what we are about is giving our children an opportunity to pursue happiness, to enjoy the freedoms and the liberty that we have in this country and to respect the right for life.

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude as we have discussed newly elected Republican Members, as we try to create and help fashion a vision for our country tonight, we have focused on strengthening the families in ways that this body can provide family friendly legislation such as the measure we passed today. Our message is rooted in hope and in optimism because that is indeed what our country was founded on.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last night myself and other members of the Democratic caucus gathered here to discuss the issue of campaign finance reform, and we had a good constructive discussion, I believe, about what is wrong with the present system, and we again appealed to the Republican leadership of this House to put a campaign finance reform bill on the table for us to consider.

This morning, roughly about 10 hours after we concluded our special order, I picked up the Washington Post, and I read that the Republican chairman who is in charge of the partisan investigation into campaign fundraising has himself abused the system. According to the story on the front page, the chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform bullied a lobbyist for the Government of Pakistan for campaign money in the manner the lobbyist described as a shakedown. Not stopping there, the chairman then contacted the Pakistani Ambassador, complaining that the lobbyist could not raise him enough money.

My colleagues, this is just the kind of abuse the chairman himself has been empowered to investigate.

Originally I was concerned that these hearings would be too partisan, but after stories in this morning's Washington Post I now know that these hearings will not just merely be partisan, they are going to be a joke. How can the gentleman from Indiana hold the gavel and conduct these hearings in an objective manner?

In light of today's allegations the gentleman from Indiana should, in my opinion, recuse himself from the committee's investigation, and he should also open up his committee's probe to a much wider scope than the White House and include both parties in Congress.

Tomorrow the Republican majority of this House will likely ask us to vote and probably pass a $12 to $15 million budget that will be placed in Chairman BURTON's hands for this investigation, and how they can do that in good conscience after today's headlines really baffles me.

I want to say today our House Democratic leader, RICHARD GEPHARDT, because of his concern over the nature of this investigation and where it is going, the House Committee on Government Reform issued a statement, and I would just like to read from part of that statement. He says that the vote on committee funding scheduled for tomorrow sanctions the Republican leadership's decision to make 12 to 15 million taxpayer dollars available for a one-sided, open-ended investigation of White House campaign fundraising. This partisan investigation flies in the face of a unanimous vote in the Senate to broaden the scope of the inquiry into improper and illegal activities in Democratic and Republican campaigns in the last election.

Let me just for a moment not read from that statement anymore and explain that essentially what is happening here is that the Republican leadership and the chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform are suggesting that this investigation essentially be limited to the White House, and they are not interested in broadening the investigation, the way it was done in the Senate, to include both Democratic and Republican campaigns, congressional campaigns, Senate and House campaigns, in the last election. The budget granted to Chairman BURTON is $8 million more than the Senate investigation.

Further, the House investigation could go on for the duration of this Congress instead of the year-end resolution set to conclude the Senate investigation. Chairman BURTON has granted himself unprecedented subpoena power and refused to provide the Democrats on the committee any resolution on the rules of conduct that would allow us assurances of the same fair and balanced process that will occur in the Senate investigation.

Now the Republican leadership, as myself and other Democratic colleagues have pointed out many times on the House floor, has ruled out so far any consideration of a campaign finance reform bill, and they are preventing Congress from being included in the House investigation. Their action begs the question of whether they are truly interested in reforming the campaign finance system or merely bent on attacking a Democratic administration, and that I think is what this is all about. What the Republican leadership wants to do, what the Republican chairman of the committee wants to do, is limit this investigation to the administration, to the White House, to the Democrats in the White House and not consider what is going on in Congress on both sides of the aisle.

The gentleman from Indiana has also abused his power, and the Republican leadership has been a willing conspirator by allowing him to run over the rules of the House in this investigation. Improper or illegal activity, whether it occurred in the Democratic or Republican campaign, should be included in the House investigation. Anything short of that smacks of protecting our self-interest at the expense of rooting out the abuses in the entire campaign finance system.

Now in the statement that the Democratic leader put out today he also released a letter to the Speaker signed by the Democratic leadership and the Democratic ranking members serving notice that we, the Democrats, will oppose the committee funding resolution and use whatever parliamentary tools we have available to block its consideration unless he reconsiders bringing this resolution to the floor in its current form.

And let me repeat. All that we are saying is that this investigation should be like the one in the Senate. The Senate one makes sense. They are not limiting it to the White House; they are including Democrats and Republicans and congressional campaigns as part of the overall inquiry.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman should refrain from characterizing the Senate action.

