dictate, which is not taking away their future for us now.

We hear from organizations like AARP that we should dare not touch the cost of living index, the CPI, regardless of the fact that most economists would agree that it overstates the incremental increase in the cost of living. The idea of selfishness has now displaced the concern for our children and our grandchildren.

The same thing for special interests that get funded by the Federal Government every year. There is going to be a debate in not too long on the National Endowment for the Arts. Regardless of what our feeling is on that, how can we spend money in that area when we know that our children will pay back that $90 million three or four times what it cost because we do not have the money to pay for it?

How in the world do we justify and rationalize our ability to not do what is right? We cannot. We cannot face our problem; we cannot stand up and do the hard thing. And, unfortunately, the reason that we will not is, many people in this body are more interested in getting reelected, and their careers and their decisions about coming back to a place of power have become more important than their children and their grandchildren. So we see greed and selfishness for ourselves is starting to displace the very unique qualities that made America great.

Alex de Tocqueville said of the American people that America is great because America is good. When America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great. I would put forth to the American public today that the way we measure our goodness, the way we measure our compassion, is by doing the right thing and doing the right thing now.

We will hear a lot of people scream and say we cannot cut certain programs, that we cannot balance the budget, that we cannot do it today. But I would put forward the belief that if we faced an external threat in this country, not an internal one but an external threat to this country, that we as Americans would rally around, we would come together and say: What do we have to do to defeat this threat? And if it required sacrifice of us all, we would make that sacrifice, we would pull together, we would demand that every aspect of our Government become much more efficient, that they would accomplish the same task with less cost and more efficiency.

The fact is, we have a subtle threat. We are not willing to address this threat, and so, consequently, we are not about to do that.

I do not hold much hope for a balanced budget because I do not hold much hope that people will make a decision based on the right things, their conscience. And I do, unfortunately, feel that too many of the Members of this body will make a decision based on cowardice and vanity, much as Martin Luther King talked about.

The only way we balance the budget is if the people of this country say we must balance the budget. So those that hear what I am saying today have to become an active part, a participant in this process. They have to demand that those that represent them make the hard choices, the difficult choices, the choices that are morally right.

It is immoral to steal from our grandchildren and our unborn grandchildren. The only way we solve this problem is for the American public, the citizens of this Nation, to demand the courage and the proper representation of their Members of Congress to accomplish this task.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the spirit of Hershey does live on, and I would say to the gentleman that I enjoyed the time that I spent at the conference on a bipartisan basis.

My concern today, however, and I suppose in a sense this is sort of a reaching out to the other side of the aisle, is that we need to address the issue of campaign finance reform. I say this not in the spirit of trying to attack anyone or to suggest that anyone has a solution to the problem or that the problem necessarily can be decided on either side of the aisle, but the bottom line is that the Republicans are in the majority in the House of Representatives, and the Democrats increasingly, including myself, have been frustrated by the fact that we have been unable to get the Republican majority to bring up the issue of campaign finance reform either in committee, with hearings or markups, or on the floor of this House.

Many of my colleagues know that in the President's State of the Union Address he called upon the House of Representatives, both Republicans and Democrats, on a bipartisan basis, to address the issue of campaign finance reform.

Democrats have increasingly, over the last few months, requested that the House Republican leadership address the issue, again have hearings on legislation, bring the legislation up in committee, and set a deadline on when campaign finance reform reaches the floor of the House of Representatives so we could have a debate and be able to vote on a bill that most of us could agree on.

Unfortunately, that has not happened, and, as a result, the Democrats have been forced to use procedural motions, as we did this afternoon on one of the suspension bills, to raise the debate and to allow us the opportunity to discuss campaign finance reform.

Mr. Speaker, on several occasions during special orders over the last couple of months, myself and other Democratic colleagues have come to the floor to both speak out on the issue and also to talk about some of the proposals that have been put forward, many of which have been introduced, many of the bills, on a bipartisan basis. But, unfortunately, we still see no action.

