This is something that this Congress designated as a national memorial. This is of great significance to our community, for sure—I think very appropriately so—and also for the issue of AIDS. So, when you go West, you have to go to the AIDS memorial and see it as a spirit of remembrance—a garden, a grove—and to those who follow Congress the importance of fighting HIV/AIDS as well as its importance to people, to communities, to our country, and to the world for our good health, for our economy, for the success of individuals.

**OUR MAGGIE**

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, Maya Angelou wrote: "If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded."

On Thanksgiving night, Chicago lost a matriarch who, by Ms. Angelou’s measure, was a magnificent success. We, sadly, lost Margaret Corbett Daley, or as she was better known, "our Maggie."

Maggie Daley embodied the heart of our city and grace under fire even when her own health was failing. Her contribution to the arts and our children, most notably through the After School Matters program, changed countless lives; and it will continue to do so for generations.

When Maggie was laid to rest this week, it wasn’t just dignitaries who came to pay respects. Thousands of regular Chicagoans lined up for blocks in the rain to say goodbye. That’s because Maggie transcended politics and reminded us that nothing is more important than family and each other.

She is, of course, survived by her best friend and husband, former Mayor Richard M. Daley, as well as by her loving children, grandchildren, and friends.

May she rest in peace and never be forgotten.

**WORLD AIDS DAY**

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I rise today in commemoration, Mr. Speaker, of World AIDS Day; and I thank our minority leader for her eloquent recounting of how far we have come.

In our best days, we can look to my dear friend Magic Johnson, who has been a living example of the improvements and the courage of those who are living with the HIV infection; but we recognize that, of the 15 million people medically recommended for antiretroviral medication worldwide, only half of them have access to drug treatment.

In the United States, nearly one in five people with HIV, or 240,000 people, don’t even know that they are infected. Communities of color and young gay and bisexual men face the most severe burden of HIV in the United States—Magic Johnson, on one hand, and my dying friend on another hand being at the bedside of dying with AIDS, who, one, lived with the stigma and didn’t have a way out.

Today, I will join others and be tested for the HIV virus, and I encourage others to do so.

I congratulate my constituents, the Harris County Hospital District and the Thomas Street Clinic, for their 12th annual World AIDS Day.

Thank you, Mr. President, for recognizing that 6 million more people need to have access to AIDS prevention drugs.

To those who have lost their lives, may I say to you on this day that your life that was lost should not be in vain. We still look for a cure, and we work for a better Nation and an opportunity to provide resources to those around the world and in the United States who still suffer. It is our challenge. We accept that challenge, and I believe someday we will be victorious.

To those who commemorate this day because they have chosen to commemorate it with you in your mourning. For those who celebrate life, I, likewise, celebrate life.

**TERMINATING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUND AND ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 477, I call up the bill (H.R. 3463) to reduce Federal spending.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 477, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3463

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

**TITLE I—TERMINATION OF TAXPAYER FINANCING OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

SECTION 101. TERMINATION OF TAXPAYER FINANCING OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

(a) TERMINATION OF DESIGNATION OF INCOME TAX PAYMENTS.—Section 6096 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d) TERMINATION.—This section shall not apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2010."
(a) IN GENERAL.—The termination of the Commission under this subtitle shall not affect any proceeding or function performed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget under this Act prior to the termination; provided that any function which would have been performed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget under section 1002; or (b) the Federal Election Commission, to the extent that the proceeding, order, or action relates to a function transferred under subtitle B.

"SEC. 1010. TERMINATION DATE. "The Commission termination date is the first date following the expiration of the 60-day period that begins on the date of the enactment of this subtitle.

