to reform this system, and there may be many good ideas, there have been many proposals advanced, the question is, Will we have a firm day now in terms of debate that provide for full and fair discussion of the proposals?

I must say that this same story from this morning's paper is not very encouraging in that regard. It does point out, as for the House, Republican leaders have been publicly silent, until this week, on the idea of bringing up the campaign finance bill, even as Democrats agitated daily for a vote on this issue.

We have had to file motions to adjourn, to approve the Journal, to count the votes, to do these various things, because under our rules, we have no other mechanism to adjourn the special interests that want to dominate this House and that have influenced legislation with the $50 billion tax break for tobacco companies and so many other ways this year.

You give the most soft money in the first 6 months, and in the seventh month you get a $50 billion tax break that all the rest of us have to pay for. That is wrong. But it is not just a matter of talking about it up here and talking about it in the Senate. We have got to do something about it. And the ''something'' is comprehensive reform that is scheduled now.

But if we read on in this morning's paper, what we learn is that the kind of reform that the Speaker says might come up sometime this fall, and fall has already begun, is not reform, but it would allow unlimited personal contributions.

□ 1215

He wants to solve the problem of big money influence on this body that is crippling the operation of our Congress; he wants to solve the big money problem by making it bigger. Let the big boys give what they are giving now, and let them give any amount they want to do to influence the priorities of this Congress. That is not reform, it is repealing the only reforms that we have been able to get on the books thus far.

We need a real reform, not a repeal of the existing law, little as it is, to try to control the way the system has operated, and that real reform could come as early as next week.

I am pleased that this same story reports that our leader, the gentleman from Missouri, [Mr. GEPHARDT], has written to Speaker GINGRICH and he has said, ''Until we receive your commitment to follow through on rhetorical offerings,'' and that is all we have had, ''we shall not treat these overtures as serious,'' and certainly they should not be, ''and we will continue our efforts to force action to daily floor proceedings.''

That is precisely what will occur on this floor on next Monday, and it is precisely what will occur in the future. Until we get fair play in this House, until the American people have a chance to see specific proposals out here, we will have other procedural votes to get the American people the reform that they deserve.

BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, just a short while ago we had a vote to cut $54 million out of the U.N. appropriation. The vote tally was 242 to 165, 165 in favor of cutting this $54 million of so-called past dues.

I want to compliment the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. BARTLETT] for bringing to this our attention, because I think it is a very important point, because we are never reimbursed for all of the peacekeeping missions throughout the world. Therefore, they actually owe us, we do not owe them. So it is rather sad to see that we, as a Congress, cannot rectify this; instead, we vote more funds for the United Nations.

Of course, I do not hide the fact that I do not think a lot about the United Nations. I think ultimately it is very detrimental to America's policy and very detrimental to our sovereignty, so I have a specific agenda in that regard.

Actually, the problems we face with the United Nations can be solved, because there has been a compromise offered. Instead of abolishing the United Nations like I would like to do, I think Ted Turner has offered us a real solution. Ted Turner is a very wealthy man, has made a lot of money in the capital system, and he is voluntarily willing to submit $1 billion to continue with the United Nations, and I think that is fine. I think the United Nations ought to be funded by donations such as from Ted Turner. An additional advantage of having Ted Turner send his money to the United Nations, we can be assured that with the next war started by the United Nations, we can send Jane Fonda to do the fighting for us.

On another subject, I want to just mention something about the recent discussions we have had here on the floor here in the last week on the pay raise. I am not in favor of the pay raise. I voted against the pay raise. As a matter of fact, I think our pension fund is outrageously obscene, and I do not participate in it. But in comparison to some other matters, I think the amount of attention that we gave to the pay raise is probably a little bit more than needed to be done.

For instance, the pay raise, after taxes, would come to $40 a week, but nevertheless, I think the point was well taken that we should not be taking a pay raise when so many people in this country are actually suffering the consequence of a decreasing standard of living. Until we solve that, I do not believe we should be taking a pay raise. That so-called pay raise would have been a 2.3-percent COLA increase.

