

Ben Ali, the President of Tunisia. And it is time that we stand, as the President said, with the people of Tunisia now and support their democratic aspirations.

The U.S. gets another chance to stand with the democratic aspirations of another people, the people of Egypt, against the autocratic, dictatorial, and undemocratic leadership of Hosni Mubarak. For too long, the U.S. has stood against the people of Egypt seeking a more democratic country and a more democratic government. Every election has been rigged by the Mubarak government, and the state emergency power laws have been extended so that people would be rounded up so his viable opponents would be thrown into jail and political parties would be outlawed.

The time has come to stop this. The time has come for the United States to tell the Mubarak government that this election has to be free and open. The sole purpose of the election cannot be to pass on a great country to the son of the current leader in spite of the democratic aspirations of the Egyptian people.

REDUCE FEDERAL SPENDING

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, "we have to confront the fact that our government spends more than it takes in. That is not sustainable. Every day, families sacrifice to live within their means. They deserve a government that does the same."

Those are the words that were stated less than 24 hours ago, at 9 o'clock last night, by the President of the United States. And I have to say that truer words have never been spoken.

Mr. Speaker, when Ms. FOXX calls up this rule, we will be proceeding with the first modified open rule for debate in 4 years, and we will be putting ourselves on a path towards reducing the size, scope, and reach of government so that we will send a signal out there that job creation and economic growth can finally, finally get moving.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 359, ELIMINATING TAXPAYER FINANCING OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 54 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 54

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. 359) to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by termi-

nating taxpayer financing of presidential election campaigns and party conventions. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the chair 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 for a period not to exceed five hours. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII and except pro forma amendments for the purpose of debate. Each amendment so printed may be offered only by the Member who caused it to be printed or a designee and shall be considered as read. 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 (Mr. SIMPSON). The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 54 provides for a modified open rule for consideration of H.R. 359, which is a bill to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of Presidential election campaigns and party conventions.

Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing to stand before you in a House dominated by new a Republican majority focused on changing the direction from the failed liberal policies that have dominated Washington for the past 4 years. Although there remains some obstacles to realizing the full breadth of a Republican agenda so desperately needed to pull our economy out of the doldrums, it is indeed a new day.

This rule provides for consideration of H.R. 359, legislation authored by my friend, Mr. COLE, that I have cosponsored as it represents a small step towards a brighter future for our country. Instead of considering legislation providing perpetual spending increases as the solution for all that ails us, in a departure from Washington

groupthink, H.R. 359 would actually reduce Federal spending, Mr. Speaker.

Although this concept may be foreign to many liberals and many Washington Beltway insiders, it's what the Americans expect out of the new Republican majority they recently sent to represent them here in the people's House. Instead, H.R. 359, which CBO estimates would save \$617 million over 10 years, eliminates an expensive Federal program that wastes taxpayer money funding Presidential campaigns and national party conventions.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to the proposed rule to H.R. 359 to terminate the Presidential Election Campaign Fund and the ability for taxpayers to designate \$3 of their Federal tax liability for financing of Presidential election campaign.

This week, Republicans have engaged in what amounts to a shifty attack on a program that successfully limited the influence of corporations and special interests in our Presidential campaigns, tilting the playing field further in favor of multimillionaires who can, and often do, spend their own money.

Just as poll taxes and literacy tests prevented poor people and minorities from voting, eliminating this program will place those without the multimillion-dollar political clout yet another step away from having their day in a Presidential race.

□ 1020

This program allows every taxpaying American to voluntarily check a box—and I think I should reiterate here the individual "opts in" to this program—on their 1040 to put \$3 in the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. A married couple has the option of \$6 if filing jointly.

Checking the "yes" box does not increase the amount of taxes an individual owes, nor does it decrease any refund to which he or she is entitled.

In establishing the checkoff program, Congress left the single most important decision to the taxpayer. The taxpayer, not the House Republican leadership, decides whether he or she wants \$3 of their taxes to be used for the Presidential funding program. The choice is theirs to voluntarily check "yes" or "no." And I might add, during our hearing in the Rules Committee yesterday, several of us, including some of my Republican colleagues, indicated that they had at one time or another participated in this program. And yet now they want to eliminate it. Yes, this program does need improvement, but it is far from ineffective or obsolete.

Since the fund's inception in 1976, every Presidential candidate before 2008 has used the Presidential Election Campaign Fund in the general election,

and Republicans' own 2008 Presidential candidate, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, used it to fund his election.

During the 2008 election cycle, nearly \$17 million of public funds were spent for the Republican convention, and an equivalent amount for Democrats; \$84 million to Republicans for general election grants; and a total of \$18 million for primary matching funds for parties' candidate nominations.

House Republican leaders have promised to bring reform and accountability to Congress, and I quote from the Republican Pledge to America: "We are fighting to bring much-needed sunlight to the process." Is this the kind of reform and sunlight that you pledge to the American people?

YouCut gives Americans a choice? Really? A Web site where you only have the opportunity to vote "yes" for cutting—that is, either you support the Republican agenda, or we do not care what you think. A Web site where saying "yes" to meaningful programs, such as the National Endowment For the Arts, Legal Services Corporation, the Community Development Program, and a fund that was created specifically to empower Presidential candidates to participate in the political system regardless of their socioeconomic status or their relationship with special interest influence, is not welcome.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: A more fitting name for the "YouCut" program would be "CutYou" because it hurts everyday Americans while doing little to cut the Federal deficit.