"Subtitle B—Transfer of Certain Authorities to the Federal Election Commission

"SEC. 1011. TRANSFER OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION FUNCTIONS TO FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION. "There are transferred to the Federal Election Commission (hereafter referred to as the 'FEC') the following functions of the Commission:

(1) The adoption of voluntary voting system guidelines, in accordance with part 3 of subtitle A of title II, or section 102 of this Act, of any such guidelines applicable to any voting system in the United States.
(2) The testing, certification, decertification, and recertification of voting system hardware and software by accredited laboratories, in accordance with subtitle B of title II.
(3) The maintenance of a clearinghouse of information on the experiences of States and local governments in implementing voluntary voting system guidelines and in operating voting systems in general.
(4) The development of a standardized format for data required by States under report described in section 102(c) of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, and the making of such format available to States and units of government implementing voluntary voting system guidelines and in operating voting systems.
(5) Any functions transferred to the Commission under section 1001 to the extent that such functions relate to a function transferred by section 1012.
(6) Any functions transferred to the Commission under section 1002 to the extent that such functions relate to a function transferred by section 1012.
(7) Any functions transferred to States under report required by section 102(c) of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, and the making of such report available to States and units of government implementing voluntary voting system guidelines and in operating voting systems.
(8) Any functions transferred to the Commission under section 1003 to the extent that such functions relate to a function transferred by section 1012.
(9) Any functions transferred to the Commission under section 1004 to the extent that such functions relate to a function transferred by section 1012.

"SEC. 1012. EFFECTIVE DATE. "The transfers under this subtitle shall take effect on the Commission termination date described in section 1004."

"Title V—Termination of Commission

"Subtitle A—Termination

"Sec. 1001. Termination.
"Sec. 1002. Transfer of operations to Office of Management and Budget during transition.
"Sec. 1003. Savings provisions.
"Sec. 1004. Commission termination date.

"Subtitle B—Transfer of Certain Authorities to the Federal Election Commission

"Sec. 1011. Transfer of election administration functions to Federal Election Commission.
"Sec. 1012. Effective date.

"Title VI—Repeal of Requirements of Standards Board

"Sec. 202. Repeal of Requirements of Standards Board and Board of Advisors with Guidelines Review Board.
(a) REPLACEMENT.—Part 2 of subtitle A of title II of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15341 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

"PART 2—GUIDELINES REVIEW BOARD
"Sec. 211. ESTABLISHMENT.
There is established the Guidelines Review Board (hereafter in this part referred to as the 'Board').

"Sec. 212. DUTIES.
The Board shall, in accordance with the procedures described in part 3, review the voluntary voting system guidelines under such part.

"Sec. 213. Membership.
(a) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall be composed of 2 members appointed as follows:
(1) One State or local election official from each State, to be selected by the chief State election official of the State, who shall take into account the needs of both State and local election officials in making the selection.
(2) 2 members appointed by the National Conference of State Legislatures.
(b) 2 members appointed by the National Association of Secretaries of State.
(c) 2 members appointed by the National Association of County Recorders, Election Administrators, and Clerks.
(d) 2 members appointed by the Election Center.
(e) 2 members appointed by the International Association of County Recorders, Election Officials, and Treasurers.
(f) 2 members appointed by the United States Commission on Civil Rights.
(g) 2 members appointed by the Architectural and Transportation Barrier Compliance Board under section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 792).
(h) 10 members appointed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.
(i) 4 members representing professionals in the field of science and technology, of whom—
(A) one each shall be appointed by the Speaker and the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and
(B) one each shall be appointed by the majority leader and the minority leader of the Senate.
(j) 4 members representing voter interests, of whom—
(A) one each shall be appointed by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives; and
(B) one each shall be appointed by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate.
(k) MANNER OF APPOINTMENTS.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall be composed of 2 members appointed by the Speaker and the minority leader of the House of Representatives and 2 members appointed by the Senate, to be selected by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate.
(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS.—The 2 individuals who are appointed...
as members of the Board under each of the paragraphs (2) through (9) of subsection (a) may not be members of the same political party.

`(c) TERM OF SERVICE; VACANCY.—Members of the Board shall serve for a term of 2 years, and may be reappointed. Any vacancy in the Board shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

`(d) EXECUTIVE BOARD.—

`(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the day on which the appointment of its members is completed, the Board shall select 9 of its members to serve as the Executive Board of the Guidelines Review Board, of whom—

`(A) not more than 5 may be State election officials;

`(B) not more than 5 may be local election officials; and

`(C) not more than 5 may be members of the same political party.

`(2) TERMS.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), members of the Executive Board of the Board shall serve for a term of 2 years and may not serve for more than 3 consecutive terms.

`(3) STANDING OF INITIAL TERMS.—Of the members first selected to serve on the Executive Board of the Board—

`(A) 3 shall serve for 1 term;

`(B) 3 shall serve for 2 consecutive terms; and

`(C) 3 shall serve for 3 consecutive terms, as determined by lot at the time the members are appointed and thereafter.

