan campaign finance legislation.

In reality, this bill bans the national parties from raising or spending soft money, but it does nothing to prevent unions, corporations, and other special interests from spending as much soft money as they want on election activity. As a result, corporations or unions are allowed to give tens of thousands of dollars to each State and local party committee. With over 3,000 counties in the United States, this means corporations and unions will still be permitted to inject millions of dollars of soft money into the political process. As such, the soft money debate amounts to nothing more than a shell game with dollars being shuffled and moved from one part of the table to another, and the American people losing out.

Furthermore, the Democrat plan does not ban soft money advocacy, it only bans it on the eve of an election. Through such rulings as *Buckley v. Valeo* in 1976 and other cases, the Supreme Court has declared that the government may not regulate political commentaries "to promote a candidate and his views." Since the 1976 *Buckley v. Valeo* decision, strong majorities have supported protections for the expenditure of money for political communications. The first amendment cannot be sacrificed by government restrictions on issue ads and free speech. No matter how they are dressed up, such restrictions still involve government regulation of political speech.

Mr. Speaker, the proposal to be offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN), supported by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), is aimed at reforming our current system of laws, but does so in a manner that is rational, balanced, and, most importantly, constitutional. Their legislation bans the use of soft money by national parties for Federal election activities. It does not, however, impose new burdensome Federal laws and rules on State parties. It restores and enhances grassroots politics by allowing State and local parties to continue to assist State and local candidates with

funds permissible under applicable State law.

Most importantly, their proposal does not violate constitutional rights to free speech, nor destroy the ability to participate in the political process. So I support fair and balanced solutions to improving our campaign finance system. As such, I have voted accordingly and supported the Hutchinson-Allen bill, which was patterned after the Ney-Wynn bill when it was considered on the House floor in the last Congress. Unfortunately, it failed.

Mr. Speaker, had the rules governing the amendment process not been limited for this upcoming debate, I would have also supported amendments to allow tax credits for up to \$200 for individuals for Federal political contributions, thereby creating an incentive for persons of all financial means to participate in the political process.

Additionally, I support allowing permanent resident aliens serving in the Armed Forces to make campaign contributions. And if we really want to clean up the current system, I support prohibiting labor organizations from fund-raising on Federal property through the use of payroll deductions.

If advocates of misguided campaign finance reform are successful in passing this legislation, they will have done nothing to prevent future campaign abuses. Instead, they will be successful in eroding and handicapping Americans' right to free speech and the right to political expression. Therefore, I urge all of my colleagues to support the Ney-Wynn bill.

□ 1315

WHY COMMUNITY SERVICE IS IMPORTANT

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make some comments today on how everybody in America probably should do a little more in helping their fellow man in contributing some community service, either at the community or national level.

I was this past week deciding on the essay topic that I ask seniors to write to apply for what I have called the LeGrand Smith Scholarship. It is named after my dad. I simply take all of the pay increases that I have had since I first ran in the Michigan Senate back in 1983; I have put these pay increases into an irrevocable trust for scholarships for graduating seniors. It is designed to reward and acknowledge those individuals in high school that are not only academically capable but also are willing to contribute to others in community service or in leadership positions in high school. Part of that decision in scoring of the committee that decides who the winners are is

grading an essay on an essay topic. The committee was just trying to decide, and we had it narrowed down to two topics, why patriotism is important in America or why helping others and working in some community service or national service is important. We decided on the latter. Part of it was maybe because the President in his State of the Union address suggested that we have a Freedom Corps where every individual in America during their lifetime contribute 2 years of community or national service.

I would like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of individuals could gain significantly by serving in a community and national service program. I would envision the possibility of taking every senior when they graduate from high school and say that here is an opportunity for you to go maybe in 6 weeks of basic training and then serve in community service. In 1990 we passed a bill in Congress signed by the President, the community and national service legislation, that lays out 20 or 30 different types of community and national service. I envision a system where you could expand that to serve in your local communities, in your local hospitals. Certainly there is a tremendous need now for individuals for service at the national level in many aspects. A national service bill for high school students would have maybe the same kind of 6 weeks of basic training that many of us had in earlier years in boot camp.

When I went into the Air Force, into boot camp, I thought I had a lot of discipline, self-discipline. As it turned out, getting up at 5 o'clock in the morning and going out and doing aggressive exercises and then making a very neat bed and keeping your clothes clean and your shoes shined, plus the patriotism that we learned in terms of working together, in terms of saluting the flag.