Simply put, YouCut undercuts our democracy. The summary's headline for the legislation we are considering today is: End the Presidential Election Fund—Savings of \$520 million over 10 years.

The biased paragraph goes on to say: "In short, it provides taxpayer subsidies to political candidates and parties." Not only are the summaries provided on YouCut inaccurate, they are written to elicit a specific response.

We know that use of the fund has declined in recent years. President Obama was the first candidate since the fund's inception to opt out of the public financing in the general election, and other candidates have opted out of public financing in primary elections. If candidates from major parties continue to decline public financing, then the savings from eliminating the fund could and likely will be substantially lower.

Confusing YouCut voters with one-sided jargon and eliminating programs like the Presidential Election Campaign Fund are not the answers; fixing the public financing system and paying attention to what the American people really want are the answers.

What Republicans fail to mention is that the YouCut program is inherently selective, and therefore biased. Neither online nor cell phone voters are able to vote to save a program rather than cut

it. Furthermore, the YouCut program conveniently targets only those who have Internet access and cell phones, which disproportionately leaves out a lot of the poor and elderly. The last time I checked, an undisclosed number of votes on a partisan Web site does not constitute the will of the American people.

Republicans seem to think that this online gimmick is an effective substitute for good governance. Now, the Republicans have promised over and over again that the 112th Congress would be a new wave of accountability and transparency. And yet this, like every other major bill that has been considered thus far, is lacking in both. The Republican leadership has held no hearings or markups, failed to consider alternatives, and crafted a bill so narrow that very few amendments can even be considered germane.

Mr. Speaker, this bill eliminates rather than repairs the Presidential public financing system, which is, in my judgment, irresponsible and will move our Nation in the wrong direction. I suggest that the next campaign more than likely on either side, Republican or Democrat, will cost as much as \$1 billion each.

The House Republican leadership has touted that they are going to change the permissive culture of Congress. Today's consideration of this legislation is evidence that the only thing House Republicans want to do is glorify the permissive culture of their own party.

I urge my colleagues to instead focus on repairing the system and maintain the focus on increasing the roles of average citizens in our Presidential election process.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), chair of the Rules Committee.

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by expressing my appreciation to my good friend from Grandfather Community for doing her typically wonderful job of managing the rule. I also want to say to my friend from Fort Lauderdale that I appreciate his thoughtful remarks. I am somewhat dumbfounded, though, that for the first time since April 8, 2008—it has been 4 years, April 4, 2008, it was a beach bill that was being considered here—we had a modified open rule. We now are going to allow Members of this House to engage in a free-flowing debate. Our Rules Committee colleague, Mr. POLIS, came up to me last night right before the State of the Union message saying that he was looking forward to offering an amendment that he told me he submitted for the RECORD last night. So we are going to, for the first time in a long time, allow for free-flowing debate. So I can understand why my friend might want to oppose the under-

lying legislation. I disagree with him, but I can't understand why in the world they would conceive of opposing for the first time since April 8, 2008, having the kind of free-flowing debate that both Democrats and Republicans and the American people deserve to see their representatives have in this institution.

And what is this legislation all about? This legislation is all about job creation and economic growth. Job creation and economic growth. And one might say, when you are talking about the Presidential checkoff, how is that about job creation and economic growth?

Well, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker. Last night the President time and time again talked about the importance of creating jobs. And as I said during my 1-minute presentation here, the President made it very clear that we need to make sure that we live within our means. Now, what is it that living within our means will do?

□ 1030

We need to send a message to those potential job creators out there that the United States Government is getting its fiscal house in order so that there can be a level of confidence for those businesses to create jobs. Right now, when you look at the fact that we have this \$14 trillion debt, when you look at the fact that we have deficits as far as the eye can see, it's not sending a very positive signal for those people who want to create jobs.

So you ask, Why is it we're taking on a new program like this? Well, the new estimate has it from \$520 million to \$617 million. This is based on the new estimates.

Now, is it a small amount of money? Of course it's a small amount of money.

Why is this chosen? Well, I think that there is a reason. It's the fact that it has failed.

President Obama chose to cast aside and not utilize this system when he was running for President, and JOHN MCCAIN did use it, as my friend from Fort Lauderdale said in the Rules Committee yesterday. We've already had the President of the United States announce that his plan is to raise \$1 billion for his reelection campaign. That would lead me to conclude that President Obama, assuming he runs for reelection, is not planning to use this fund.

Let's also look at the fact that, since 1980, when it was in effect, 28.7 percent of the American people utilized that checkoff; and today, about 7.3 percent—or something like that—of the American people are using that check-off system that is there.

Now, I listened to the remarks of my friend from Fort Lauderdale in which he said that the notion of getting rid of this would allow corporations to be involved in a much greater way, and he implied that there would be all kinds of corruption.

No one—no one, Mr. Speaker—is advocating that we go back to the way the campaign finance law was before 1974 and Watergate. I mean, it was a horrible, horrible time. Disclosure and accountability are very important, and we have in place today, under the Federal election law, limitations that exist. No corporate contributions are allowed to be made to Federal advocates. No corporate contributions are allowed to be made to Federal candidates.

There is the notion of somehow claiming that, by saving \$617 million, the idea of taking that amount of money off the table and allowing people to voluntarily support the candidates of their choice is somehow going to encourage greater corporate contributions. It's against the law. This does nothing to change that, and I think that it's a very specious argument to propound something other than the case here.