`(4) DUTIES.—The Executive Board of the Board shall carry out such duties of the Board as the Board may delegate.

`(e) BYLAWS: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.—The Board may promulgate such bylaws as it considers appropriate to provide for the operation of the Board, including bylaws that permit the Executive Board to delegate to any of its members the authority to act on behalf of the Board.

`§ 214. POWERS, NO COMPENSATION FOR SERVICE.

`(a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—

`(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that funds are made available by the Federal Election Commission, the Board may hold such hearings for the purpose of carrying out this Act, and may sit at such times and places, and take such testimony as it may consider necessary to give such evidence as the Board considers advisable to carry out this title, except that the Board may not issue subpoenas requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses or the production of any evidence.

`(2) MEETINGS.—The Board shall hold a meeting of its members—

`(A) not less frequently than once every 2 years for purposes selecting the Executive Board and voting on the voluntary voting system guidelines referred to in this section; and

`(B) at such other times as it considers appropriate for purposes of conducting such other business as it considers appropriate consistent with the title.

`(b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Board may secure directly from any Federal department or agency such information as the Board considers necessary to carry out this Act. Upon request of the Executive Board, the head of such department or agency shall furnish such information to the Board.

`(c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Board may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as a department or agency of the Federal Government.

`(d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon the request of the Executive Board, the Administrator of the General Services Administration shall provide to the Board, on a reimbursable basis, the administrative support services that are necessary to enable the Board to carry out its duties under this title.

`(e) NO COMPENSATION FOR SERVICE.—Members of the Board shall not receive any compensation for their service, but shall be paid travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, and mileage allowances for travel expenses incurred in the performance of services for the Board.

`§ 215. STATUS OF BOARD AND MEMBERS FOR PURPOSES OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.—

`(a) IN GENERAL.—The provisions of chapters 161 and 171 of title 28, United States Code, shall apply with respect to the liability of the Board and its members for acts or commissions performed pursuant to and in the course of the duties and responsibilities of the Board.

`(b) EXCEPTION FOR CRIMINAL ACTS AND OTHER WILLFUL CONDUCT.—Subsection (a) may not be construed to limit personal liability for criminal acts or omissions, willful or malicious misconduct, acts or omissions for private gain, or any other act or omission outside the scope of the service of a member of the Board.

`(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by amending the item relating to part 2 of subtitle A of title II to read as follows:

`"PART 2—GUIDELINES REVIEW BOARD"

`Sec. 211. Establishment.

`Sec. 212. Duties.

`Sec. 213. Membership.

`Sec. 214. Powers; no compensation for service.

`Sec. 215. Status of Board and members for purposes of claims against Board.''

`(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the Commission termination date described in section 1004 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (as added by section 210(a)).

`§ 216. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO TRANSFER OF CERTAIN AUTHORITIES TO FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION.

`(a) DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF VOLUNTEER VOTING SYSTEM GUIDELINES.—

`(1) IN GENERAL.—Part 3 of subtitle A of title II of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15361 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

`"§ 223. TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY TO FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION.—

`(a) TRANSFER.—Effective on the Commission termination date described in section 1004, the Federal Election Commission (hereafter in this section referred to as the 'FEC') shall be responsible for any funds designated for the duties and functions of the Commission under this part.

`(b) ROLE OF STAFF DIRECTOR.—The FEC shall carry out the operation and management of its duties and functions under this part through the Office of the Staff Director of the FEC.

`(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the item relating to part 3 of subtitle A of title II the following new section:

`"Sec. 223. Transfer of authority to Federal Election Commission.''

`(b) TESTING, CERTIFICATION, DECHROMATIZATION, AND RECHROMATIZATION OF VOTING SYSTEM HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE.

`(1) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle C of title II of such Act (42 U.S.C. 15371 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end of that section the following new part:

`"PART 2—GUIDELINES REVIEW BOARD"

`Sec. 222. Establishment of the Guidelines Review Board.

`Sec. 223. Powers; no compensation for service.

`Sec. 224. Authority to Federal Election Commission.

`Sec. 225. Status of Board and members for purposes of claims against Board.''