Mr. PALLONE. Excuse me; thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now the problems that I mentioned with regard to the gentleman from Indiana and the reason that we are gathering here tonight, or the reason that I am here tonight, and some of my colleagues, is because we want to see campaign finance reform. Again the Republican leadership is missing a great opportunity here because there are some serious proposals that have been introduced by Members of the House on the campaign finance reform issue. We may discuss a few of them tonight. On the Democratic side we have formed a campaign finance reform task force in order to review all legislative proposals for reform and to try to develop a consensus position, and I want to stress that many of my colleagues, including some of the Republicans, some of the rank and file Republicans, have introduced some good proposals in this regard.

There are bills out there that address spending limits, the role of political parties, political advocacy, tax-exempt organizations, contribution limits, greater disclosure, FEC enforcement, soft money, free commercial broadcast time, public financing, and the list goes on. But the bottom line is these bills mean nothing unless the Republican leadership of this House, which is the majority party, sets the agenda and decides to act.

I would like now to yield, if I could, to one of my colleagues who is here tonight to talk about some of the same concerns, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, and I believe that the important focus of our conversation, and certainly debate as well, over the past couple of weeks and our conversation this evening is to really elaborate on the facts and begin to clear the air that there is opposition in totality really, Republicans and Democrats, to the question of campaign finance reform. I think we have unanimity, if you will, in the whole concept of campaign finance reform in terms of its importance. We do not have that commitment in terms of having it come to the floor of the House and immediately address the concerns in a nonhysterical but rational way to respond to the concerns of the American people.

Now yesterday I joined Members of the House, colleagues of mine that happen to be all women, and it was a symbolic press conference to suggest that we who are women know how to clean house. The only thing we are lacking is a good broom, and we had indicated that we want to clean house and want the Speaker of the House to bring to the floor viable campaign finance reform legislation that all of us will have an opportunity to debate, and as you have indicated, I am part of the campaign finance reform task force.

There is good legislation on both sides of the aisle, so this is not a suggestion that there are not Members on both sides of the aisle ready to roll up their sleeves and work. The problem is that there is a roadblock, if you will, to be able to bring viable legislation to the floor of the House and viable legislation for this body to discuss.

I do not believe the American public is really looking for us to turn on ourselves. The comments that I made yesterday were I want to see the homemaker, the scientist, the bus driver, the teacher, have access to the U.S. Congress. I want to see them get up one morning and say, I would like to be in the U.S. Congress, I have an issue, I have a passion, and therefore with those individuals running, we realize that we have to have ways of electing Americans to the U.S. Congress.

There is nothing wrong with that. That means there has to be a form of fundraising.

I certainly think there are very positive ideas, such as access to the electronic media or to the media that should be given in an organized manner to provide reasoned debate, to have us express ourselves to the public with no sort of flowery advertising around us, but just look our constituents in the eye and have the ability to communicate through the media.

There are many ways that we can address this question of campaign finance reform, but in the shadow of that discussion, and I hope that it is discussed or I have discussed it in a manner that is not confrontational, I am outraged presently by the efforts now of the majority on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight in terms of the structure, and I think it is important for those of us in Congress to be able to come to compromise. We just had Hershey and the bipartisan approach to this Congress, and I believe in it.

□ 1945

I think it can work. But in the shadow of all of us committing to campaign finance reform, taking the broom and sweeping this House clean, this structure that has now been offered to investigate possible campaign abuses requires outrage. Nothing less. It does not require solid commentary. The reason why it requires outrage is that we are doing ourselves a disservice. It is limited to the so-called improprieties and possible violations of law by the executive branch officials and Government agencies in the 1996 Presidential campaign.

This is a much narrower scope than our other body, the Senate, adopted in a 99 to 0 vote. These are the same representatives that represent this Nation and constituents, they are Republicans and Democrats alike, and they have indicated that the value of having this process is to ensure not that we look to blast and castigate, but that we look to correct and uplift.

How can we correct and uplift if we do not find or get to the bottom of the issue, if I am not afraid to come forward and say, for example, some of the improprieties may be just that, incorrectness, mistakes that were not intentional? God forbid if we are in this highly politicized atmosphere. We want to fine someone and hang them up by their fingernails, if you will. It may have been just an impropriety. If that is the case, do we not want to find that out in the light of day? Why are we narrowing the House investigation to just the President and what happened in 1996, when the Senate has very well covered itself to find out the truth and to improve this structure.

Let me also acknowledge that the format gives pause. With the subpoena powers, we know that we have a Democratic Party and a Republican Party. We recognize that the great American people have the right to vote Democratic and Republican, and in some instances vote a third party, and I appreciate and respect that.