Mr. Speaker, I will say again we are going to have a rigorous debate on this, and Members are going to have an opportunity to participate. If Members do want to oppose the underlying legislation, I think they should be welcomed to do that, but I still find it very hard to believe that for the first time in the history of our Republic, now approaching 222 years this spring, we saw an entire Congress have not a single bill considered under an open amendment process; and while this is not an open rule—and I'm not claiming it's an open rule—it is a modified open rule that does allow for the kind of free-flowing debate that we haven't seen in a long period of time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join with Ms. FOXX in support of this rule. Then let's have the free-flowing debate and allow, as Speaker BOEHNER regularly says, the House to work its will. Then we'll have a vote, and people can vote however they'd like at the end of the debate.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, that free-flowing debate consists of six preprinted amendments. Five of those amendments are not in order. So we're going to have a free-flowing debate on six matters that are offered; and if what he just said is going to give the American public the impression that we're having a free-flowing debate, then I must have missed something.

Mr. DREIER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Let me just say that, obviously, this is a very positive step in the direction for allowing for that debate. If we had 100 amendments filed that were germane, we'd have the outside time limit and an opportunity for a debate to take place on those amendments.

So, again, any Member had the chance—Democrat or Republican alike—to file amendments last night so

that we could consider them on the House floor, and I think it's a great thing.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I reclaim my time merely to point out that I don't consider five matters that are not in order and one that's going to be ultimately debated to be a free-flowing debate.

We'll get there. Perhaps we'll get there after we listen to my good friend, the former chair of this committee and the distinguished ranking member from New York.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I thank the gentleman from Florida.

You know, it's rather ironic that we are having this debate today, because it is almost exactly 1 year from the day the Supreme Court decided the Citizens United case. That decision opened the floodgates for anonymous special interests and corporations to dump unlimited amounts of cash into our political system. Predictably, the result of this awful judgment was to set loose a torrent of secret money to influence the midterm elections this past November.

Now my Republican colleagues propose to further erode whatever protections our government has left against a state of "democracy for the highest bidder" by attempting to undo our system of Presidential public financing.

Let's remember where this system came from. It was a direct response to the Wild West—unregulated, free-wheeling campaigns that led up to the Watergate scandal. The atmosphere of that time was described by campaign finance expert Fred Wertheimer as so bad that contributors to Richard Nixon's reelection campaign were "literally flying into Washington with satchels of cash." Hidden, unregulated, private money ruled.

In response to that, Congress acted as much as it could to clean up that system, and we have done fairly well with that.

Our democracy will not be able to afford a return to that corruption, but that is what we start today with this bill. This bill will result in even more corporate and special interest money in our campaigns than we have today—and that's really saying something. We don't even know how much money comes in from foreign money.

The Presidential Election Campaign Fund is the one place in our Federal electoral system where we take some of the pressure off of candidates who otherwise have to raise bushels of private money. For the life of me, I can't see how this bill does anything other than add insult to the injury of the terrible Citizens United decision last year. This bill will also take away from American taxpayers the freedom to choose to support good government, to choose to support the public financing of campaigns.

Republicans cite the low participation rate as a reason to scrap the en-

tire program. I don't see the sense of that argument. The amount of money that goes into the Presidential Election Campaign Fund is directly proportional to how many people check the box on the tax form. Apparently, there is enough support for the program for American taxpayers to designate a projected \$617 million, since that's the number being thrown around here today, to be saved over the next 10 years. That sounds to me like enough support to keep the program around. Now, that is certainly not to say that this current system is perfect. It has not really been changed since the seventies. On the contrary, our current system is one in dire need of reform.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentlelady an additional minute.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. As the Washington Post said yesterday in an editorial opposing this bill: We have a great need to rehab it. Let's fix it. Don't junk it.

I wholeheartedly agree.

I'd like to see an honest attempt to reform our campaign finance system to provide for openness, transparency and good government. I hope that the other side will join me in supporting such an effort. There are already two bills introduced last Congress and being circulated now that will do just that. The House's very own campaign finance policy expert, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, introduced a bill last year, H.R. 6061, the Presidential Funding Act of 2010, which would strengthen and expand the system the Republicans want to dismantle, to bring the system into line with the reality of today's campaigns and boost participation rates.

Also, H.R. 5175 in the last Congress, the DISCLOSE Act, which this House passed last year. The DISCLOSE Act would make sure we know where the money flooding our campaigns is coming from.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the previous question, "no" on the rule, and "no" on the bill. Instead of this anti-small-d-democratic bill the Republicans have brought to the floor without any public input, without any committee hearings and markups, let's debate a serious plan to improve our campaign finance system and strengthen our democracy.

□ 1040

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to our colleagues across the aisle who are complaining about some of the proposed amendments being declared not germane that it is not the Republicans who decide whether amendments are germane or not germane; it is the Parliamentarian's office that decides that. They can do the same thing to our amendments as well as to the Democrats' amendments.

I now yield such time as he may consume to my colleague on the Rules Committee, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL).

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I could not get over here to the floor fast enough when I saw this rule come up for debate, and I rise in strong support of this rule today and in strong support of the underlying legislation.

I am pleased to be joined on this day after the State of the Union not just by my colleagues but with so many young people in the gallery today, because that is exactly what this debate is about.