I think the issue is important for a number of reasons. First of all, as I mentioned earlier today, when I returned to my district for the 2-week break that we had, the 2-week district work period, it was repeatedly mentioned to me by my constituents at every location, a supermarket, a coffee shop, wherever I happened to be, many people came up to me and said: What is the Congress doing? It does not appear to be doing anything.

The term has already been coined by the Washington Post, which on this last Monday did an editorial, calling the Congress the do-nothing Congress. I think this editorial has already been read into the RECORD, and I will not repeat it again, but the bottom line is that we have taken up almost nothing of substance in the first 3 or 4 months of this Congress.

When I talk to my constituents, they say, well, it seems the only thing Congress does is to call upon investigations of the White House or investigations of campaign financing, but, at the same time that they are spending money on these investigations and doing subpoenas and calling for hearings about investigating finances or campaign finances out of the last November campaign, no one in the majority, no one on the Republican side in the leadership, is proposing that we move forward on campaign finance reform.

I would maintain, just based on talking with my own constituents in the last 2 weeks, that that is not acceptable. The public is really tired of hearing about all the investigations and all the problems with the campaign finance system. We all know there are problems. We know there is too much money in the system. We know that Representatives, Senators, the President and the Vice President, and everyone who is a Federal officeholder has to spend too much time raising money, which takes away from the time for them to do substantive business.

So the system cries out for change. It just cries out for change. Whether it is public financing or it is a cap on spending or it is the various proposals that have been put forward, the bottom line is that we have to address the issue. It is time for action. It is time to stop worrying about all the myriad of investigations and all the myriad charges and to simply do something legislatively to make the system work. That means campaign finance reform.

Just to throw out an example, in New Jersey we are now in the midst of a gubernatorial race, and for a number of years in my home State of New Jersey we have had a system in place where there is a cap on the amount of money

one can spend, and if a candidate raises a certain amount of money through individual as well as political action committee contributions, they get public funds to match it, with the understanding that there is a cap on the amount of money that they spend on the campaign.

Now, I do not have to get into all the details of the New Jersey system, but the bottom line is, it is essentially a way of trying to reduce the amount of money spent on a campaign, trying to provide some sort of private funding either through political action committees or individuals at a certain amount, which is also capped, and then to match it with public funds. As a consequence, our gubernatorial races in New Jersey are reducing the amount of money that has to be spent.

If we look at how much is spent on a gubernatorial race in New Jersey statewide as opposed to how much is spent on a senatorial race where there is no public system of financing or no restrictions in the way that we have in spending on the State level, there is a big difference.

Really, at this point in New Jersey, it is not that difficult to run for Governor, raise the money to do so, if an individual wants to. On the other hand, it is very difficult to run for Senator because of all the money that one has to raise without any matching requirements.

So I do not want to get into the details of the specific proposals today, although I think some of my colleagues may decide they would like to, and that is fine, but the bottom line is, we are calling for action on campaign finance reform by the Republicans. They are in the majority; they have the obligation to bring up the bill, to have the hearings, to mark it up and bring it to the floor.

We suggested that that be done by Memorial Day. The President suggested it be done by July 4. In either case, it needs to be done and we need action.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have some of my colleagues joining me today, and I would like to yield at this point to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TIERNEY].

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the lack of direction and the absence of any agenda addressing issues of importance to the people of my district as well as the people of this country.

□ 1515

Frankly this body has been behaving as an institution so gripped by political tensions and acrimony that any action claimed as nonpolitical appears only to be a pretense. Most Americans can remember when the distinguished Congressman O'Neill from my home State of Massachusetts was the Speaker and members of both parties conversed, they met, they socialized, they civilly debated issues and they deliberated all the proposed bills and amendments and finally they voted moving an agenda forward.