We realize that we, in different parties, get together and we strategize. We talk about how we are going to win this election. There is nothing sinister about that. But yet there is unilateral subpoena powers so that this particular oversight committee under this chairman will not only seek subpoena powers and subpoena data that may be relevant, but they will seek subpoena data on the strategies of the Democratic Party that would violate, if you will, really free speech and the way this country is run.

As long as we are not creating criminal activities, there is nothing wrong with analyzing how we can beat the other fellow, how we can get our message out. Why is that relevant to campaign finance improprieties or campaign finance reform? There is no limitation on this committee's or the chairman's subpoena powers so that private matters may be investigated.

Let me also bring to the attention of our discussion this evening a precedent that I have never heard of; that is, the unilateral authority of the chairman to release documents. Now, I want all of this to be discussed in the light of day, but let me share with the American people that that would mean that confidential financial records and trade secrets could be released without the opportunity for committee review or anyone else's input but the chairman; medical histories and other personal records of individuals. The identity of confidential FBI informants and other confidential law enforcement information could be presented without any challenge. Privileged attorney-client communications.

No document protocols conducted by any other committee have ever given the chairman this authority. Mr. Speaker, let me cite for my colleagues, Whitewater did not have this authority. Iran Contra, the resolution did not allow this unilateral distribution of private records. And again, let me stand here and say, I am not looking for a cover-up, I do not want a cover-up, I want fairness.

Certainly the ethics investigation did not allow this random distribution of papers that might in fact suggest that someone is criminally at fault if they made a mistake. As I said, if we are truly looking to get this solved, we need to be able to have people come forward so people can say I made a mistake and I want this committee to know about it, because I want it to be fixed.

As I yield back to the gentleman, and I see that my good friend has joined us, and I happen to be a cosponsor on Congressman FARR's very, very able and very responsive bill on campaign finance reform that responds to my concern about how the bus driver can come to the U.S. Congress, the school teacher can come, the average American can get elected because there is a proper process of campaign fund-raising.

Let me tell my colleagues what I am most concerned about. We have not passed a budget yet. We have not talked about the 10 million, and when I say talked about, let me stand corrected, we have not addressed the concern of 10 million uninsured children in America without health care. We have not looked at and resolved the questions of seeing how we can implement this new welfare reform.

We have not addressed the security of pension rights for Americans, and yet this committee may already have at its finger tips $8 million to spend and possibly upwards of $15 million to spend on this investigation, when young people in my district are fighting to get summer jobs, where the lines are teeming

with individuals who are looking to get summer work and may not have the kind of investment from this government that will help them get summer jobs, when people are without housing.

I cannot understand how we would put in one source, if you will, or give to one entity that is narrowing its investigation, with no ending, some $15 million. I think it takes my breath away. If I was not standing on the floor of the House, I might not be able to stand. To do this kind of investigation with no commitment to coming forward with real campaign finance reform.

The American public, I believe, does not want us to be in a witch-hunt. What they really want is for us to sweep our own House clean. We can do that by violent discussion on the floor of the House of real campaign finance reform and take those good millions of dollars and help with affordable housing and the uninsured children, for working families, for health care, and making sure that the welfare reform works.

The gentleman from New Jersey certainly has been one of the leaders, along with the gentleman from California, and I that we will be heard and that we will have the kind of debate that will help us solve the problems that the American people would like us to.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the gentlewoman, because I think she really encapsulated the way I feel and the way many of us feel.

I have to say last weekend when I was in the district, I had people come up to me and talk to me about the amount of money that is going to be spent by these committees on investigation, and people were literally outraged by the millions of dollars. But the amazing thing is that this funding resolution that the House Republicans expects us to vote on tomorrow would spend $8 to $11 million more than what is being proposed in the Senate committee, and yet limiting it exclusively to the White House, not even discussing congressional activity on the Republican or the Democratic side, and yet it is $8 to $11 million more.

Again, I did not want to dwell on the fact of what the chairman is doing here, but I have to conclude that the chairman himself, based on what was in the Washington Post today, clearly he does not want this investigation opened to deal with congressional activities, because maybe it will implicate him perhaps. That is what is really an outrage here, that they are trying to make this so partisan, just the White House, all of this money, and refusing to deal with any investigation of activity on either side of the aisle in the House of Representatives and in congressional campaigns; then at the same time saying we will not consider campaign finance reform, we will not bring it to the floor, we do not have a deadline, we do not have a proposal.

Fortunately for us, we have someone here with us tonight who does have a proposal and has been out there talking about us and has concrete ideas and has put them in bill form.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR].

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me and for the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE], for her very articulate outline.