We've heard much talk on the floor of this House over the past week about the upcoming CBO baseline report. Well, if it arrived in your email boxes this morning like it did mine, you saw that CBO's most recent score predicts a \$6.9 trillion, 10-year operating deficit. That's not the \$14 trillion in debt that these young people are going to have to pay back, it's the actual operating deficit, the additional debt that we're going to add over the next 10 years. This proposal today is one small step towards attacking that operating deficit.

Now we're talking about big numbers here today. Somewhere between \$500 million and \$600 million will be saved with the elimination of this proposal. But folks, \$6.9 trillion is where we have to go over the next 10 years. So if you think that this underlying proposal, the public financing proposal, has some merit, I look forward to debating that when the time comes, when we get our operating deficit under control. But we don't just need to pass this provision today; we need to pass this provision and 10,000 more just like it to get to a balanced budget.

Now, I want you to think about that. All of the discussion, all of the gnashing of teeth, the handwringing about eliminating this provision today, folks, this is just the beginning. This proposal and 10,000 more just like it are what we need to pass in this House. The question isn't why are we bringing up this proposal today; the question is why don't we have three or four or five more just like it.

I look forward to joining with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to talk about those provisions, talk about those spending items in our budget that we can get rid of. But folks, I am absolutely certain, as the YouCut site pointed out when America voted, that public financing is one of the top 10,000 things that we can get rid of. We don't have to decide today whether this is number one of the 10,000 most wasteful programs in government or number 10,000 of the 10,000 most wasteful programs in government; we only have to decide if it's somewhere on that spectrum. I tell you that it is, and I rise in strong support of this rule.

The second reason I had to rush over here to the floor is I'm brand new. I've been in this House less than 1 month, and I'm down here speaking on a rule that offers an open amendment process.

Now, if anybody has been watching the House floor, as I have, over the past 2 years, you might wonder what an open amendment process is, and you would be right to wonder because you've never seen one. I may be a freshman in this body, but folks who came 2 years before me, the sopho-

mores in this body, they don't have any more experience in this process than I do, because this is the first open amendment process that we've seen on the floor of the House. Why are we seeing it? Because it's the right thing to do for the institution.

Speaker BOEHNER has made a point of saying the House is going to work its will. I come from a very conservative district in the northeastern suburbs of Atlanta. And I tell you, when the House works its will, we're not always going to get what we want in the northeastern suburbs of Atlanta, because the House sits kind of here in the middle, and I'm a little further over here on the right-hand side of the spectrum. But in order for this Congress to work, in order for this House to work, in order to restore the dignity of this House, we have to allow the House to work its will.

I am just so pleased, in my very first month in Congress, that we not only have seen very narrowly focused pieces of legislation come to the floor, but we're seeing them come to the floor under an open amendment process.

And let me just say one thing about that open amendment process, particularly for folks, again, who haven't seen one before, folks who are in the gallery or watching on TV who have not seen an open amendment process before. Just because it's open doesn't mean you can do whatever you want to do on the House floor. We're talking about the public financing of elections today. So if you have an amendment that's going to change the way we finance education, that amendment is not going to be germane. If you have an amendment about what you want to do with the health care system, that amendment is not going to be germane.

When you bring narrowly crafted pieces of legislation to the floor, the amendments that are germane are narrowly crafted amendments. And folks, I love that. For too long we have had 2,000-page bills, 1,000-page bills that folks can't read and can't understand and that can't be amended. And I am so pleased today to be standing here in strong support of my colleague from North Carolina's resolution. I will be voting in favor of the rule, and I will be voting in favor of the underlying legislation.

I thank the gentlelady for the time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to occupants of the gallery.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentleman from Florida for allowing me to speak on the rule.

I rise in opposition today to the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, first it was repealing patients' rights; then it was a budget resolution with no budget. Every one of

us in this Chamber was elected to Congress with a goal of creating jobs and growing our economy, yet there hasn't been any talk about that.

Today, the Republican leadership has brought to the floor another piece of political posturing that takes us away from that goal of creating jobs for millions of Americans and establishing economic stability and growth. Rather than wasting time bringing these bills to the floor, we should be working to develop innovative, bipartisan solutions that will create jobs, reduce the deficit, and put our economy back on track.

We can all agree that our campaign finance system is broken. In every election, more and more dollars are spent by wealthy corporations and special interests on campaigns, inflicting great damage on the American people's trust in government. I know a lot of my friends wanted to turn the television off by the end of the last campaign. But ending the Presidential Campaign Fund would only further breach that trust.

Recent polls have found that the public overwhelmingly believes that money buys elections—by 5 to 1 in some polls. And it's no surprise, because election spending has gone up fourfold between the 2006 and 2010 congressional elections. With a voluntary \$3 individual contribution, the Presidential Campaign Fund is a modest part of the answer to the Nation's campaign finance needs, not the problem. It is a way to include the people's voice in our government by honoring small donations and helping restore the people's faith in democracy.

Nearly all Presidential candidates from both parties over the past 35 years have used this fund as a way to reduce the emphasis on fundraising and special interests. Our democracy in its current form would cease to exist if only the rich and powerful could influence public officials.

I ask you today, when the middle class is suffering and job creation is our number one goal, why do we continue to talk about giving more power to big money contributors for Presidential campaigns? After the Supreme Court's terrible decision on Citizens United, we need the exact opposite of this bill—true, reasonable campaign finance reform. That's how democracy is restored and people are empowered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. POLIS. The people's House should not be spending its time cutting off the connection of the people of this country to the White House. Yes, our Presidential campaign finance system is broken. It needs to be repaired, not eliminated, so we can have a fair way of electing our leaders.