`(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by amending the item relating to part 2 of subtitle A of title II to read as follows:

"PART 2—GUIDELINES REVIEW BOARD"

"Sec. 221. Establishment.

"Sec. 222. Duties.

"Sec. 223. Membership.

"Sec. 224. Powers; no compensation for service.

"Sec. 225. Status of Board and members for purposes of claims against Board.''

`(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by amending the item relating to part 3 of subtitle A of title II to read as follows:

"PART 3—ELECTION COMMISSION TERMINATION

"Sec. 211. Establishment.

"Sec. 212. Duties.

"Sec. 213. Membership.

"Sec. 214. Powers; no compensation for service.

"Sec. 215. Status of Board and members for purposes of claims against Board.''

`(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the Commission termination date described in section 1004 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (as added by section 210(a)).

`§ 217. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO TRANSFER OF CERTAIN AUTHORITIES TO FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION.

`(a) DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF VOLUNTEER VOTING SYSTEM GUIDELINES.—

`(1) IN GENERAL.—Part 3 of subtitle A of title II of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15361 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end of that section the following new section:

`"Sec. 223. TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY TO FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION.—

`(a) TRANSFER.—Effective on the Commission termination date described in section 1004, the Federal Election Commission (hereafter in this section referred to as the 'FEC') shall be responsible for any funds designated for the duties and functions of the Commission under this part.

`(b) ROLE OF STAFF DIRECTOR.—The FEC shall carry out the operation and management of its duties and functions under this part through the Office of the Staff Director of the FEC.

`(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the item relating to part 3 of subtitle A of title II the following new section:

`"Sec. 223. Transfer of authority to Federal Election Commission.''

`(b) TESTING, CERTIFICATION, DECHROMATIZATION, AND RECHROMATIZATION OF VOTING SYSTEM HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE.

`(1) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle C of title II of such Act (42 U.S.C. 15371 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end of that section the following new part:

`"PART 2—GUIDELINES REVIEW BOARD"

`Sec. 222. Establishment of the Guidelines Review Board.

`Sec. 223. Powers; no compensation for service.

`Sec. 224. Authority to Federal Election Commission.

`Sec. 225. Status of Board and members for purposes of claims against Board.''

`(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by amending the item relating to part 2 of subtitle A of title II to read as follows:

"PART 2—GUIDELINES REVIEW BOARD"

"Sec. 221. Establishment.

"Sec. 222. Duties.

"Sec. 223. Membership.

"Sec. 224. Powers; no compensation for service.

"Sec. 225. Status of Board and members for purposes of claims against Board.''

`(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by amending the item relating to part 3 of subtitle A of title II to read as follows:

"PART 3—ELECTION COMMISSION TERMINATION

"Sec. 211. Establishment.

"Sec. 212. Duties.

"Sec. 213. Membership.

"Sec. 214. Powers; no compensation for service.

"Sec. 215. Status of Board and members for purposes of claims against Board.''
available to the Office, are transferred and made available to the FEC.

"(b) Personnel.—

(1) In general.—The personnel of the Office and the FEC, except that the number of full-time equivalent personnel so transferred may not exceed the number of full-time equivalent personnel of the Office as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) Treatment of employees at time of transfer.—An individual who is an employee of the Office who is transferred under this subsection shall not be separated or reduced in grade or compensation because of the transfer during the 1-year period that begins on the date of transfer.

(2) CEREMONIAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to subtitle B of title II the following:

"Sec. 232. Transfer of authority to Federal Election Commission..."

(c) Development of standardized format for reports on absentee voting by absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters.—Section 703(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff–1 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(i) DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—The Comptroller General shall develop and promulgate standards for the manner in which States and local governments receiving funds under title II and title IV of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15361 et seq.) shall conduct a study of the procedures established by such procedures, including State and local election officials and others, to ensure that such procedures, including the voting system guidelines and in operating voting systems in general; and

(2) maintain a clearinghouse of information concerning the activities of State and local governments in implementing voluntary voting system guidelines and in operating voting systems in general; and

(d) provide for the adoption of voluntary voting system guidelines, in accordance with part 3 of subtitle A of title II of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15361 et seq.);

(3) LIMITATION ON AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE REQUIREMENTS ON STATES AND UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—In general.—Section 1004 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 438), as amended by paragraph (2), is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(h) Nothing in paragraphs (10) through (16) of subsection (a) or any other provision of this Act shall be construed to grant the Commission the authority to issue any rule, promulgate any regulation, or take any other action that imposes any requirement on any State or unit of local government, except to the extent that the Commission had such authority prior to the enactment of this subsection or to the extent permitted under section 9(a) of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1973g–7(a)).

