When the history of North Carolina is finally written, a prominent place will be given to this man who will be missed, but forever loved by so many.

THE PAYCHECK PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KINGSTON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, tonight is one of those opportunities for the Members of the Republican freshman class to address the House, to use this special order as an opportunity to discuss many of the topics that come to our minds as new Members of the 105th Congress.

I want to use the occasion to discuss an issue that is very important to me and to members of the constituency that I represent out in the Fourth District of Colorado, and others perhaps may be here to join me tonight, as well. That issue is the Paycheck Protection Act.

The Paycheck Protection Act is a measure this House has considered previously this year, and it will come up again within the next few weeks. In fact, as campaign finance reform legislation makes its way to the floor, the Paycheck Protection Act is expected to be an integral part of the overall discussions. I myself intend to see to it that that becomes the case, and to fight vigorously, certainly as vigorously as I possibly can, to bring up the issue.

Let me describe the need for it, and what the Paycheck Protection Act is all about. The Paycheck Protection Act is a measure that was inspired by a certain level of abuse that takes place with respect to campaign fundraising.

Let me step back one moment and say that this House has spent considerable time discussing how we spend money as candidates, and in political parties, and in the political arena. It has spent time discussing different strategies to get us toward full disclosure, and how we disclose the kinds of campaign finances that candidates and politicians need to raise in order to put together campaigns.

This House has spent considerable time talking about how that information is accounted for through the Federal Elections Commission, and the rules that surround the Federal Election Commission's responsibilities, but rarely have we spent time talking about how the cash is actually raised, and who works to raise the money for political purposes.

In America, elections are a very important time in our Republic in maintaining a democratic republican form of government. It is a critically important time because it is the one time when the people are actually in charge and assert their authority in deciding which representatives will speak for them on the floor of the House, on the floor of the Senate, and as President. Americans have every right to participate fully and openly and voluntarily in that electoral process.

That last statement that I mentioned, that last word, ''voluntarily'', is the operative word here. It really is the basis for the Paycheck Protection Act. Because in America today, it is possible, in fact, it is very likely, that if you belong to a labor union or if you belong to any other political association that raises funds for political causes, and if you allow your membership dues to be collected through automatic wage withholding, it is likely, I say again, that a certain portion of your wages are siphoned off for political causes that you may or may not support. In fact, you may not even know that that is occurring.

So to those who find themselves members of these various organizations, the first thing I would do is ask you to doublecheck your paycheck, to look again and see if the money that you are sending to your union is really going toward collective bargaining, toward agency representation, or whether there are associated fees that necessitate spending a certain portion of your paycheck on various political causes.

These political causes may be campaigns for candidates like myself or any other Member of the House that runs for office every 2 years. It may be a campaign for a local race in your State, for State legislature, Governor, State Treasurer, county commissioner, city council member, whatever the case may be. It may be a ballot initiative or a ballot issue, one that perhaps is sponsored by a labor organization or a group sympathetic to labor unions, or it might be some kind of political education initiative, where the goal and motivation is to persuade voters to one degree or another to behave at the polls in a certain way.

All of these are legitimate functions of our government. They are essential portions of electing representatives at election time. But what should not occur in America is a condition where anyone is forced to contribute to a political cause either against their will or without their knowledge. Political participation in the United States of America must and should be voluntary, 100 percent voluntary.

The Paycheck Protection Act is a bill that is designed to ensure that political participation throughout the country is voluntary, and it does so by addressing the issue of automatic wage withholding and skimming off a certain portion of one's wages for political causes without their consent.

It is an issue that many, many Americans are concerned about. In fact, it is a topic that the Committee on Education and the Work Force has spent considerable time investigating, through various hearings at different subcommittee levels throughout the country. It is a topic that the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has considered. It is one that the American people have considered as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would direct the attention of my colleagues to this chart here. When we went out in the field with a poll that we had commissioned, those who are working on trying to find a solution to this problem, back in October of 1997, we asked voters in general, and these are voters, I might add, from throughout the country, and in fact, this sample oversamples union households, we asked whether individuals approve or disapprove of a new Federal law that would protect workers' paychecks.

As Members can see, the results are pretty overwhelming. In the universe of all voters, 80 percent of them tell us that they support a change in the Federal law that would protect workers' paychecks. Only 16 percent of America's voters oppose such a law. The rest would have no opinion, of course.

When we ask members of a union household where their preferences lie in this regard, we find again that the results of union households are no different than the results of voters in general. Eighty percent of union households tell us that they support a Federal law that would protect workers' paychecks.

When we ask members of the teachers' union, the National Education Association being the largest teachers' union, and there is one other large one and some other smaller ones, but when we ask members of teachers' unions, 84 percent say they would support a Federal law that would protect workers' paychecks.

When we ask non-union households in general, once again, the numbers are not surprising, there, given what we have already learned from the other responses, 80 percent of nonunion households approve of a Federal law that would protect workers' paychecks, and 16 percent would oppose such a measure.

Let me talk about the 16, 16, 13, and 16 percent in these four different samples that, for one reason or another, support a law that allows the current state of affairs today, that allows a labor organization or any other political entity to siphon cash out of somebody's paycheck without their knowledge.