I urge a "no" vote on the rule and the bill.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my colleague from Colorado,

this is not cutting off access of our citizens to the White House. Our citizens have voted in lots of different ways to express their opinions in this country in the last year or so. In November, they voted to replace our spendthrift colleagues on the other side of the aisle with people on our side of the aisle who want to cut government spending. They voted on this program by reducing their involvement in this program to a very small number. If they wanted this program, they could have continued to participate in it. They participated in the YouCut program, which singled out this program as something that needed to be cut.

We are listening to the American people, Mr. Speaker—we are doing that in many different ways; this is one of the ways—because they've told us at least in three different ways that they want a different kind of working going on in Washington, D.C. They don't want a lot of spending; they want us to cut back spending. And they've told us this on this program three different ways. So I would like to point that out.

Mr. Speaker, according to Congressional Quarterly, nearly \$139 million in public funds were spent during the 2008 election cycle, including \$17 million each for the Democratic and Republican conventions, \$84 million to Republicans for general elections grants, and a total of \$18 million for primary matching funds for candidates for the nominations of Democrats, Republicans, and other parties.

□ 1050

As is the case with so many other actions, the Federal Government has no business funding political campaigns, particularly while the troubled economy demands fiscal restraint. And let me point out that the way the Federal Government gets its money is, again, by taxing the American people or, in this case, by using funds that the people have said that it could be used for.

The proposal embodied by H.R. 359 first received attention as a result of then-Republican Minority Whip CANTOR's initiative dubbed "YouCut." Majority Leader CANTOR is continuing this innovative effort which encourages public participation in our wonderful American democracy.

The Web site, located at majorityleader.gov/YouCut, for the first time enables Americans to make their voices heard by voting weekly on various proposals to shrink, rather than grow, Federal spending. As I said in my earlier remarks, this is one of the ways the American people can tell us what they think.

According to the official YouCut Web site, "The Presidential Election Campaign Fund provides Federal tax dollars in the form of matching funds to candidates in Presidential primaries provided the candidates qualify and agree to abide by certain spending and contribution limits. It provides grants to qualifying Presidential candidates in general elections, if they agree not

to accept other contributions. The program also provides grants to sponsor national party conventions.

"In short, it provides taxpayer subsidies to political candidates and parties. Since 2000, some major candidates have chosen to forgo public financing. While some have argued that providing even more taxpayer funding for this program might entice more candidates to participate, eliminating the program altogether . . . would require candidates and political parties to rely on private donations rather than tax dollars. The amount of funding for the public financing system is determined by checkoffs on income tax returns, and taxpayer participation via the checkoffs has declined," Mr. Speaker, "from 28.7 percent in 1980 to 7.3 percent in 2009." And that's the end of the quote from the Web site.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the American people are telling us how they feel about this program because they're not using the checkoff.

As the program grows increasingly less popular, its purpose is accordingly muddled. For example, while on the campaign trail, then-candidate Barack Obama, who portrayed himself as a longtime supporter of public financing, ultimately broke his pledge to participate in the presidential public financing system. If public financing isn't good enough for such a vehement supporter, why should taxpayers finance partisan political campaigns?

That's why I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, my good friend, GERRY CONNOLLY.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I thank my good friend.

Mr. Speaker, we just heard a reference to YouCut and that this was one of the most popular cuts suggested by people on this Republican blog. Well, Mr. Speaker, 10 million Americans want to participate in public financing of Presidential campaigns. And I would dare say that dwarfs anything we've heard from YouCut. So if we're going to get in the business of what the American people want and how they've expressed themselves, 10 million voices are in threat of being silenced today by this rule and the underlying legislation.

The idea that we're going to save money and solve the deficit by eliminating public financing in presidential campaigns is fallacious. But I will give the other side credit: It is intellectually honest. When you have a Supreme Court ruling like Citizens United that fosters anonymous financing of campaigns, no wonder you want to delete public financing of campaigns.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2

minutes to my friend of longstanding, the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I don't like to reference the Republican chairman of the Rules Committee, Mr. DREIER, because he did leave the floor. But he made a couple of statements that I have to comment on.

First of all, he said that this Republican initiative is about creating jobs. Nothing could be further from the truth, in my opinion. I've watched as the Republicans have been in the majority now for about 3 or 4 weeks, and they're not doing anything to create jobs. And this certainly doesn't create jobs.

And then Mr. DREIER said that there can be no corporate contributions under the current law. Well, the Citizens United case clearly says that there are unlimited corporate contributions, and that's the problem. Rather than having public financing of campaigns—which this legislation would eliminate—we're going to have more and more corporations just spending millions and millions of dollars to finance campaigns. And that's what this is all about.

This is the Republicans basically catering to special interests and the large corporations who will spend unlimited amounts of corporate money on campaigns, and not having in this case a public financing component through voluntary largely small donations.

Now, I have to say this is a system that we have now that's been in place since Watergate. It was a reform that Democrats and Republicans used, a reform of a very bad system that the Watergate scandal showed was not the way we should go. And I agree that the system needs to be updated, but it should be changed to meet the needs of today's elections that are costing more, and more primaries, and the focus should be on small donations, not getting rid of small donations.

But what we see instead is the Republican majority eliminating the system altogether and making Presidential campaigns more susceptible to what I call outside influence.