SEC. 204. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO OTHER LAWS.

(a) Federal election campaign act of 1971.—

(1) Duties of FEC.—Section 311(a) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 437c(a)) is amended by—

(A) striking "and" at the end of paragraph (8); and

(B) striking the period at the end of paragraph (9) and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(10) provide for the adoption of voluntary voting system guidelines, in accordance with part 3 of subtitle A of title II of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15361 et seq.);

(2) maintain a clearinghouse of information concerning the activities of State and local governments in implementing voluntary voting system guidelines and in operating voting systems in general; and


(f) Effective date.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act (July 25, 2002)."
less and less popular for both taxpayers and candidates. Second, H.R. 3463 terminates the Election Assistance Commission, an obsolete government agency originally intended to sunset in 2005.

Every Federal program, including these, is funded by someone, and it is a good idea; but if we do not eliminate some programs, then a $15 trillion debt will just be the starting point of our decline into a European-style fiscal crisis. Everyone talks about tough choices, but I have to make them. Frankly, these choices aren’t even very tough. They are about as easy as we’re going to find.

Since 1976 American taxpayers have spent $1.8 billion in funding Presidential primary campaigns, Presidential election campaigns, and national party conventions. My colleague from Oklahoma (Mr. Cole) has been a leader in trying to end those campaigns, and I am pleased to work with him today to continue that effort.

When the taxpayer financing of political campaigns and conventions was adopted, proponents said it would improve the public’s trust in their government, our politics, and increase the competitiveness of political campaigns. Sadly, it has failed on all counts. Now we find that more and more candidates are opting out of the system altogether. The Federal Election Commission has just this week confirmed that no Presidential candidate to date has opted to participate for the 2012 election.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about language that literally no candidate is currently using or preparing to use at this point. That includes President Obama, who in 2008 famously became the first Presidential candidate ever to decline to participate in both the primary and general election phases of the program.

It’s not just the candidates who don’t like it. As this chart indicates, support from Americans overall is dramatically low for this program. Since peaking in 1980, the percentage of taxpayers opting to participate has declined from a high of 28.7 percent to 7 percent.

It’s obviously something that needs to be done away with. That means that 93 percent of American taxpayers choose not to participate. They refuse to subsidize political campaigns. Who can blame them? It’s bad enough that they have to watch campaign commercials, but they shouldn’t have to pay for them with taxpayer dollars as well. The money designated by a check-off on tax returns is diverted from those taxpayers’ payments into this program so that every other taxpayer has to make up the difference in revenue to the 7 percent.

Mr. Speaker, eliminating this system will save taxpayers an estimated $447 million over 5 years and will immediately return nearly $200 million to the Treasury. This is sensible and long overdue.

Also long overdue is the elimination of the Election Assistance Commission. The EAC, created in 2002, as this chart indicates, was expected to sunset in 2005. Instead, as you see on the chart, despite its dwindling services, Mr. Speaker, this agency has more than doubled its employee size in 3 years. This is clearly an abuse of what should have taken place.

The EAC was established for a noble purpose: to allocate Federal grants for State voting systems upgrades, to conduct research, and to test and certify voting equipment. Aside from the certification services, which can be carried out by another agency, the EAC has fulfilled its purpose.

Over $3 billion has been sent to States over the years to help them modernize their voting equipment. Now, the EAC has allocated all of its remaining election grants and even zeroed out its request for additional grant funds in its last three annual budget requests.

The National Association of Secretaries of State, a bipartisan group, the direct beneficiary of the EAC’s dwindling services, has passed not one but two resolutions calling for the EAC’s dissolution. As this chart indicates, the EAC’s FY12 budget request devotes 51.7 percent of its budget to management and overhead costs—more than half. Under this plan, the agency would use $5.4 million to manage programs totaling $3.5 million.