I am an author of one of the proposals for campaign finance reform, and I am not going to dwell on my particular bill. But I am going to point out that we certainly need to address this problem. The American public heard the President right here in this room just a few months ago ask us in all sincerity to deliver to him by July 4, our Nation's birthday, a campaign finance reform bill.

Tomorrow we will be recessing for our Easter recess, for our homework back in our districts, and we do not return here until April 8, I think it is. So April, May is a month, June a month. We have about two-and-a-half months left after we get back to meet the President's deadline. What have we seen? Absolutely nothing. There is no committee hearing scheduled, there is no work in progress on a bipartisan effort.

I want to point out that this campaign finance reform has to be bipartisan. It has to have four principles that I think are essential in any bill. It has to be fair. This bill cannot be designed to help the Republican Party nor the Democratic Party. It cannot have the favor of one party over the other.

Second, the bill has to reduce the influence of special interests. We have to bring down the amounts that political action committees can contribute. We also have to limit large single donors. I think we have to limit the amount that an individual can give, as the gentlewoman from Texas just pointed out, so that this House should be accessible to anyone, not just those who are millionaires and go out and spend their own money.

Third, it has to have a level playing field. We have to make campaigns competitive. How do we do that? By enacting spending limits so that essentially everybody who is in this process knows exactly how much is going to be spent and those who just spend the most are not the winners.

Fourth, the principle for campaign finance reform has to include access to the system by nontraditional candidates. I was sworn in in the very spot that the gentleman from New Jersey are standing in in a special election in 1993. It was the first time I stood on the House floor. I looked out, as the gentleman are looking at me today, to a sea of white males. Sandy was shocked coming from the California legislature, where it is much more gender balanced and ethnic balanced than the U.S. Congress, and it hit me that indeed, if this institution is going to be of, by and for the people, then it has to have people of America in here, and it is not doing that. We have 48 women in the U.S. Congress. There are more women in the United States than there are males. This ought to have a majority of women.

How are women going to get elected to the U.S. Congress? How are people of color going to get elected to the U.S. Congress? We are only going to do that by a campaign finance reform system that is fair and makes it possible for minorities to run for this office. We cannot require that people have to raise all of their money in their districts.

There are people here in very, very poor districts. Under the Federal law, anyone can move into a district to run. So if we limit the incumbent to saying you have to raise the money in the district, we will send a message out to anyone of wealth to say, aha, I can get elected to the U.S. Congress, all I have to do is move to a particular district, because that candidate is now required to raise all of her or his money in that district. That is not fair. That does not make the process accessible.

So these ingredients of fairness, reduce the influence of special interests, level the playing field so that it is competitive, and to make the system accessible by nontraditional candidates I think are the four principles of campaign finance reform.

□ 2000

Do Members know what? We have the bills to do that. We have more than just my bill. We have a bipartisan bill; different, not much different. We have different approaches. We have people who want to clean up pieces of campaign reform, those who want to clean it all up.

None of these bills, none of them, have been able to be scheduled for a hearing. I speak tonight in this colloquy with my colleagues to ask the American public to rise up and demand that the leadership of this House, that the Speaker of this House, set for a hearing, set for a vote, a campaign finance reform bill. We must bring that to the House.

I plead with my colleagues to help alert the American public that this process is broken and it is not going to get fixed, it is only going to get diverted by attention to what is going on in the White House, what is going on in the Senate, but not to what is going on to fix campaign laws in America.

I would be glad to be involved in any discussion the gentleman wants to have.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. He has really been very modest, because the fact of the matter is that he knows this issue very well, and that his legislation is very well thought out and very specific about what we should be doing.

I think what the gentleman is saying, and I think we all agree, is that there are a number of bills out there. There is not necessarily any miracle

cure. We have some areas where we agree and others where we do not. But the bottom line is that we are in the minority and we do not control the process here. Unless the Republican leadership and the chairmen of the committees have hearings, let legislation come to the floor, set a deadline when we can consider these bills, nothing is going to happen.

All we have really been doing for the last month or so on the floor here almost every night or every other night is to demand that some action be taken, and that the Republicans allow some of these bills to come up.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say a few comments, and I would like to engage my colleague in a colloquy on his legislation, though he has been kind enough to acknowledge that there are many others. We are not here to at this time debate the pieces of legislation.

I think something is important that goes to the point that we have now agreed with on the average person having access to the United States Congress. One of the most successful processes is, as the term is used, bundling. I want to raise that because it does not sound good. It is important as we have the discussion that people would understand that there are a lot of processes in campaign finance that are not negative, that are in fact enhancing and helpful.