It is hard to believe that there would be anybody in America who supports such a thing, but apparently, when asked, there are about 16 percent of the American public that believes that this is somehow a good idea.

There are a number of reasons for that. Labor unions play a very powerful role here in Washington, lobbying in the halls of Congress. We see them all the time, whatever the bill may be. Sometimes it is trade measures, sometimes it is tax issues. Other times it might be matters of environmental regulation. It might be efforts to try to improve public education throughout

the country. Sometimes it is work force-related issues. It could be a variety of topics.

There are labor union lobbyists all over this Capitol, and if you are a member of a labor union and oppose many of the initiatives that have taken place to clean the air, to improve schools, to improve workplace safety and to try to create more jobs and wealth and to improve foreign trade and so on, if you oppose those efforts, as labor unions typically do, as represented here in Washington, then you might want other people who are your co-workers to pay for the message that you agree with here in Washington. But again, it is a very small minority of people who believe that taking cash from an unsuspecting wage earner's paycheck is a good idea.

Once again, let me restate that. There are a handful of people here in Washington who believe that they have some kind of right to take your cash, or an unsuspecting wage earner's cash, and use it to promote the political objectives of their minority opinions. So that is why we have 16 percent of the American public, when surveyed, who agree with that sort of thing.

The vast majority of Americans, however, understand fairness when they are looking at fairness, they understand unfairness when they are looking at such a travesty as involuntary campaign contributions. I would use a different term, and that would be ''theft.''

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Union members are fed up with the practice, frankly, of forced union dues and forced union dues being used for political purposes. Multiple national surveys of American workers have revealed widespread support for ending this practice.

One of the other questions we asked, and it is very closely related to the previous one that I went through, but this question does not even reference any existing law. It just merely says, should we change or keep the current Federal election laws that allow unions to make political contributions with money deducted from a union member's paycheck. Well, 78 percent of the American people think that the current law needs to be changed; 72 percent of union households believe that the current law needs to be changed; 78 percent of teacher union households believe that the current law needs to be changed. And once again, reflected in the previous chart, 80 percent of all nonunion households in America believe that the current law needs to be changed, that something needs to be done to address this issue of political contributions with money deducted from a union member's paycheck.

Despite the widespread support, even the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee is in the effort, has joined in the effort of trying to prevent paycheck protection from going forward. At the request of AFL-CIO's John Sweeney, the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee is considering cutting off campaign funds to any Democrat who supports the Paycheck Protection Act.

I would refer the body, in fact I will go through in more detail in a minute or two, the news article from which I take that position. Federal and State paycheck protection efforts will force union bosses to play by the same rules that everyone else plays by. It is about time that labor bosses understand that the Constitution applies to them, too.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, what an opportunity to yield on something that is very important. I was speaking about the campaign finance reform efforts that are coming to the floor very shortly; the rule that was just read across the desk is certainly the vehicle that will allow that to occur.

My intent is for the Paycheck Protection Act to play, to certainly be considered within the context of that overall debate. There are several reasons why the country needs the Paycheck Protection Act. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, in the 1995–96 election cycle, labor unions flexed their political muscles by spending $119 million on Federal political activity. That figure includes $35 million on issue ads that the AFL-CIO says it spent, nearly 66 million in campaign contributions and $18.5 million on Federal lobbying expenses.

While unions are required to file financial reports under the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, these reports are arranged by type of expenditure; for example, salaries or administrative costs and so on, rather than by the functional category that the American public would understand, such as contract negotiations and administration and political activities. So you have to be able to apply a certain level of political sophistication just to understand the reports that are filed, since they are filed through the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act.

The reality is that labor bosses did not fund political activities through legitimate voluntary contributions. Instead they plundered the paychecks of hard working union members. Many of these members were not even aware that their money was being used for political activity. The hearings that the Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations conducted revealed quite shocking testimony.

A woman named Jane Gansmann of West Chicago, Illinois who works for TWA, a member of the IAM union, said, ''The union never mentioned that my dues could be used for things other than collective bargaining. In other words, I was given only half-truths. I now realize the union was and is operating by misinformation.'' She submitted that through written testimony. She went on, I quote, ''I wanted to see a breakdown of where my union dues were going.'' She grudgingly said she could not, the local union official, in her notation here, when she went to a local union official, she grudgingly said ''She could not help me and stated that I could try contacting the IAM President. I then approached the union shop steward who advised me that if I demanded an audit, it would be very expensive and would cause increases in our union dues. She stated that if that happened, she would let everyone in our office know that I was responsible.'' Again, that was submitted in her written testimony.

She went on, ''I fear repercussions of harassment. The IAM recently listed the names of all current union dues objectors in the January 1997 issue of their Airwaves publication.''

This quote was given in written testimony to the Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations. I want to go on as to what the Paycheck Protection Act would do and how it would help in the case of Ms. Gansmann.

