making a state visit to the People's Republic of China in late February. As Secretary of State Colin Powell said, the United States and China have many common interests and also many disagreements, one of which is Taiwan.

I hope that President Bush will stand firm on the issue of Taiwan in his discussions with the Chinese. The United states and Taiwan have been maintaining strong relations for decades. In recent years, despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan, Taiwan has been unwavering in its support of the United States in all areas. In the wake of the Twin Towers tragedy, Taiwan went into deep mourning and its government ordered all flags lowered at half-staff for two days.

Taiwan stands with the United States on nearly all issues including safeguarding human rights and fighting terrorism around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan is not an issue that divides the United States from China. As long as we stand firm on our principles of providing what Taiwan needs militarily, there will be stability in the Taiwan Strait and that is in everyone's best interests. I wish President Bush the best of luck in his journey to China.

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2002

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2356) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to provide bipartisan campaign reform:

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I come to the floor today to ask my colleagues, what are we doing here? We are playing games, and I, for one, did not come to this body to play games.

America is being misled. We are being misled. Who is telling the truth?

To those of you outside this hall that think this is reform, I say to you it is as bad as the current situation—and that makes it worse, doesn't it? It's worse because you truly believe that this bill represents real reform. It doesn't.

And to those of you who stand in the way of real reform, I say to you, move aside.

All of these arguments on the ''process'' are lost on the American people who just want reform, pure and simple. We are playing a game with those who have more vested in the ''process,'' than they do in principle. And when principles loses, what does that say about us?

Never did I think that my vote on dearly held principles would doom reform. But that is the conundrum that has been handed to me—those who would choose to kill reform and those who would choose ''less reform'' as ''good enough'' have boxed me into a corner. Who would have ever thought that ''doing the right thing'' may be the wrong move?

Many of my colleagues and my constituents alike know that I am a long-time supporter of campaign finance reform. I have been a strong supporter since we first began this struggle for real reform three years ago, and my party's opposition then and since has never stopped me from voting my conscience, holding to my principles.

I have always, and will continue to believe that a total ban on soft money is necessary to reform our campaign financing system, and I will cast my vote to ban soft money again. Likewise, I believe that we must practice what we preach, and so I will vote to make these reforms effective today, not more than two years from now. They are needed now, they were needed when we first began this reform movement.

This issue is not about winning elections, it can't be. It is about restoring the public's faith and confidence in what we do . . . it's all principle. It is about cleaning up a flawed system, where whether true or not, the perception is we are all bought and sold! I reject that thinking—I reject that label. I am not, and neither are far too many of my colleagues in this House, to let that label stand. We, as a collective body, are too good to let that perception be taken for granted by our fellow Americans.

For my votes on principle today, I will no doubt be raked over the coals by editorial boards, and people on both sides of the issue, and that's fine. I can take the heat because I know I am fulfilling the obligation I've been given by the good people of New Jersey's 11th Congressional District, and that is, to vote my conscience, in their best interests, all the while holding fast to principle.

My votes today will be principle over politics. I won't play games. How easy it would be to do what is ''popular.'' To look the other way, and vote the way editorial boards want me to, or the way my leadership wants me to, or the way Common Cause wants me to. But what is popular, and easy, is not always what is principled, and that, for me, is an easy decision to make.

Today I vote for real reform. And with those votes, I stand on principle. Mr. Chairman, I hope I do not stand alone here today. But if need be, stand alone, I will.

H.R. 3733, THE VETERANS' CLAIMS CONTINUATION ACT

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, recently I introduced H.R. 3733, the Veterans' Claims Continuation Act. This important measure would allow the families of veterans to continue claims for benefits which are pending at the time of a veteran's death. This measure would also allow for continuation of other claims, such as a claim for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) by surviving spouses or claims by children eligible for benefits because of birth defects attributable to their parent's military service during the Vietnam War. This important legislation would assure that families receive the full benefits which would have been paid, if the claimant had survived.

Currently, if a veteran or other claimant dies while a claim is pending, the claim is extinguished. Under some circumstances, a new claim can be filed for ''accrued benefits.'' However, payment of accrued benefits is extremely limited. Benefits can only be paid to a limited category of survivors and only if all of the evidence supporting the claim is in the claimant's file at the time of death. No more than two years of retroactive benefits can be paid.

The need for a change in law has been recognized by the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims. In a particularly egregious case, *Marlow* v. *West,* 12 Vet. App. 548 (1999), the court noted that the daughter of a combat wounded World War II veteran who had been erroneously denied benefits between 1946 and 1980 was precluded from pursuing his claim because the claim terminated at the veteran's death. In its decision the Court noted that the original decision in the case was a clear and unmistakable error, but because of the veteran's death, benefits otherwise due were not paid. The Court stated: ''This is a case that causes one to understand the frustration of Charles Dickens' character Mr. Bumble, when he proclaimed, 'The law is an ass, an idiot.' '' 12 Vet App. At 551. Veterans and their families are not served well by idiotic laws.

Currently, the Veterans' Benefits Administration has a backlog of almost 600,000 claims and another 100,000 appeals to the Board of Veterans' Appeals are awaiting action. While efforts are underway to reduce this backlog, it is inevitable that some claimants will die while their claims or appeals are pending. In some cases, veterans' families have incurred substantial expenses and suffered financial hardship while the claims have been pending. If benefits are justified, these families should be made whole.

Older veterans have expressed concern that VA uses delaying tactics, hoping that the veteran will die before the claim is allowed. I have no evidence that this is so. However the inability of family members to continue the claim and the limitation on any benefits payable to a two-year period in current law, may erroneously give veterans this impression. Claims for other government benefits, such as Social Security benefits are not extinguished when a claimant dies. The families of veterans, who have served our Nation honorably, deserve no lesser rights than Social Security claimants.

Mr. Speaker, I also note that the Independent Budget for Fiscal Year 2003 had called upon Congress to eliminate the restriction on payment of accrued benefits. The Veterans' Claims Continuation Act will accomplish that end and I strongly encourage my colleagues to cosponsor and support H.R. 3733.

WORKER RETRAINING INCENTIVE ACT OF 2002

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, America's workers are facing tremendous pressures. Import competition continues to erode vital industries that are the economic foundation of communities across the country. At the same time, new jobs are increasingly hard to come by in the midst of a recession, especially jobs with good wages.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program was designed to help workers who are caught up in these forces and lose their jobs. It provides assistance so that these workers may seek training to gain new skills, and launch themselves onto a more stable and prosperous career path. This program serves a