What has changed, Mr. Speaker? Who has changed to make this different so that the majority now proposes bills designed not for debate, not for contemplation or improvement, not even for amendment, but only for votes along party lines that are phrased in such political terms that are so stark that they are not even faintly disguised as other than campaign hype for the next election. Again, who has changed and what has changed, Mr. Speaker, so that this is the way things are today?

People expect us to debate here. They expect us to deliberate and they want an exchange of ideas and votes on the issues of importance to them. They want us to be dealing with campaign finance reform, with education, with health care, with Social Security and Medicare, the budget and economic growth. Our colleagues across the aisle complained when they were in the minority. Well, they are in the majority now, Mr. Speaker. Show us the leadership. Show us the fairness. Show us the good faith. Show us the nonpartisan governance. It is simply not happening. Some assert that they are not extremists on that side of the aisle, and that may be so, but check out the party-line votes and those assertions seem to lack merit. The protestations of moderation are contradicted by their party-line behavior, and their votes support the extremism and the politicization. Perhaps the greatest example, Mr. Speaker, is the committee funding. We are not here today debating campaign finance reform, as we should be, or the economy or health or education. We are not addressing campaign finance reform because we are busy dealing with the budgets for committees like the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, where the committee chairman appears bent on orchestrating an investigation that will be without credibility. Why will it be without credibility, Mr. Speaker? Because, unlike the Senate committee dealing with the same subjects, it is going to be partisan. It is going to be more about the next election than about oversight. It is going to be limited. It is not going to be about the entire House and people running for the House or the entire Senate and people campaigning for the Senate. It is not going to be about Republicans and Democrats running for President, or the Republican as well as the Democratic party. Unlike the Senate, it is going to be focused only in a partisan manner. It is a committee that is seeking some $16.2 million, Mr. Speaker, using $3.2 million to investigate, using as much as $3.8 million of the base budget to supplement that investigation, and reserving some $7.9 million in a slush fund in case it needs more to go about its partisan limited attacks. That is $14.9 million, Mr. Speaker, potentially for that limited partisan political investigation that will be totally without credibility and will be a partial duplication of what the Senate is doing. That Senate, Mr. Speaker, will be doing a broader, bipartisan, more objective and I suggest more credible job for $4.35 million.

Are the majority afraid, Mr. Speaker, to investigate Republicans and Democrats who ran for the House and the way they did it? Or Republicans and Democrats who ran for the Senate and the way they did it? Or both parties? We need to know what the past practices were. We need a thorough, inclusive investigation. We are 100 days into this session, Mr. Speaker, and there has been no campaign reform debate. We need a credible, valuable investigation that will cover all practices of all parties and all candidates. The purpose of the oversight portion of that committee, Mr. Speaker, should be to learn from the errors and the problems of the past. The goal, Mr. Speaker, should be to use that information as we deliberate proposals for campaign finance reform. We should be dealing with that business now, Mr. Speaker, so we can then address the budget, the economy, health care, economic growth and other issues in such a way that the public will not have the perception that special interests are taking charge but rather will have the confidence that we are doing the people's business.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentleman, and I think, Mr. Speaker, we increasingly see the sense of frustration that many of those on the Democratic side of the aisle fear right now over the fact that there has been no progress in terms of the Republican leadership bringing up the issue of campaign finance reform. We are just going to continue to speak out every day until they take some action on this issue.

I yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. WAXMAN].

Mr. WAXMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, there is an important reason why the House of Representatives and the Congress ought to investigate campaign finance abuses. Such an investigation is perfectly legitimate. But the one that is about to be conducted in the House is not legitimate. That investigation by the Government Reform and Oversight Committee is now on a path to a very partisan investigation. I believe if we are going to look at campaign finance abuses, we ought to look at the whole spectrum of how this system supposedly works. We ought to find out what has been going on at the White House but we also ought to understand what has been going on here in the Congress. The scope of the investigation ought to be to look at all of these matters, because the only legitimate purpose of an investigation is to lead to campaign finance reform.

It is this system that is driving Members of Congress and candidates for President to go out and raise money.