But one thing that all of us that served in that basic training also learned in associating with individuals from all kinds of backgrounds, that the individual that had a different religious faith, that the individual that was yellow, black, tan or a different color ended up being just as qualified in their intelligence, just as qualified in their leadership ability, and it gave me a new perspective and also at the same time I think opened new vistas of opportunities of the responsibility of all of us to serve.

When the President suggested a national service program, I wonder how many of us will respond. I think the response should be very aggressive. But I also think it should be considered that every graduating high school senior come into some kind of a program where they would go through 6 weeks of kind of basic training. And maybe with what happened September 11, it is especially important, because we have now learned that those individuals in the Taliban were trained to hate and hate Americans.

Mr. Speaker, in combination with patriotism, I think community and national service is vital for everyone. I encourage all to participate.

□ 1315

WHY COMMUNITY SERVICE IS IMPORTANT

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make some comments today on how everybody in America should consider doing a little more to help others. Helping others in your neighborhood or contributing service, either at the community or national level should be considered an obligation.

I was this past week deciding on the essay topic that I ask seniors to write, as part of their application to apply for what I have called the LeGrand Smith Scholarship. It is named after my dad. I simply take all of the pay increases that I have had since I first ran in the Michigan Senate back in 1983 and put those funds into an irrevocable trust for scholarships for graduating seniors. It is designed to reward and acknowledge those individuals in high school that are not only academically capable but also are willing to contribute to others in community service or in leadership positions in high school. Part of the scoring of the committee that decides winners, is the grading of an essay. The committee was deciding the essay topic and had it narrowed down to two topics; why patriotism is important in America or why helping others and working in some community service or national service is important. We decided on the latter. The President in his State of the Union address suggested that we have a Freedom Corps where every individual in America during their lifetime contribute 2 years of community or national service.

I would like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of individuals could gain significantly by serving in a community and national service program. I would envision the possibility of taking every high school senior when they graduate from high school to go into a community and national service program, this would be an opportunity for young people to go through maybe 6 weeks of basic training and then serve in national or community service. In 1990 we passed a bill in Congress signed by the President, the community and national service legislation, that establishes 20 plus different types of community and national service. I envision a system where you could expand that to serve in your local communities, in local hospitals, with senior groups or many other areas of need. Certainly there is a tremendous need now for individuals to serve at the national level in many aspects. A national service bill for high school students would have maybe the same kind of 6 weeks of basic training that many of us had in earlier years in boot camp where you learn discipline, respect for yourself and others as well as patriotism.

When I went into the Air Force, into boot camp, I thought I had a lot of discipline, self-discipline. As it turned out, getting up at 5

o'clock in the morning and going out and doing aggressive exercises and then making a very neat bed and keeping your clothes pressed and your shoes shined as well as education about defending our country plus the patriotism that we learned was valuable.

But one thing that all of us that served in that basic training also learned in associating with individuals from all kinds of backgrounds, was respect for others. We learned that individuals that had different religious faiths, individuals that were yellow, black, tan, white or whatever ended up being just as qualified in their intelligence, just as qualified in their leadership ability and just as nice of people as anyone else. It gave us a new perspective and also at the same time I think opened new vistas of opportunities and the feeling of responsibility to help others when they need help.

When the President suggested a national service program, I wonder how many of us will respond. I think the response should be very aggressive. But I also think it should be a responsibility that every graduating high school senior come into some kind of a program where they would go through 6 weeks of kind of basic training and another four months of serving others. And maybe with what happened September 11, it is especially important.

Mr. Speaker, in combination with patriotism, I think community and national service is a responsibility of all Americans. I encourage all to participate.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

God be gracious to us and bless us. God, let Your face shine upon us. Make Your ways known to us. May Your saving power be acknowledged by all nations on the Earth.

Let the people of this Congress praise You, O God, by their words. Let this people praise You in all their deeds.

May the people of the United States rejoice and shout with joy because You embrace all the people of this Nation with justice.

You alone guide all the powers of Earth. So the Earth has given its increase and the peoples of the Earth prosper and praise You. Let all the peoples praise You, O God. Some day soon let all the peoples praise You.

Because the blessings of God even now extend to the ends of the Earth, let all the peoples praise You. Amen.