We saw the effect of the Citizens United case in the past election, where corporations and special interests poured money to sway the elections in their favor. With disclosure requirements almost nonexistent, we have no way of knowing whether foreign corporations or entities were contributing to the elections. And we have to question whose side the new Republican House majority is on.

Unfortunately, it appears that this is just another attempt by the Republicans to support their special interest friends and big corporations who have an unfair and undue influence on our electoral process.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the American people are buying these tired arguments that our colleagues across the aisle are using

about us wanting to be the tools of corporate interest. That is not the issue here.

The issue here is that the public has said in at least three different ways, as I said before, that this program is not worth continuing.

My colleague from Virginia said that we're denying 10 million Americans the opportunity to participate in donating to campaigns. That isn't true. Individuals can donate to any campaign they want to. So these American people who are now doing the checkoff can easily write a \$3 check to the candidates of their choice. We're not stopping that in any way whatsoever.

What we are doing is saying we don't need to be supporting political conventions, primarily, and candidates. They're perfectly capable of raising the money directly from the American people. And what we are doing, though, is saying that \$617 million is real money. Our colleagues across the aisle don't think \$617 million will put a dent in our deficit? That shows you how far away from the American people they are. They don't think of \$617 million as significant.

Mr. Speaker, the American people think that \$617 million is significant. They want us to cut spending wherever we can, and this is a program that has long ago outlived its usefulness.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1100

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I am one of those people among the 10 million that did do the checkoff of \$3 for publicly-financed Presidential campaigns and to support the national parties' conventions. I feel very strongly that my \$3 now is directed in a way that I did not wish that it should be directed.

I do urge my friend from North Carolina to understand that at least one Member on this side clearly understands that \$617 million is a whole whale of a lot of money. To some of us, \$617 or \$67 is a whole lot of money. That said, what is balanced here is whether or not we should try in this institution to eliminate the kind of corruption that comes by virtue of a flood of dollars going into campaigns.

To correct my colleague from California—and I wish he were here; I would yield to him to respond—when he cites the fact that no corporate dollars can be contributed to the respective candidates who are on the ballot, he is absolutely correct. That is the law. But under the aegis of the Citizens United decision, corporations and individuals can contribute anonymously to any campaign. And we saw evidence of that on both sides.

Now, I have seen every iteration of reform during the last 50 years in the United States of America. Some of it was good and some of it didn't achieve its mark. This particular measure had some limitations and at the very same time did permit people like Eugene McCarthy, Jimmy Carter, Pat Bu-

chanan, Pat Robertson, Jerry Brown, Jesse Jackson, Sr., just to mention a few, and more recently my good friend Dr. RON PAUL—it gave them an opportunity to put forward their ideas. And the argument that they can go out there and raise the kind of money that would allow for that to happen I think is specious at best.

For most candidates, public funding from the Presidential election campaign fund has been the source of sorely needed funds at crucial points in Presidential races. To make matters worse, as has been pointed out by Ms. SLAUGHTER and myself and others, the legislation we are considering today is a repeat of the disastrous Citizens United decision, which on January 21, 2010, unleashed massive corporate influence-buying expenditures in our national elections. In the face of the first anniversary of Citizens United, we know for a fact how essential it is to repair the Presidential public financing system and provide Presidential candidates with a viable alternative for financing their elections, as opposed to having to depend on influence-seeking big donors, lobbyists, bundlers, and corporate spenders. We cannot eliminate the corruption of our political system when we are eliminating a program that was created to try to do that.

Mr. Speaker, a vote for this legislation is a vote for big corporations and big private money to fund the election of their desired candidates. The Presidential public financing system needs repairs, but eliminating a program that works, that is voluntary, and that gives a voice to the American people is not the answer.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to provide that immediately after the House adopts this rule it will bring up the DISCLOSE Act, with the same text as H.R. 5175 from the 111th Congress, as it passed the House on June 24, 2010. This Republican proposal to eliminate voluntary public financing for Presidential elections is, in my view, a step in the wrong direction.

When Presidential campaigns stop receiving this clean money, they'll have to go after private contributions instead. That's going to mean more time spent talking to special interests and the powerful and less time spent talking with the voters and communities and groups that have good ideas and real problems to discuss but don't have multi-million dollars to donate to a campaign.

Is that really what we want for our constituents? I am confident that the answer is a resounding "no." Make no mistake, this will affect the quality of our campaigns and it will affect our democratic process.

We should be considering real campaign finance reform like the DISCLOSE Act. That bill would establish disclosure requirements for election-related spending by corporations, unions,

and other organizations. And I might add, Mr. Speaker, it was a measure, as offered in the previous Congress, that did go through regular order, did have substantial committee hearings, and was presented to the Rules Committee, as opposed to this measure that has had absolutely no hearings and just comes here direct to the floor under the rubric of a modified open rule. And it would require, this DISCLOSE measure, any person or organization making so-called "independent expenditures" over \$10,000 to disclose them within 24 hours. That's what we need after Citizens United, not politicians spending more time and energy to raise big money.

The DISCLOSE Act would put a check on donations by Federal contractors and prohibit contributions and expenditures by foreign-controlled domestic corporations. And among its other provisions, for example, is a prohibition on recipients of TARP funds from making contributions or expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD along with extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" and defeat the previous question so we can debate and pass real campaign finance reform today.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Florida is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 54 OFFERED BY
MR. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, 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 a bill consisting only of the text of H.R. 5175 of the 111th Congress as passed by the House. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair 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. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. 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. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 3. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of the bill specified in section 2 of this resolution.