First, let me say that the use of compulsory union dues for political purposes violates a basic principle of voluntary political participation which is embodied in our Nation's Constitution. In 1994, 40 percent of union members voted for Republicans, for example, yet in 1996, less than 10 percent of labor PAC dollars went to Republican candidates. In Washington State, where 72 percent of the voters approved a paycheck protection initiative in 1992, over 40,000 union workers had the shackles of involuntary political participation broken. Originally 48,000 members of the Washington Education Association, again this is the teachers union in the State of Washington, 48,000 of them were forced to fund political activities against their will. Once the Paycheck Protection Act passed in the State of Washington, only 8,000 voluntarily succumbed to the union's political activities. That is a pretty remarkable statistic for the State of Washington. 48,000 union members had contributed to political activities knowingly or unknowingly against their will, sometimes with full compliance, yet after the Paycheck Protection Act passed and the law required that there be a checkoff, that you actually approve on an annual basis your willingness to voluntarily participate in union political activities, the number dropped from 48,000 in the State of Washington down to 8,000 contributors.

Well, today, very, very soon here in Congress, we can send a message to the labor bosses reminiscent of the message sent by colonists to King George. No taxation without representation.

In August of 1997, Kerry Gipe, who is a union member, testified to the House Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations. He said, ''I was told that joining the union was a mandatory part of working for the company and that absolutely no money was allowed to be used from our union dues for political purposes.'' Well, unfortunately for Mr. Gipe and millions of other

American workers, labor bosses continue to use compulsory dues for political purposes. According to some estimates, the unions spent as much as $200 million in 1996, that after you calculate many of the other expenditures that are reported far after and in different formats than are required at election time.

What the Paycheck Protection Act does is empower the individual worker. Employees will decide whether and to whom they contribute their hard-earned wages and they can revoke their authorization at any time. The labor bosses are so opposed to giving union members control over their own money that they have raised dues $1 per member to fund efforts to oppose paycheck protection nationwide. That was reported in the Morning Times March 20, 1998.

In the State of Oregon, labor unions are assessing their Members $60 each to fight the Oregon initiative equivalent to the Paycheck Protection Act. Are they labor bosses looking out for workers or union bosses trying to protect their six-figure salaries and potential, their political income?

We heard more riveting testimony in the subcommittee. John Masiello of Mooresville, North Carolina is an aircraft mechanic. He said.

> I had been a member of the IAM for 13 years. I do believe that collective bargaining for a work force that performs a common service is a proper and efficient way to be represented for contractual matters. I also believe I am a client paying an association for service. The IAM does not see it that way. Instead, they assume the role of dictator and I am their subject.

Mr. Masiello went on, he said that,

> The local lodge president immediately started a campaign to descredit him and all the other members who exercised their rights.

Let me stop there and digress for a moment about what those rights might be. In 1988, the Supreme Court, in a decision known as the Beck decision, ruled that any labor member, union member who pays dues can go back retroactively and get their cash back for those portions of their wages that have been withheld for political purposes. In other words, if you object, you go back to your union boss, under the Beck decision, and ask for your money back. Well, many people in the union will tell you that your rights are somehow protected because of the Beck decision. But Mr. Masiello's testimony explains how workplace harassment really prevents individuals in some occasions from exercising their workplace rights.

He said, I will read that portion again, that

> The local lodge president of the IAM immediately started a campaign to discredit me and all the other members who exercised their rights. He did this with slanderous lies and character assassination. Letters were hung all over the workplace claiming we objected to paying any dues, we were against unions and equated with scabs. They stripped me of my membership. Told me that I was in bad standing with the union and disallowed me of any and all voting rights, including voting on contractual matters and strike votes. Months had gone by and the harassment had not let up one bit. To make matters worse, I was still paying what they had considered a full due. Not one penny of the overpayment was refunded to me. I was forced to take the local lodge president to small claims court. The union has no concept of individual freedom. They seem to operate in their own little world with no regard for an individual's unalienable rights or the Constitution of the United States.

Again, this was submitted in written testimony by John Masiello, Mooresville, North Carolina. He submitted this testimony January 21 of this year. And the record from that hearing and other hearings like them are replete with example after example after example of union members who join unions for legitimate purposes yet do not want their hard-earned dollars to go to a separate political purpose which they do not consent to, which they do not support, many times supporting candidates that the individual may actually oppose.

It is important at this point, I think, Mr. Speaker, for me to say that the Paycheck Protection Act, when introduced as House Resolution 2608, enjoys the support of about, if I remember right, 163 Members of the House of Representatives. When that bill came up for a vote on the floor, it enjoyed bipartisan support on both sides of the aisle. Yes, that is right, Democrats joining Republicans in supporting the Paycheck Protection Act, in supporting the rank and file hard-working Americans who deserve the right to direct their own hard-earned dollars to the political causes that they choose to associate with, or to avoid participating in the political process altogether. Within that context, the Paycheck Protection Act can almost be viewed as a pay raise without a tax increase, an added benefit that allows cash to stay in the hands of the individual who earned it rather than the union boss who will squander it.