This bill would transfer the EAC’s remaining valuable service, its voting system testing and certification program, to an existing agency instead of paying the overhead costs of a complete agency just to operate that program. Like its predecessor bill, H.R. 672, this bill maintains an advisory system to do State and local election officials input into the testing and certification program.

Mr. Speaker, since December of 2010, the Election Assistance Commission has not had a quorum. That means it has not been able to make policy decisions requiring approval by the Commissioners. Has anyone even noticed? Compared to the real crises facing our country, has there been harm caused to justify keeping an obsolete agency? The EAC is not merely obsolete, it’s also wasteful. I have spoken to this House before about pending discrimination lawsuits against the EAC. Unfortunately, the more time that passes, the more problems come to light. Just recently we learned that a former EAC Commissioner, who continued serving for a year after the end of the term and then resigned, has been collecting unemployment benefits. Neither the Commissioner’s resignation letter nor any facts that we know of indicate the departure was anything other than voluntary.

When we have millions of people in this country struggling to make ends meet, how can a senior government official who leaves a job voluntarily collect unemployment benefits? When we have an agency that is not needed and produces scandal after scandal, misperformance after misperformance, it is time for this agency to go.

According to the CBO, dissolving the EAC will save taxpayers $33 million over the next 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, we have a $15 trillion debt. We have to start somewhere. We now have annual deficits over a trillion dollars. H.R. 3463 eliminates one government program that virtually no one uses and shuts down an agency that has completed the task that it was assigned. Amazingly, we’ve had proposals not to shrink these deficits, but to expand them. Only in Washington is the answer to dysfunction expansion.

This bill will not cure all of the problems that we have on our own, but it is one of many steps we are going to have to take; otherwise, we will sink deeper and deeper into debt and trap our children and our grandchildren down into a downward spiral. Today is the time to act, and this agency and this program are the place to start.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3463, and I reserve the balance of my time.

House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Washington, DC, November 30, 2011.

Hon. Darrell E. Issa,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Dear Chairman Issa: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology in H.R. 3463 (to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of presidential election campaigns and party conventions and by terminating the Election Assistance Commission) introduced on November 17, 2011.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, I will waive further consideration of this bill in Committee, notwithstanding any provision that may have been in the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. This waiver, of course, is conditional upon my mutual understanding that agreeing to waive consideration of this bill should not be construed as waiving, reducing, or affecting the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Additionally, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology expressly reserves its authority to seek conference on any provision within its jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference that may be convened on this, or any similar legislation. I ask for your commitment to support any request by the Committee for conference on H.R. 3463 as well as any similar or related legislation.

I ask that a copy of this letter and your response be placed in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 3463 on the House floor.

I look forward to working with you on matters of mutual concern.

Sincerely,

RALPH M. HALL,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.
Hon. RALPH HALL, Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter inviting your Committee’s jurisdictional interest in H.R. 3463, to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of presidential election campaigns and party conventions and by terminating the Election Assistance Commission.

I appreciate your willingness to support expeditious floor consideration of this important legislation, notwithstanding the inclusion of any provisions under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. I understand and agree that your willingness to waive further consideration of the bill is without prejudice to your Committee’s jurisdictional interests in this or similar legislation in the future. In the event a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation is convened, I would support a request from your Committee for an appropriate number of conferees.

I will include a copy of our exchange in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 3463.

Thank you for your cooperation as we work towards enactment of this legislation.

Sincerely,

DANIEL E. LUNGREN,
Chairman, Committee on House Administration.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to H.R. 3463. This is not a new territory for this Congress. This proposal to eliminate the Presidential Election Campaign Fund and the Election Assistance Commission has already been dealt with in this Congress. The legislation before us proposes to combine these two really bad ideas.

In an era of rapidly changing election law, both in terms of campaign finance regulation and voting rights, these two programs have become an important part of the American political system. The electoral landscape is much different today than it was even 4 short years ago. The Supreme Court allows unlimited contributions from special interests, and Super PACs are raising vast amounts of funds with no government oversight or regulation. Corporations and special interests are donating massive sums of money, and some may expect a return on their investment. Unfortunately, this return often comes at the expense of the American people and sometimes at the expense of the integrity of this body.