(The information contained herein was provided by the Republican Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 110th and 111th Congresses.)

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308-311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

Because the vote today may look bad for the Republican majority they will say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: "Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy impli-

cations. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for the previous question, rule, and underlying bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the resolution, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 234, nays 178, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 22]

YEAS—234

Adams	Duncan (SC)	Johnson, Sam
Aderholt	Duncan (TN)	Jones
Akin	Ellmers	Jordan
Alexander	Farenthold	Kelly
Altmire	Fincher	King (IA)
Amash	Fitzpatrick	King (NY)
Austria	Flake	Kingston
Bachmann	Fleischmann	Kinzinger (IL)
Bachus	Fleming	Kline
Barletta	Flores	Labrador
Bartlett	Forbes	Lamborn
Barton (TX)	Fortenberry	Lance
Bass (NH)	Fox	Landry
Benishek	Franks (AZ)	Lankford
Berg	Frelinghuysen	Latham
Biggart	Galleghy	LaTourette
Bilbray	Gardner	Latta
Bilirakis	Garrett	Lee (NY)
Bishop (UT)	Gerlach	Lewis (CA)
Blackburn	Gibbs	LoBiondo
Bonner	Gibson	Long
Bono Mack	Gingrey (GA)	Lucas
Boustany	Gohmert	Luetkemeyer
Brady (TX)	Goodlatte	Lummis
Brooks	Gosar	Lungren, Daniel
Buchanan	Gowdy	E.
Bucshon	Granger	Mack
Buerkle	Graves (GA)	Manzullo
Burgess	Graves (MO)	Marchant
Burton (IN)	Griffin (AR)	Marino
Calvert	Griffith (VA)	McCarthy (CA)
Camp	Grimm	McCauley
Campbell	Guinta	McClintock
Canseco	Guthrie	McCotter
Cantor	Hall	McHenry
Capito	Hanna	McKeon
Carter	Harper	McKinley
Cassidy	Harris	McMorris
Chabot	Hartzer	Rodgers
Chaffetz	Hastings (WA)	Meehan
Coble	Hayworth	Miller (FL)
Coffman (CO)	Heck	Miller (MI)
Cole	Heller	Miller, Gary
Conaway	Hensarling	Mulvaney
Cravaack	Herger	Murphy (PA)
Crawford	Herrera Beutler	Myrick
Crenshaw	Huelskamp	Neugebauer
Culberson	Huizenga (MI)	Noem
Davis (KY)	Hultgren	Nugent
Denham	Hunter	Nunes
Dent	Hurt	Nunnelee
DesJarlais	Issa	Olson
Dold	Jenkins	Palazzo
Dreier	Johnson (IL)	Paul
Duffy	Johnson (OH)	Paulsen

Pearce	Ross (FL)	Terry
Pence	Royce	Thompson (CA)
Platts	Runyan	Thompson (PA)
Poe (TX)	Ryan (WI)	Thornberry
Pompeo	Scalise	Tiberi
Posey	Schilling	Tipton
Price (GA)	Schmidt	Turner
Quayle	Schock	Upton
Reed	Schweikert	Walberg
Rehberg	Scott (SC)	Walden
Reichert	Scott, Austin	Walsh (IL)
Renacci	Sensenbrenner	Webster
Ribble	Sessions	West
Rigell	Shimkus	Westmoreland
Rivera	Shuster	Whitfield
Roby	Simpson	Wilson (SC)
Roe (TN)	Smith (NE)	Wittman
Rogers (AL)	Smith (NJ)	Wolf
Rogers (KY)	Smith (TX)	Womack
Rogers (MI)	Southerland	Woodall
Rohrabacher	Stearns	Yoder
Rokita	Stivers	Young (FL)
Rooney	Stutzman	Young (IN)
Roskam	Sullivan	

NAYS—178

Ackerman	Green, Al	Pascarell
Andrews	Green, Gene	Pastor (AZ)
Baca	Grijalva	Payne
Baldwin	Gutierrez	Pelosi
Barrow	Hanabusa	Perlmutter
Bass (CA)	Harman	Peters
Becerra	Hastings (FL)	Peterson
Berkley	Heinrich	Polis
Berman	Higgins	Price (NC)
Bishop (GA)	Himes	Quigley
Bishop (NY)	Hirono	Rahall
Blumenauer	Holden	Reyes
Boren	Holt	Richardson
Boswell	Hoyer	Richmond
Brady (PA)	Inslee	Ross (AR)
Braley (IA)	Israel	Rothman (NJ)
Brown (FL)	Jackson (IL)	Roybal-Allard
Butterfield	Jackson Lee	Ruppersberger
Capps	(TX)	Ryan (OH)
Cardoza	Johnson (GA)	Sánchez, Linda
Carnahan	Johnson, E. B.	T.
Carney	Kaptur	Sanchez, Loretta
Carson (IN)	Keating	Sarbanes
Castor (FL)	Kildee	Schakowsky
Chandler	Kind	Schiff
Chu	Kissell	Schrader
Ciicilline	Kucinich	Schwartz
Clarke (MI)	Langevin	Scott (VA)
Clarke (NY)	Larsen (WA)	Scott, David
Clay	Lee (CA)	Serrano
Cleaver	Levin	Sewell
Clyburn	Lewis (GA)	Sherman
Cohen	Lipinski	Shuler
Connolly (VA)	Loebach	Sires
Cooper	Lofgren, Zoe	Lowey
Costa	Lowe	Smith (WA)
Costello	Lujan	Speier
Courtney	Lynch	Stark
Critz	Maloney	Sutton
Crowley	Markey	Thompson (MS)
Cuellar	Matheson	Tierney
Cummings	Matsui	Tonko
Davis (CA)	McCarthy (NY)	Towns
Davis (IL)	McCollum	Tsongas
DeFazio	McDermott	Van Hollen
DeGette	McGovern	Velázquez
DeLauro	McIntyre	Visclosky
Deutch	McNerney	Walz (MN)
Dicks	Meeks	Wasserman
Dingell	Michaud	Schultz
Donnelly (IN)	Miller (NC)	Waters
Doyle	Miller, George	Watt
Edwards	Moore	Waxman
Ellison	Moran	Weiner
Engel	Murphy (CT)	Welch
Eshoo	Nadler	Wilson (FL)
Farr	Napolitano	Woolsey
Fattah	Neal	Wu
Filner	Olver	Yarmuth
Fudge	Owens	
Gonzalez	Pallone	