If we do not get on with the people's business of debating, we are going to get the American people so angry they are not going to be able to accept anything that may come forth, and there are some positive aspects.

I might ask my colleague, the gentleman from California, one that comes to mind, of course, is a group that so intelligently organized around helping women to get to the United States Congress. I was one of them who received the support. The minute I received the support from this group by the name of Emily's List, that takes $10 and $5 and $1 from women across the Nation, it seemed to be a band of acceptance. And certainly I started with very little in running for this office.

But it is important for people to understand that there can be good concepts that allow the average citizen to give a dollar, and before he or she knows it, a person who they care about, who has their principles, can be elected because someone in New York gave $1 or someone in Florida gave $1.

Would the gentleman just share with us how he perceives that to help diversify and help this Congress?

Mr. FARR of California. Let me explain that by going back to the State that I represent, California. When I was in the California legislature we had to run for that office with very tough rules in the State, disclosure rules. Essentially those rules have been drastically amended and modified by an initiative that the people enacted last November which severely restricts not only what contributions can be given, but how much one can spend in a campaign.

The point is that running for public office is a very exciting opportunity. We ought to allow people to receive contributions. I think we can limit the amount of contributions, and we can limit the category of those contributions, but we ought not to limit the source of contributions. By that, going back to the gentlewoman's point, is that Emily's List, like others, there is the Wish List, a more conservative group, but there are groups out here that call out to people who are on their lists, who have signed up and said we are supportive of your cause.

A mail solicitation goes out to those people and says, ''By the way, Mrs. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE of Texas is running for Congress. We support her activities. She is a woman, she has served in the Texas legislature, she has a distinguished background, and we think she warrants election to the United States Congress, and would you women around the country please send us a small contribution. Together we will put these contributions together; that is called bundling, and we will send them to SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.''

I do not see any problem with that. That organization does not come down here and lobby. It does not ask for any votes. It does not have an agenda in politics. What it is doing is trying to elect the right people to public office. There are a lot of groups like that. I do not think we ought to restrict them. Some of these campaign finance reform bills say that should not happen.

I was a former Peace Corps volunteer. When I ran for Congress I wrote people that I served in the Peace Corps with. Why? They knew me. I was also in a university. I wrote to the people that were in my class in the university. I graduated from a high school. I wrote to the kids that were in that high school. Some lived in my district, some lived in the State, some lived out of State.

When you run for public office, the way you get elected and the way you start a campaign is call up your friends and your family. I called up my family, and they are Republicans and I am a Democrat, and they said, we will support you. We probably never supported a Democrat before, but we will support you because we are your family. That is the way you get into public life. None of these bills should stifle that.

What we are trying to talk about is finance reform. Take the incredible obscenity of having to spend $1 million to get elected to the United States Congress. The bill that I propose, and almost all of them, recognize that the average costs of a campaign to the United States Congress is a little over half a million dollars; $600,000. That is the cap. We say you do not need to spend more than that to get elected.

We also say the way you collect money ought to be limited. You ought to have how much money you can raise from PAC's, and it cannot all come from there; how much can come from wealthy individuals, it cannot all come from there; how much can come from yourself, you cannot just pay for your own campaign out of your own pocket. That way we allow this diversity of contributions to be getting in, limiting the amount, limiting the total capacity of that particular area, and allow you then to run a competitive campaign for $600,000 or less.

Mr. PALLONE. I appreciate the comments the gentleman made. I know that our time is running out, because we want to yield for another special order tonight, but there are going to be a lot more opportunities.

We are going to be here every night, if necessary, to make the point that we want campaign finance reform to come to the floor, and that the Republican leadership has an obligation to make sure that that happens in this session of Congress and as soon as possible.

I thank the Members again for joining with me. This is just the beginning of a lot more discussion on this topic.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much, and I certainly hope that the outrage over $50 million is something that we can focus more on what we should be, which is getting real campaign finance reform.

Mr. FARR of California. It is too bad we have to schedule a special order to discuss campaign finance reform. We ought to be doing this in a regular session, in a regular time, to vote on a bill, not just to talk about the bill.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

NAFTA TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for the remaining 30 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE], and the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR].

I want to commend them for their discussion here this evening, and echo their comments with respect to making sure that we have campaign finance on the floor of the House of Representatives, so all sides and all issues and all facets of this complex issue can be heard by the American people, and we can make some decisions that will move us away from this terribly corrosive system we are now engaged in.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to kind of shift gears here and talk about something that has been very important to I think the country, an issue that will be before this body very shortly. That is trade. I am joined by my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. RON KLINK], who I think will also share some views and comments on NAFTA.