We cannot expect the trust of the electorate if they feel they do not have a voice. We should provide transparency and accountability, not secrecy and irresponsibility.

Just last Congress, my colleagues and I passed the DISCLOSE Act, which called for more transparency in how our elections are financed, and that bill was killed by Senate Republicans. Members of the House, such as Mr. VAN HOLLEN of Maryland and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, have authorized bills that would strengthen public financing of elections, not weaken it, as this bill does.

When sources of funds are intentionally concealed, what kind of message does this send to the country? It sends the message that we do not care where those funds have come from, as long as they are substantial and they are secret, and that is wrong.

We can reform the Presidential Election Campaign Fund without repealing it. This is not the time for action.

Across the country, States are making it harder for voters to cast their ballots. New laws requiring voter identifications, strict and arbitrary voting registration regulations, and eliminating the days designed for early voting are all part of an effort to limit voter participation and turnout. Voters have noticed and have already started to push back.

This was the case in Maine last month when they used the “People’s Veto” to throw out a law passed by the Republican legislature and Governor to eliminate the State’s successful same-day registration system. Maine has other States, restrictive new laws may be forced onto the ballot for a possible repeal in 2012. If that wasn’t bad enough, overworked and underpaid local election officials and volunteers are expected to keep track of election law changes while still administering large, complex, and often unpredictable elections. The Election Assistance Commission does much of the heavy lifting for them, establishing and maintaining an information database for all local election officials to utilize.

The EAC also produces instructional videos and materials, which cash-strapped election officials claim save them thousands of dollars annually. And the letters of support for the EAC, which have been also sent to my colleagues across the aisle, are still rolling in.

The EAC’s essential services do not stop there. The Commission is charged with the testing of certification of voting machines, the only agency in the Federal Government tasked to do this. Who will ensure that all of our votes are counted? Who will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to cast a ballot for their intended candidate? Who will ensure that we do not repeat the historical debacle of Florida in the year 2000?

It is important to remember that events led to the establishment of the Presidential Election Campaign Fund and the EAC—the Watergate scandal of the early 1970s and Florida in 2000, respectively. These historical controversies led us to implement our political system. These measures were meant to restore their faith, to restore accountability to Washington and, most importantly, to ensure that the people were heard. All this bill will do is weaken further the faith the American electorate has left.

Today I stand with every letter writer that has pleaded with us not to terminate the EAC. I stand with those who cannot afford to make huge contributions and who would rather speak with their votes than their wallets. I, along with Democratic colleagues, stand with the principles that voter inclusion, not voter exclusion, is what we should stand for. And the disenfranchisement of any eligible voters is despicable and is beyond words and cannot be tolerated.

On this bill I urge a “no” vote.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

From: Elisabeth MacNamara, President
To: Members of the Committee on House Administration

Re H.R. 672, To Terminate the Election Assistance Commission

The League of Women Voters urges you to oppose H.R. 672, which would terminate the Election Assistance Commission and transfer some of its functions to the Federal Election Commission. Instead of eliminating the EAC, we believe that Congress should strengthen the commission and expand its responsibilities.

Moreover, the FEC is dysfunctional; expanding its role would be a mistake.

The League believes that elections are fundamental to a functioning democracy and that every effort should be made to elevate their administration to the highest importance. Congress should not turn its back on federal efforts to ensure election integrity, improve voter access to the polls, and improve election systems. The value of the EAC far outweighs its monetary costs; in fact, the costs of poorly run elections are intolerable. It is time for election administration to move into the 21st Century, not back toward the 20th.

Unfortunately, elections in our country are still not well-administered, and we are concerned that many states and localities are not doing a good job ensuring federally-protected voting rights. For example, a GAO report on the 2008 election said that there are significant problems for persons with disabilities in gaining access to the polls. Physical barriers remain in far too many cases. In fact, 31 states reported that ensuring polling place accessibility was among their administration of election responsibilities.

There many other areas of election administration that cause concern, including statewide voter registration lists, provisional ballots, list maintenance, punch card and tabulating, access to registration, and meeting voter information needs. In addition, there are critical questions that must be addressed about the application of new technologies like the Internet to the voting and registration processes. Each of these areas would benefit from additional study, data gathering and sharing among election officials at every level, the public, and concerned organizations.