But in comparison to what we were doing in the particular bill that that was attached to, the Treasury-Postal Service appropriation, informed many Members of the Congress that were not aware of it, but in this bill, we actually increase the budget for the IRS by more than a half a billion dollars. At the same time we hold these grand hearings, make grand speeches against the IRS, and at the very same time we are expanding the role and the power and the authority of the IRS by expanding their budget by more than a half a billion dollars.

Then there is another agency of government that is probably the second least favorite of mine to the IRS, and that is the BATF. The BATF budget was increased 14 percent. It went up $66 million. So at the time we were talking about a small cost-of-living increase for Congress, which again I oppose, we at the same time were pretending that we were fighting this IRS and the abuse of the IRS, but expanding the role of the IRS.

I think what we need to do is get things in perspective. I think that first off, we should exist here for the liberty, protection of liberties of American citizens; we should be protecting the sovereignty of the United States; we should not be paying the dues out of proportion to what everybody else pays throughout the world at the same time we sacrifice much of our liberties and we live in a nation today where our troops are actually serving under the commanders of foreign generals. Everybody I talk to, everybody in my district I talk to, they do not like this. They would like to see this change.

So once again, I would like to express the sadness about the recent vote that we could not even cut the $54 million away from what is called overdue back dues for the United Nations. I think it is so important that we put all of this in perspective. Yes, we do not need pay raises, but we certainly do not need to raise the amount of money we give the IRS and the BATF.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, the pictures that have been painted in the hearings in the Senate and in the disclosures by national news media about what took place in the last campaign is not a pretty picture for the American people.

In fact, I am sure it is quite painful when they see that the last campaign of what we call soft money, that is money that essentially is not regulated by Federal campaign laws, was made in contributions to both parties, both major parties in this country, in huge

amounts by individuals, and the story that unfolds is that that soft money was all about access. It was all about access to the White House; it was all about access to the Republican committee chairmen in the House, and the Republican committee chairmen in the Senate, and the leadership in the House and in the Senate. Letters went out and told people, if they gave $10,000, they could have lunch with chairman of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade, and Consumer Protection, or the Committee on Labor, or the Committee on Ways and Means, or in the Senate one could have lunch or dinner or a private meeting, and for $25,000 one could be in on strategy sessions.

The average American could not even dream of being in on one of those sessions. But that soft money then started to dictate, as we saw in the previous session, even before this election, lobbyists and powerful people sitting in the offices of the Republican leadership drafting legislation to weaken the Clean Air Act, to weaken the Clean Water Act, to weaken the health safety acts that protect our families and children against unhealthy food, to weaken the meat inspection act after people have died because of bad meat in the marketplace. But the lobbyists, they had access, because they gave $10,000, they gave $100,000. And the crescendo really came in campaign finance reform, or really about bad campaign practices, the crescendo came just about 1 month ago or 2 months ago when we did the Balanced Budget Tax Relief Act.

Members in this House voted on an act believing they were balancing the budget and providing tax relief. However, later we found out that the interests, the tobacco interests that gave the most money to the Republican Party, to the leadership, the individual Members of the Republican leadership, they were able to get a meeting that no other American could get. They were able to get a meeting where in the middle of the night, with no vote, no hearing, no discussion, and apparently, if we listen to the people, no authors, but an amendment got into that bill that provided $50-, 5–0, $50 billion in tax breaks for the tobacco companies that have been killing our citizens and lying about it for 50 years.

How did they do it? They did it because they gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to members of the leadership, to the Republican Party, to the Republican conventions, and the payoff day was the day that bill was passed.

Now, fortunately, because of Senator DURBIN over on the other side and Senator COLLINS and the gentlewoman from New York, Mrs. LOWEY, here, when they made us vote in the light of the day, it went away, because we shined democracy, we shined light, we shined the public perception. The press could see what was going on, and nobody would claim that amendment. But a few hundred thousand dollars got the amendment into the bill.