They are constantly out raising money and not doing the job of representing the people. We need to understand how this system has brought us to the point where we are today.

When we meet tomorrow on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, we are going to, for the very first time, discuss our committee's investigation. We have never had a meeting to discuss it. We are going to have a vote on the scope of that investigation. The chairman, Congressman DAN BURTON, has suggested that the scope be only limited to President Clinton.

Can anyone believe that that is not a blueprint for a partisan investigation, a partisan witch-hunt? There is no reason for the Congress of the United States to use millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to pursue a partisan agenda. The only legitimate investigation, in my view, is to try to lead to reform and to understand how to accomplish that reform.

We have another important issue that is going to be coming up in our committee tomorrow, and that is the question of issuing subpoenas and disclosing confidential information. There has never been a committee of the Congress, to my knowledge, that has ever let one person, even the chairman, unilaterally issue subpoenas. Subpoenas have always been issued either by concurrence with the minority or a vote of the committee. The investigation is not the chairman's. The investigation is the committee's.

For that reason, we are proposing that the rules under which our committee operates protect the interests and the accountability of the Members for this investigation. If we do not issue the subpoenas in that committee and it is simply the chairman, how do we answer for it? And if the chairman is issuing them alone, how do we know it is not just his staff issuing subpoenas? This is important, because when a subpoena is issued to someone, they have to go out and hire an attorney. They are facing possible criminal sanctions for violation of that subpoena. They have got to worry that they are not going to comply in a precise way. I cannot tell you how many people have told me if they are the subject of a lawsuit, they get a little knot in their stomach of anxiety.

Can you imagine what it means for an ordinary citizen to be issued a subpoena by a committee of the Congress on a highly charged political investigation as we are now seeing conducted? In the Senate of the United States, there is a similar investigation on campaign finance in the committee chaired by Senator THOMPSON. In that committee, he is operating under a scope that will look at all campaign finance issues, and he is conducting himself under the traditional rules of all committees where the chairman issues subpoenas only with the concurrence of the minority or a vote of the committee. He is taking the same view when it comes to releasing confidential information. Yet Congressman DAN BURTON, the chairman of our committee, thinks he alone should be able to release confidential information whenever he sees fit.

We are talking about releasing, unilaterally, virtually all documents given to the committee. These documents were given to the committee, not to one member but to the committee itself. And we are talking about confidential financial records, trade secrets, medical histories, the identity of FBI informants, and privileged attorney-client communications. There may be times when such information should be released, but that decision should not be in the hands of one person alone, even if he is the chairman of the committee.

I am using this occasion to alert the Members to the fact that a very crucial decision is going to be made by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight tomorrow. If we accept the protocol the chairman is setting out for us, we are going to be on a path of a partisan investigation which serves no legitimate purpose.

Why do we need to change the rules and let the chairman have this power? No one has explained to me why that is the case. By tomorrow, the chairman will have unilaterally issued around 100 subpoenas. Members of our committee are here today, and they are going to speak on this issue, but they are members of the committee and they have never been consulted about issuing these subpoenas. People have called me, and maybe them, asking how such a subpoena could have been issued. We do not know. And we do not think it is right. No one person should have that kind of power. Power concentrated in that way is an invitation for abuse, and I do not think we ought to give Chairman BURTON that option which may be too attractive to him and to his staff for them to abuse.

So when we meet tomorrow, we are going to propose a bipartisan investigation. Why should this be partisan? It ought to be something done both with the Democrats and the Republicans working together, just as in the Senate they are working together under rules that they have agreed to on a bipartisan basis to conduct this investigation that they are conducting.

From my point of view, I do not see any reason why there ought to be two separate investigations. I do not know why there is a Senate investigation and a House investigation and other committees are conducting parallel investigations on parts of the campaign finance issues. Can you imagine the amount of money that is being spent, in fact wasted, when the House is paying for a separate investigation than what the Senate is doing?