All that the bill requires is that a corporation, any other corporation, national bank, any organization collect the written and voluntary consent from an employee or union member before using any portion of their dues or fees for the organization's political activity. This does not ban participation in political, in union political activities. In fact, it actually encourages it because it causes unions to ask their members to participate at least on an annual basis.

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They may ask more than that, if they would like. But it asks every individual to be confronted with the simple question of whether or not they want their cash to go to a political cause or not.

Now, I tend to have faith in the hard-working members of the labor force throughout the country. I think, when confronted with such a question, they will probably participate in their political system. They love America. They work hard for everything our great country stands for.

In fact, I would submit that they are at the very center of what it means to be real Americans, encompassing the age-old principle of honest hard work and strong families. And when given the choice, I think that they will participate. They will participate in the political process. They will vote. They may run for office themselves.

But the reason labor union bosses, as opposed to labor union members, oppose the Paycheck Protection Act is because it takes power away from a privileged few, who have found a way to manipulate the rules here in Washington over the years to create a situation where hard-earned wages can be siphoned away from the wage earner and spent on the political causes that a few labor bosses select, and to direct somebody else's cash to achieve their own selfish objectives. The Paycheck Protection Act restores fairness. It empowers rank-and-file labor union members.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the campaign finance bill will be coming to the floor very shortly. The Committee on Rules, as we just received the report just moments ago, has indicated that it is moving forward to bring a bill to this floor to deal with the issue of campaign finance.

There will be several amendments that will be offered, several different aspects of campaign finance that will be considered, many of them good, many of them bad, many of them are certainly at the very least worthy of consideration by the House. But I will make the pledge tonight that I will do everything I can on behalf of hard-working union members throughout the country, the hard-working laborers who are currently having, in many cases, portions of their wages siphoned off for political causes they do not support. I will be working for them and bringing the Paycheck Protection Act for consideration over and over and over again.

The political stakes are high, and I know it will be another emotional issue, but I urge all Americans, I urge every Member of this Congress to consider very carefully the importance, again within the context of campaign finance, of how the money is raised. Once we deal with that, then it is legitimate and right and just to consider all the other issues with reporting, with campaign amounts, with how money is spent, how it is reported and so on.

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) is here to join us this evening, who also plays an integral role in the campaign finance debate and has been a real leader among the freshman class, and I yield the floor to him.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and I want to express my appreciation to the gentleman for his leadership to the freshman class, as president of our class,

but also on the issue that the gentleman has been talking about, which is paycheck protection. The gentleman has devoted an enormous amount of energy and time to this issue and I congratulate him for that.

As the gentleman indicated, there is going to be an opportunity to vote on paycheck protection as well as other campaign reform amendments and ideas on the floor, starting, hopefully, tomorrow. And as the gentleman indicated, the Committee on Rules is preparing for that event, and I am delighted that the base bill that will be considered, whenever we debate campaign finance reform, will be the bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act, which again is called ''the freshman bill''.

This bill is fairly limited in scope as to all that it does, but it accomplishes very significant and substantial reform. And if the gentleman will continue to yield for a few moments, I would like to be able to talk about this particular bill that will be considered on the House floor.

This bill started out with a working group, six Democrats and six Republicans meeting together, building a trust relationship and saying what can we agree upon; how can we address the most severe abuses in our campaign system. This was 15 months ago. For over 5 months we have worked together and crafted a bipartisan bill that avoided the extremes. It stayed away from public funding of our campaigns, where we have taxpayers' money paying for the campaigns; it stayed away from free TV; it stayed away from the extremes that both sides might think would be ideal; and it concentrated on the middle ground, the ground that we could agree upon. And, yes, the American public can probably zero in on that very quickly, and that is a ban on soft money.

Now today in The Washington Post, David Broder, long time Washington journalist, wrote a column and talked about what is going to be happening on this House floor. He titled his article ''Campaign Reformers at War'', because there are going to be a number of significant reform bills. And I think it is important that we do not get in disagreement, recognizing there are going to be different bills and alternatives that we can vote upon.

I just want to present that the bill that has been crafted in a bipartisan fashion is a good vehicle to send over to the Senate because it is bipartisan, because it is constitutional, and because it is substantial in nature and addresses the most significant abuse, which is soft money.

David Broder, in his article, referred to soft money as, ''The huge donations to the political parties from corporations, unions and wealthy individuals that figured most in the 1996 campaign scandals.'' And that is important, because not just in 1996, but as we even come into the present with the latest revelations about the possibility of technology going to the People's Republic of China and the question arising in the public's mind, did that decision have anything to do with the huge soft money contributions that were made here in Washington.

What the Supreme Court is concerned about is that we protect the first amendment and the rights of free speech, but they have recognized in the Buckley v. Valeo decision that there is an appropriate role that Congress can play in restricting the amount of contributions. They upheld the $1,000 individual contribution limit, and there is a ban on corporate contributions and labor union contributions directly to a candidate. Soft money is a way to get around all that, and that is what needs to be shut down, and that is simply what the freshman bill does.

Michael Malbin of the State University of New York-Albany, an expert in the arena of campaign finance reform, said ''The freshman bill would do everything that a soft money ban should do, put a lid on the behavior of Federal officials and candidates.'' And that is what we are trying to do.