That is why we have been having procedural votes in this House, because we have to end this system that allows the people to sit in the galleries, but the special interests to sit in the office of the Speaker and the majority whip and design legislation; that allows the people to stand outside and petition us on the steps, but allows the special interests to sit down and have dinner and talk about how they can redesign the communications business and who gets access to this billion-dollar giveaway and that billion-dollar giveaway, and the networks will not be charged for using the public airways. That is what has to stop. That is what this week was about.

Finally, finally, after this week, we get some utterances from the other side that maybe they will allow a debate on campaign finance reform. They will not tell us when, they will not tell us how, and they are not even sure they will do it.

We deserve better, and the American people deserve better. The U.S. Senate today has started debate on campaign finance reform, and yet in the House we cannot even discuss it. We cannot even discuss it because of huge contributions to the Republican leadership.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds all Members not to refer to individual Senators or to characterize Senate action or inaction.

ENERGY POLICY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, in 1992, Congress passed the Energy Policy Act which set Federal requirements on the use of alternative fuel vehicles such as ethanol-powered cars. This legislation required Federal, State, and city fleets to use vehicles that are cleaner and better for our environment. This act listed fuels and vehicle types that can be used by fleet managers to comply with this act.

Unfortunately, biodiesel was not one of the listed alternative fuels at the time because the industry was new, untested, unproven. However, today, that is not the case. As a result, I am introducing a bill, along with the gentlewoman from Missouri [Ms. MCCARTHY], to classify biodiesel as an alternative fuel under the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

Biodiesel is a renewable alternative fuel for diesel engines derived from soybeans. Once biodiesel is classified as an alternative fuel under this bill, it will be used immediately in conventional diesel engines with no engine modifications needed. A few examples of the type of vehicles using this B–20 mix are heavy-duty fleet vehicles such as city buses, boats, and trucks.

The diesel engines will use biodiesel in blends of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent petroleum diesel, which is the most efficient, energy-efficient, and environmentally beneficial mix.

□ 1230

The use of biodiesel will help to save on capital expenditures as fleets will be able to modify and improve their existing vehicles, as opposed to purchasing completely new fleets.

The production, sale, and use of biodiesel will create a new market for our farmers, and, in turn, boost our economy. Because it runs cleaner than regular diesel fuel, the use of biodiesel also means that fewer emissions, as an example, particulate matter, hydrocarbons, and carbon monoxide, are released to our environment.

By granting alternative fuel status to biodiesel this bill will promote economic development and energy security. Biodiesel means jobs and tax revenues for processing a greater portion of our domestic soybean oil in the United States.

The emerging biodiesel market offers a stable, long-term market for efficiently produced domestic soybeans that will directly benefit American farmers. The use of domestic biodiesel also improves national energy security by displacing imported energy, such as foreign oil.

It is important to note that this legislation does not create a tax break or a new Federal mandate. This bill will simply allow the biodiesel industry to compete in the alternative fuel market, giving fleet vehicle managers more flexibility in complying with the mandates required at the Federal level.

The production, sale, and use of biodiesel is good for the environment, good for family farmers, good for the economy, and good for our energy security. As a Congressman from one of the largest agricultural producer States in the United States, creating new markets for our family farmers, helping the economy, and keeping our air clean is very important to me.

In a time that we are looking for answers to environmental concerns, new markets for family farmers and a boost for the economy and energy security, biodiesel makes sense for everyone.

THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP SHOULD SCHEDULE DEBATE AND A VOTE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington, [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADAM SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to echo the comments of my colleagues and urge that this body bring up campaign finance reform and pass meaningful campaign finance reform in this session.

I think the biggest reason I want to see this happen is because of the lack of confidence that the public has in this body. There is a crisis in our democracy that I think too few people have noticed; that is, the majority of