We had joint House-Senate investigations in the past. I think it makes a lot of sense for us to do one now. But not only is the taxpayers' money being wasted in the funding of these investigations, but when an agency gets a subpoena from the House and the Senate and different other committees, they have got to stop everything they are doing and devote staff time and resources to comply with the requests for information, and they are wasting money by the multiplicity of committees that are asking them to comply.

Mr. Speaker, I alert my colleagues that now is the time, if we are going to have a fair and bipartisan investigation, to get the ground rules straight. I hope tomorrow the members of the committee will go along with the suggestions that were adopted 99 to 0 in the Senate and ought to be the blueprint for our investigation in the House.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WAXMAN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MILLER of California. I want to commend the gentleman for the position that he and a number of his members on the Democratic side of the committee have taken. I only wish it would be taken by the entire committee, by the chairman, and by the leadership of the House.

One of the things that is becoming very clear, as we watch your investigations and others get under way with respect to the White House and the whole question of campaign finance reform and what happened in the last election and the incredible amounts of money, is that we do not have a lot of credibility with the public on this issue.

□ 1530

They really do believe that in some cases the fox is guarding the hen house here. The only way that we can start to reestablish that credibility is with a complete, comprehensive, and a bipartisan investigation.

One of the finest hours in terms of the public's understanding of the Congress and appreciation for the Congress was in the Watergate investigations, which were done, in fact, on a bipartisan basis because what was at stake was, in fact, the very institution of the Presidency, of the separation of powers, and of our democratic institutions.

I would suggest to the gentleman from California, and I would suggest to Chairman BURTON, and I would suggest to the Republican leadership that no less is at stake here. No less is at stake here because what we have seen is, in this last campaign in action, by the White House, by the Republican National Committee, by the Dole committee, by the Democratic National Committee, by Members of Congress, what we have seen is that we have essentially lost the confidence of the American people. That becomes very clear in any sampling done of the American public.

There is no substitute for a bipartisan, comprehensive investigation into irregularities with respect to this, into the legalities of various activities, into the ethics of these activities. If we fail to do that, whether or not you can pin

somebody's hide to the wall or not will not resonate with the public in terms of whether they believe we have done the kind of investigation, whether we have really cleansed this system of what I believe is such a corrosive level of special interest money that it is now distorting the processes by which this institution arrives at conclusions and I think is undermining our democratic institutions.

I would hope that when the gentleman starts his hearings tomorrow and the committee deliberates this, that there would be some fundamental understanding by the Republicans that this is larger than their party or our party, this is about the survivability of this institution in terms of the confidence of the American public, and that is very important.

That is very important because when this is all said and done, we have a lot of other issues where, if we do not have some level of confidence with the American public, the decisions about tax relief or the balanced budget or Medicare or Social Security were made without the corrosive influence of special interest money, then we are going to have a lot of trouble in terms of the future of this country and the future of this institution being able to make those difficult and tough decisions that are so necessary to our future.

And I just want to commend my colleague from California for his tenacity in this argument. I can appreciate that it appears that, this is simply prepared to overwhelm you, they are prepared to go on with business, as they view, as usual. And I want to thank the gentleman on behalf of one that serves in this institution and one who tries to represent to his constituents the democratic process in this institution for your efforts to try to balance out this investigation so that when we are all done, we can be clear with the public that we have done our very best, that we have been the fairest we can possibly be, that we have been bipartisan and we have arrived at some support and conclusion.

I want to thank the gentleman for his efforts.

Mr. WAXMAN. I thank the gentleman for his kind words.

This investigation is too important to play petty politics with. I think that the American public is thoroughly cynical about the role of special interest money and the way the candidates run after that money. We have got to reform the system.

This is an opportunity for us to understand the system, where it has been abused, where illegal actions have taken place, if any. But there are a lot of legal actions, as we all know, within the campaign finance area now, particularly with the opening of loopholes for soft money and independent expenditures, that are perfectly legal. Some of the most scandalous activities, I think, are some of the most legal activities in the campaign finance area.