But, in addition, it helps the individuals in our society because it empowers them by indexing their contributions to the rate of inflation. Where a $1,000 contribution limit back in 1970 has eroded to $300, this again indexes that to inflation so we do not lose that value, the contribution of an individual.

And then we increase information to the public so the public will know who is trying to influence the campaigns; requiring candidates to provide more frequent disclosure as to who is sending them money so the public will have that information.

But, also, we have all of the third-party groups that are out there that engage, many times, in issue advocacy, and we simply say that they should have to say who they are so there is not a cloak as to the public wondering who is trying to influence the campaign. They must say who they are and how much they are spending, and that is it. That is reasonable information the public is entitled to have.

So it is a good bill. It is straightforward. It empowers individuals. It stops the greatest abuse. And that is what I hope that the public will see as strong reform that we can send over to the Senate, addressing the greatest abuses in our campaign system.

And yes, it is going to be a long process. A lot of amendments have to go through there. There are some that might improve the bill, but there are some that might be harmful. So we need to move through this process in a democratic fashion, and I believe in the end we will do something good for the American public.

I am delighted with the Republican leadership that has opened up this opportunity and for the bipartisan fashion in which we have addressed this.

I want to thank again the gentleman from Colorado for his excellent leadership on paycheck protection, his devotion to that issue, as well as his willingness to yield me time tonight.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Before the gentleman goes, I know he has been back in his district over the breaks talking about campaign finance reform and various issues that we are dealing with here to try to improve the integrity of the political process, so perhaps the gentleman will tell us a little about what his constituents are telling him with respect to campaign finance reform.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. It is interesting because the constituents are talking more about it. I have learned that it is a subject that they do not automatically bring up themselves, but whenever I have been out front and taken a leadership position on it, I have them coming up to me time and time again and thanking me for what I am doing on campaign finance reform.

I think what they are saying is, and someone articulated it this way, their $20 contribution, their $50 contribution is drowned out in the sea of big money in Washington, D.C., and that is the message that I consistently get.

I talk to grass root organizations, whether it is the AARP, the Reserve Officers, or a political action committee group or a labor union, I talk to these grass roots organizations and they are struggling to have their small contributions sent to Washington, and their voice is being minimized because of the flood of big money in Washington, and they understand that.

So I am hearing good things about it; support for it. They do not understand necessarily all the ins-and-outs and the difficulties of campaign finance reform and issue advocacy, express advocacy, independent expenditures, but they are saying there is a problem out there that is clear to everyone and Congress needs to address it.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. We are also joined here tonight, Mr. Speaker, by the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), who I know is one who has been very helpful and thoughtful with respect to political participation and campaign finance reform, and I will yield the floor to him.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Colorado for yielding and for the great work he has done in spearheading this effort to liberate the paychecks of working men and women in this country from being robbed for a purpose with which they do not agree. And the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) as well has been a leader on campaign finance reform.

I suspect when it is all said and done we are probably not going to all agree on every issue of this, because I think we all bring a different perspective on what constitutes campaign finance reform. We have been trying to balance the constitutional rights of free speech, freedom of expression and so forth, and at the same time bring some common sense to what has become a proliferation of big money, special interest

money actually running this political process. As a consequence of that, many of the voters in this country, the citizens who would like to participate, feel disenfranchised simply because they feel their voice is not heard.

So I think our freshman class has been very much at the forefront of leading this debate, discussing these issues in a very meaningful way and coming up with what I think are solutions. Again, solutions in some cases that are going to have to go through this process that maybe we are not all going to agree with every aspect of, but when it is all said and done, at the end of the day, hopefully, something will emerge that will be an improvement over where we are today, that will help restore the trust and confidence people have in the political system in this country.

So I want to thank my distinguished colleagues of the freshman class, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) for the good work they are doing on this subject and continuing to keep the faith and keeping the process moving forward. We are going to have, I think, what will be a rather vigorous debate in the days ahead on this subject.

I would simply say as well that, in discussing the whole issue of allowing the hard working men and women in this country to be an active part of the political process, that this majority in this Congress has taken our agenda forward in a way that I think is consistent with the priorities and the values that a lot of the people who work hard in this country really share, when it comes right down to it.

And the gentleman talks about paycheck protection and seeing that we do not pick the pockets of hard-working men and women in this country and force them to participate in a way that they do not want to. Political participation as a basic premise ought to be voluntary. And that is essentially what the gentleman's legislation says, and I would hope that that will be incorporated in a final product that emerges from this Congress.

At the same time, we want to say to those hard-working men and women in America that we want them to participate voluntarily, we want to give them more freedom, more liberation from the shackles of big government, not only as it pertains to political participation but also in the way that we approach the whole issue of taxes, the role of government in our culture and what that means for people in this country who are trying to pay the bills, trying to educate their kids, trying to make a living, trying to put a little aside for retirement, trying to take care of child care and health care and working in a very systematic way to roll back the burden of government in their lives so that they have the freedom, as families, to make the choices that affect their every day lives.