NOT VOTING—22

Black	Garamendi	Pingree (ME)
Broun (GA)	Giffords	Pitts
Capuano	Hinchey	Rangel
Conyers	Hinojosa	Ros-Lehtinen
Diaz-Balart	Honda	Rush
Doggett	Larson (CT)	Young (AK)
Emerson	Mica	
Frank (MA)	Petri	

□ 1131

Messrs. HOLT, GEORGE MILLER of California, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 22, I was detained in committee. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 22, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Stated against:

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 22 on H.R. 54, the button did not record my "no" vote as the gavel fell.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may inquire.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, on the bill we're going to be considering shortly, the Presidential checkoff bill, there's a requirement under the rules that the amendments be printed in the RECORD. Is that RECORD available?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the printed RECORD is not yet available.

Mr. WEINER. Further inquiry, does the Speaker have any guidance for the House on when that RECORD might be available so we can read what we're going to be considering in a matter of minutes?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair does not currently have that information. Under the terms of House Resolution 54, any issue would become ripe when the amendment process begins.

Mr. WEINER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 359.

ELIMINATING TAXPAYER FINANCING OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 54 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. 359.

□ 1134

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. 359) to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of presidential election campaigns and party conventions, with Mr. LATOURETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT), the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) each will control 15 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM).

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, last night, the President in this very Chamber issued us an invitation. In that invitation, there were several opportunities, but two of them I would like to highlight. One is, he said this: He said he is willing to eliminate whatever we can honestly afford to do without. I take the President at face value that he's interested in doing that.

The thing that the President issued was an invitation where he said this: He said, in fact, the best thing we could do on taxes for all Americans is to simplify the Tax Code.

Well, the law of governing Presidential election campaign funds in the Presidential Primary Matching Payment Account is located in the Internal Revenue Code, which really inherently makes no sense.

And I think during the course of this debate, Mr. Chairman, we're going to lay out the argument as to why the President's first point can be greeted and agreed to, that first goal that this is simply something that we can do without.

Let me make a couple of quick points. I think it's important to recognize the irony of the Statement of Administration Policy that was published on January 25, and I'm reading in the third paragraph, he says—the administration, in criticism of this effort, says, "Its effect would be to expand the power of corporations and special interests in the Nation's elections to force many candidates into an endless cycle of fundraising at the expense of engagement with voters on the issues."

How can that be, Mr. Chairman? President Obama, when he was a candidate in 2000 for the United States Presidency, declined to participate in this fund, both in his primary and in his general election. And if President Obama has been able to rise above that, I think other Americans can rise above that.

Also, I would just like to bring your attention to that same argument, and that is, a "Dear colleague" that was sent criticizing this bill said basically the same thing: By creating a viable alternative to private fundraising, the public financing system was designed to level the electoral playing field and ensure that candidates remain accountable to voters, not special interests.

So does that mean, implicitly, Mr. Chairman, that candidates who didn't participate in the program are somehow not accountable to voters? I think President Obama would say he's really accountable to voters.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1140

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this measure, which, along with the Supreme Court's radical decision in Citizens United, takes our Nation's campaign finance system in precisely the wrong direction: less transparency and less information for the voters.

Americans from across the political spectrum—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—want less special interest money in politics, not more. They want clean, transparent, and competitive elections; and campaigns where candidates—those of us in this room and Presidential candidates—rise and fall based on the quality of their ideas, the strength of their arguments, and their ability to attract support from the voters that they seek to represent.

What they don't want are campaigns decided by how much secret money flows into an election from secret outside groups. And they will no longer tolerate, I believe, those politicians turning around and saying to those citizens: You have no right to know who is paying for what in our political campaigns; you have no right to know who is paying for those TV advertisements you're watching.

Let's remember what we are talking about here. The current Presidential financing system that this bill would eliminate arose from public outrage in the post-Watergate period. Rather than Presidential candidates trafficking in secret slush funds, our Nation decided that our democracy would be better served by a system of public disclosure, contribution limits, and emphasis on smaller-dollar contributions matched by the Presidential financing fund.

The system is voluntary, one line on our Tax Code, not complicated; and while not perfect, for most of its 36 years in existence, it has served this Nation well. Candidates from across the political spectrum, from Ronald Reagan to Jesse Jackson, have voluntarily participated in the Presidential financing system.

As my colleague on the other side of the aisle mentioned there is no doubt