The Speaker of the House, NEWT GINGRICH, spoke to a group the other day, and he said that he wants a thorough investigation about whether a foreign government is trying to influence American elections. How can you have an investigation about whether foreign governments may be trying to interfere in our elections but only for the Presidency, not for the Congress? If that is an important issue, let us put it all on the table. There are other members of my committee.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman wants to be kind, but I have to say that, you know, the ultimate irony in this whole idea of foreign governments is that, and one of the reasons that I believe that the chairman of your committee, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON], is not willing to open this up to include the House, both Democrat and Republican, and the Senate, is because he himself has been under investigation.

There have been allegations, as you know, that he in fact——

Mr. WAXMAN. Let me reclaim my time and just tell the gentleman, I hope he is incorrect, and I want us to work on our committee in a bipartisan basis and to go forward together legitimately to understand the system, find abuses, hold them out to public scrutiny, learn how to reform the system that no one, I think, can defend.

I know that there are members of my committee here that have taken out this opportunity for Special Orders.

Mr. TIERNEY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WAXMAN. I am not going to yield to the gentleman. I will yield back my time to the gentleman from New Jersey and hope that he will yield to the other members of the committee that are here and others on our side of the aisle who want to express their views.

But I thank the gentleman for taking this opportunity on the House floor so that we can alert the public as to what is going on.

Mr. PALLONE. What I would like to do, with the indulgence of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, is if I could yield back my time with the understanding that the Chair will grant that time to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TIERNEY].

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TIERNEY] is recognized for the remainder of the hour.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield at this time to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DAVIS].

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

Our Founding Fathers, the authors of our Constitution, created something that the world had never seen, a representative government based on the popular election of the legislative and executive branches. It was a powerful idea whose time had indeed come.

Based on the study of the most advanced ideas of that date, it has taken us now more than 200 years to extend those basic ideas to include all of the people in this country, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, men and women; and I would like to add rich and poor to the list.

But, unfortunately, our democratic system has been attacked by a virus of virulence that our Founding Fathers could never have imagined, money. By some estimates, our last national elections cost $2 billion. And according to a study by the Center for Responsive Politics, 9 out of 10 U.S. House races were won by candidates who outspent their opponents in the election, and in nearly 40 percent of the House races the winner outspent the loser by a factor of 10 to 1 or more.

In competitive races, House candidates are spending 50 percent more in real terms on TV and radio advertising than they did 20 years ago at the time of Buckley versus Valeo. Thirty years ago, the average sound bite on the TV news was 42 seconds. By 1992, that bite was trimmed to less than 10 seconds. Literally, money talks, and because money talks, and when it talks it drowns out almost all other political discourse, money has distorted, corrupted, and perverted our political system.

It is time to get back to the basic democracy of Benjamin Franklin, Elizabeth Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Susan Anthony, and Martin Luther King. We are past the time for halfway and halfhearted patches on the system. Belief that this closure alone will remedy the problem is akin to belief in the tooth fairy. Solving the problem by just regulating soft money is about as likely as expecting pigs to fly.

I believe that the basic principles of campaign reform, at a very minimum, should be these:

First, take money out of the equation; finance all Federal campaigns through voluntary full public funding; amend the Constitution to prohibit Federal candidates from using private funds; provide voters with enough unfiltered information to make informed choices; open up television, radio, and other media for a discussion of the issues by the candidates; shorten the election cycle; create a truly independent regulatory agency to monitor and make public the spending of public campaign moneys; require paid lobbyists to publicly report who and when they lobby; create universal voter registration; encourage experimentation with mail and electronic ballots and multiple day elections; require full disclosure of all independent expenditures.

The fact that most Americans indicate that they have lost confidence in the functioning of our democratic elections and that most do not vote should be both a warning and a summons to action. The time to act is now, before