I think, again, that is a philosophy and approach that is embodied in everything that we do; that these things ought to be voluntary; that it ought to be a matter of personal freedom. And I think the thing that gets lost in this debate a lot of times, people who are members of unions in this country use that representation to negotiate, to bargain on issues like health care, on pensions and wages. Those are very good things, but sometimes I think their leadership loses sight because their agenda, I believe, is more about consolidation of power in Washington.

And that is very much at odds, I think, with what I think is in the best interest of the people they purport to represent, and that is the hard-working men and women who, day in and day out, are trying to make a living and trying to pay the bills. We are saying to them, in effect, in the agenda we have laid out, that we want to make government smaller and make the Federal budget smaller so that their budget, their family budget, can be bigger, and that we want to allow them to keep more of what they earn.

□ 2045

And in doing so, liberate them from the burden of government in a way that will enable them to meet the needs that they have for their families and the challenges and difficulties that are out there for all of us who are trying to raise kids in this day and age.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, my colleague has made an important distinction that I think is important for this Congress to keep in mind; and that is that many people think that this debate is about whether we support labor unions or not, and it really is not that at all.

There is a huge division among people associated with labor unions on paycheck protection. There are those who are the rank and file hard-working union members who join labor unions because they desire collective bargaining, they want agency representation, they want the many benefits associated with labor unions, but they want to have some say in how their wages are used when it comes to politics. That is one subset of the overall union organization that has a position on this issue that agrees with my colleague and I.

The other half of the equation, though, is the union bosses, those who work their way up the union hierarchy and become the managers, in fact the players, on a political level of distributing political cash for their advantages. There are many political bosses I am sure, and I have met some of them, who are genuine in their desire to represent their union to back political causes that are in the best interest of creating jobs and workplace security for their members.

But when we start reading headlines about Teamster Union members indited, the president of the Teamsters Union being disqualified from carrying on his job. That was Teamster President Ron Carey and James Hoffa, Jr. And now I guess there is going to be another election and Hoffa is clear to run. This is just in the Teamsters Union.

In this article, this was in the Washington Times not long ago, there is an individual who was an accountant or the comptroller of union funds was charged with embezzlement, conspiracy, wire fraud, mail fraud, perjury, making false statements to a Federal election officer. If convicted, he faces up to 30 years in prison and $1.5 million in fines.

This is a different group of people that we are talking about who oppose the Paycheck Protection Act. And this is the reason why, they have a tremendous amount of cash at their disposal and it buys them certain favors with Members of Congress. It buys them easy access to meetings that go on here in Washington. It buys them friendship with those who are inclined to listen to these particular individuals.

But again, these kinds of people who are at the union boss level, the ones who are in the business of being political insiders are very, very different from the people that my colleague will and I represent, the ones that we care about and the ones that we fight for and speak for here on the House floor, those individuals who are actually doing the hard work of driving the American economy, the ones who work 40 hours or more per week, who are very skilled and very dedicated to economic prosperity in our country, who have families, who go to church, who enjoy their constitutional rights, who enjoy full participation in our community as real leaders and friends and neighbors. But the last thing they want from this Congress or from anyone else is to allow a set of laws to continue on our books that allows union bosses to steal cash from the paychecks of hard-working Americans.

I am really looking forward to this debate coming up here in the next few days so that the American people can see whether this Congress is really going to stand with the rank and file hard-working Americans or whether it is going to choose the few union bosses.

I regret to say that the last time this question came up the political stakes were very, very high here. And those lobbyists running around the hallway representing the union bosses, they were very persuasive with a large number of Members of our Congress.

So I am hopeful that the American people will put their collective foot down this week and just say enough is enough. Politics in America should be voluntary. It is the one time when everyday rank and file citizens are in charge of their government. It is when they elect somebody to go to Washington and when they put their dollars behind their candidacy. People want to know that their dollars matter, that their political participation really counts, that their candidates, their elected officials listen to them.

But they do not want to hear, as we do today, and I will going through those graphs again perhaps, they do not want to hear that their message is getting confused and distorted by a handful of political insiders who use hard-earned cash as though it were monopoly money.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I guess I would simply say that my guess is that perhaps like the district that my colleague represents, Colorado, people that I represent, the State of South Dakota, the people that I serve, whether they are union members or not, are very much just hard-working people, who, as a basic premise of life, think that these matters can best be resolved at the local level, that the decision-making, the control, and the power ought to be there, and that they ought to have the freedom to determine how best to use the hard-earned dollars, those dollars that they work very, very hard for week in and week out, to the purpose for which they intend, rather than having someone say to them that this is not a prerogative that they ought to have.

I think again what we are really talking about here very simply is saying that this ought to be a voluntary process and clearly the people who are forced to participate against their will and political process that that is wrong.

I have heard the argument, as perhaps my colleague has, that other organizations out there that are active politically, gun organizations, whether they are pro-life organizations or whatever, that these organizations do essentially the same thing.

There is a very fundamental difference here. People who participate in those organizations do it of their own volition, they do it of their own free will. It is a voluntary thing. Again, this is the only place that I am aware of where folks are forced as a matter of practice, if they want to participate in union activities, the other things, that the benefits that they get, legitimate activities from union participation and involvement, but beyond that have their dollars taken out of their hand and put into a political process into an agenda which in many cases they might agree with.

Now, if they agree with that agenda, that is fine. It does not deprive them of the opportunity to contribute. Because very clearly, that is an option they still have. Under my colleague's legislation, if they choose to do that, it is, it is a voluntary thing.

All we are simply saying is that when we look at these issues, we want to look at what is in the best interest of the working people, the people out there who are just doing their very, very best to get by and to survive and to do all the things, that the expectations, the responsibilities to live up to those responsibilities.

Frankly, people who work hard for a living I think are very much of a notion that there ought to be a leveler degree of personal responsibility that goes along with freedoms that we enjoy in this country. And frankly, again, I think that is a value that we share in much of the legislation that has been passed since this majority has been in power here in Washington, from welfare reform, to balanced budget, to lower taxes. All those things I think again are consistent with the values that people who work hard in this country share.

And so, as we look down the road in the future on the agenda we want to bring, the things that we want to see happen, the goals for the next generation, things like winning the war on drugs, things like coming up with a system of education and learning that is the very best in the world that utilizes information-age technology and allows the children, our children, to learn at the very fastest rate, issues like solving for the long-term the retirement issues of Social Security and Medicare and doing it in a way that protects and preserves the safety net for those who are currently dependent upon those programs, but at the same time says to those people who are paying in and again contributing to this process that we want them to have the very best retirement possible in a way that would dramatically increase their retirement earnings so that when that time comes they have got a nest egg there, and solutions that again say to the American people that we want them to have the security, the retirement security that Social Security provides and Medicare provides, but we also want them to have better than that. We want to improve upon that because we think that we can do better.

And in this era where we are going to see we hope, knock on wood, some surpluses coming into the Treasury and some revenues that will give us an opportunity to give something back to the American people, I would hope that is the direction in which we will go. And finally, again to say that the other goal, objective, that we have is to reduce the tax burden in this country by about a third of what it is today collectively, state, local, Federal tax burden, about 38 percent, and get it down to 25 percent, so that no hard-working family in America is spending more than a quarter of their income to pay for the cost of government.

And when we are living in a time where we are at peace and we have got an economy that is in an expansionary phase, the question, the debate that is going to rage in this city has to do with control, it has to do with whether or not we are going to continue to centralize, consolidate and move power and control into Washington or whether we are going to distribute it back home and put it back in the hands of individuals and families and states and localities and let people do in this country what they do best, and that is continue to move this economy forward, to contribute out of their productivity and their hard work and their effort and their just day-to-day diligence in getting up every day and again continuing to go build and make this country great.

But the best way that we can do that is to continue to move power out of this city, out of Washington, back home to individuals and to take less of the dollars that they work hard for here and then figure out how we can give them back in some way that Washington comes up with by some form that they devise in accordance with what their priorities are, as opposed to allowing people who work hard to keep those dollars at home and to spend them in the very best way that they see fit and to meet the needs of their families and communities and to become more actively involved in their communities and churches and private organizations out there that are really getting the job done and in which I think can unleash a tremendous work in this country toward addressing those very real needs, the needs again to win the war on drugs, to lessen the crime that goes on across America and to restore values to our families to our workplace.

If parents had more time to stay at home, to spend with their children, we would have a lot less of the problems that we are facing out there. Frankly, one of the reasons they cannot do that is because we ask them to work 2 and 3 jobs to pay for the cost of government so that we can decide for them what is in their best interest. And clearly, I think that is something that when it comes to again people who work hard in this country, it is just a matter of a statement of values. We want to work systematically toward the end of moving power back toward home and allowing them to have more input in the things that affect their lives.

So, again, when it comes to the whole area of political participation, I think the value, the philosophy that my colleague's legislation brings is consistent with that overall philosophy which we all share.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, my colleague has hit on two key themes that really separate us from our friends and opponents on a partisan level on the other side of the aisle, the Democrat Party; and those two themes are that, one, when it comes to the power and the importance of individuals, we consistently try to side on the Republican side with individuals. That is a clear distinction in how we organize ourselves as a society and how we believe political authority ought to be placed, the overall question of whether authority ought to reside in Washington, D.C., or in every single house, in every single city, in every single community and with individuals back home.

And that value we see played out on this floor every single day, whether it is tax policy. And the debate frequently is leaders of the Democrat

Party have come to the floor and said that the fact of the matter is very simple that they do not support tax cuts, period, stated as emphatically as it possibly can be.

And that is fine. That is a fine position to represent and to have if they happen to go in for that sort of thing and believe that. But we, on the other hand, happen to believe that taxes ought to be lower, that more authority, in this case wealth, should be in the hands of individuals that earn it.

The second value that my colleague mentioned or touched on deals with families, that we acknowledge the power and importance of families and recognize families as the most central and essential social unit in America. And we see that being played out every single day, a huge difference of opinion that we have where we believe families ought to be strong and be empowered wherever we can and that responsibility ought to reside with families, rather than, as our friends on the other side of the aisle again, the Democrats, tend to have a record that would suggest that our government does a better job of organizing our communities and our schools and our neighborhoods and so on. A huge difference of opinion.

And this issue of campaign finance is no different. It is just one other issue that comes up where the differences between our values on individuals is exposed. Those who will oppose paycheck protection clearly believe that it is fine for somebody else to take cash out our paycheck and spend it on the political cause of their choice.

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Versus us who believe that every individual ought to voluntarily agree whether they want to participate in a political activity or not.

When it comes to families as well, I fundamentally believe that the Paycheck Protection Act is essentially a pay raise without a tax increase. It gives folks more disposable income, more wealth in their own hands, the hands of the people who earn it.

They can decide whether they want to spend it on politics, or maybe they want it put toward their pension fund, or maybe they want to buy new shoes for their kids, or maybe they want to put it aside and invest in some things at home to make their lives a little bit more comfortable and more convenient. A huge distinction in values, where we stand as a country. Again, we are going to see where this Congress stands later this week as we deal with the whole issue of the Paycheck Protection Act.

Let me also state that the political stakes on this are very high. The two political parties have very divergent opinions on this.

I am going to read from a report called Inside The New Congress. It is a report that is published every Friday by Inside Washington Publishers, is the name of their organization. The managing editor is John Brushnehand. He reported just a few months ago, the headline says ''House Democrats may retaliate against Members who support the Paycheck Protection Act.''

The article goes on, it says ''Some high-ranking Democrat law makers suggested retaliating against any party members who vote in favor of legislation placing new limits on union political activities, say Hill sources.'' It says ''The suggested retaliation would be to cut off Democrats from financial support from the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee this election cycle.'' It says ''While few Democrats are thought to be in favor of the legislation known as the Paycheck Protection Act, some conservative Democrats could face trouble in November if their GOP opponents are able to attack them on the issue, say the sources.'' It says the issue was raised during a meeting of the House Democrat leadership held this week, and this issue was published at the end of February of this year, so this meeting was held, presumably, at the end of February ''with AFL/CIO president John Sweeney, say several sources who attended the gathering. A representative from Wisconsin, among others, recommended during the meeting that Democrats who vote in favor of the legislation should not be backed by the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee. Democratic sources say they did not get much further than the talking stage on the issue during the meeting.'' The issue basically goes on.

This is a live-or-die issue for Democrat operatives here in the Congress. They have formed a very close coalition with a small number of union bosses predicated on the notion that they are going to be able to continue taking cash out of wage earners' paychecks and diverting it toward their political activities without the concept of wage earners.

The Paycheck Protection Act, while I agree it may threaten the flow of cash to Democrat coffers, is still a matter of fairness that, even when we voted on this floor, a handful of courageous Democrats were willing to join with the majority of us Republicans in voting for it. We just needed a few more of them in order to put it over the top and to score a real victory for hard-working Americans that day. We are going to get a chance to do that again.

The debate is not limited to Congress. The State of California has this very question on their ballot which will come up in June. The State of Nevada has put this on their ballot which will come up in November.

The State of Colorado, my home State, is leading an effort, and I am chairman of that effort to try to get this issue on the ballot. The State of Oregon is moving forward.

Several State legislatures are referring a similar measure to the ballots within their States. Across this country, Americans will have an opportunity to participate in a fundamental question on campaign finance reform of whether individuals will be guaranteed the right to participate in the political process on voluntary terms and have their paychecks protected from those who believe they have some kind of right, some kind of clear path of access to the hard-earned wages of somebody who works hard to make ends meet.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, and really it does come down, when I listened to the debate when this debate was held on the floor previously, and I listened to the other side get up and talk, they did not address this issue because they cannot. There is no answer to this. This is a very, very simple issue. We cannot get any simpler.

This is a question of whether or not political participation ought to be mandatory; in other words, we ought to be required to take something out of our paycheck and give it to a political cause even if we do not agree with it, versus whether it ought to be optional. It is that simple.

This concept cannot get lost in the complexity, although it has been tried. They tried to disguise and delude and distract and divert and everything possible during the course of the last debate. But the fact of the matter is that on its surface this is a very simple issue.

People who work hard, who join unions, can still contribute to political processes. There is nothing to deprive them or prevent them from doing that. All this simply says is it has got to be optional. All we have to do if we want to do it is we have that option every year. I think, again, that is consistent with the way the political process ought to operate.

It states as a matter of value and I think a political, again, principle that has been held dearly by this country for so many years, and that is that anybody who participates in this process ought to be able to do it on a voluntary basis.

To the extent, again, that we can bring that back in this country, the legislation takes us in that direction. I certainly hope as we have this debate that there will be those who will step forward and demonstrate the courage and the boldness to go against the tide, no matter what the forces and the special interests might be saying, and do the right thing; and that is, again, give people who work hard for a paycheck in this country the opportunity to participate voluntarily.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I see that our time is about to expire, and I appreciate the Speaker for recognizing the freshman class tonight. We will be back one week from tonight with another special order.