In light of these continuing problems, now is certainly not the time for the only federal agency that devotes its full resources and attention to improving our elections. Let us not go back to the 2000 election. Let us forge ahead, improving each election over the last. We know what needs to be done; now let us devote the resources to what should be done.

THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

From: Nyanzi Johnson, President
To: Members of the Committee on House Administration

Re: H.R. 672, To Terminate the Election Assistance Commission

We write to you to express our strong opposition to H.R. 672, which would terminate the EAC. We stand with those who cannot afford to make huge contributions and would rather speak with their votes than their wallets. We, along with our colleagues on the leadership conference team, strongly oppose the proposal to eliminate the EAC.

The EAC is a crucial organization that serves as a crucial resource for states and localities to ensure elections are conducted fairly and accurately. It is important to remember that events led to the establishment of the EAC—the Watergate scandal of the early 1970s and Florida in 2000, respectively. These historical controversies led us to implement our political system. These measures were meant to restore their faith, to restore accountability to Washington and, most importantly, to ensure that the people were heard. All this bill will do is weaken further the faith the American electorate has left.

Today I stand with every letter writer that has pleaded with us not to terminate the EAC. We stand with those who cannot afford to make huge contributions and would rather speak with their votes than their wallets. We, along with our colleagues on the leadership conference team, strongly oppose the proposal to eliminate the EAC.

As organizations
that are committed to supporting and expanding the civil and voting rights of all Americans, we have devoted substantial resources to the passage of both the National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act. Terminating the EAC puts our work at jeopardy and risks reducing the voting and civil rights of our citizens—rights for which many fought and gave their lives.

The EAC does valuable work to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of our nation’s elections. The Commission plays a major role in collecting accurate and comparable election data. With our nation’s complex and diversified election administration systems, central data collection is essential if we are going to improve our citizens’ trust and confidence in election results. The Commission develops and fosters the training and education of our nation’s more than 8,000 election administrators. Through its many working committees and the work it does to foster robust dialogue among advocates, manufacturers and administrators, the Commission is improving the administration of elections. The EAC’s award-winning web page has become the “go to” site for election administrators, advocates, and academics.

The Commission is charged with developing standards for voting systems, and this precedent-setting work has been recognized by nations around the world. Several countries are so impressed with our system that they have signed agreements with the EAC for technical assistance as they develop their own voting system standards and certification procedures. The EAC’s certification program uses its oversight role to coordinate with manufacturers and local election officials to ensure that existing voting equipment meets durability and longevity standards. This saves state and local governments from the unnecessary expense of new voting equipment.

The EAC has also played a central role in improving the accessibility of voting for the country’s more than 37 million voters with disabilities. We still have a long way to go to achieve the Help America Vote Act’s mandate to make voting accessible. The EAC’s leadership is essential to continuing the effort to offer all Americans the right to vote “privately and independently.”

As we approach the 2012 elections, the EAC must continue to do its important work. Rather than abolishing the agency just before the 2012 elections, we believe Congress should ensure that the Commission by broadening its data collection responsibilities and by giving it regulatory authority to ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to the polls.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Leadership Conference on Civil Rights at (202) 283-2856 or borstein@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

WADE HENDERSON,
President & CEO,
NANCY ZIRKIN,
Executive Vice Presi-
dent.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE,
Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

MEMBERS,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the NAACP, our nation’s oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization, I strongly urge you to do all you can to support the Election Assistance Commission and to oppose and vote against efforts to terminate this crucial tool in our arsenal to strengthen our democracy.

The right to vote is a cornerstone of our democracy and we as a Nation should do all we can to ensure that every eligible American can cast an unconfounded, unimpeded vote of their own free will and that their vote is counted.

As established by the 2002 Help America Vote Act, the Election Assistance Commission provides research and data, guidance and grants to states and local governments so they can employ the best practices and ensure the highest quality of registering and voting. The Election Assistance Commission has provided crucial help to many localities in the efforts to identify and remove thousands of registered voters who were not qualified to vote and the vote.

Thank you in advance for your attention to the NAACP position: I look forward to meeting with you to see that we work toward a more inclusive democracy and to protect the integrity of our Nation and our government. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 463-2940.

Sincerely,

HILARY O. SHELTON,
Director, NAACP
Washington Bureau & Senior Vice Presi-
dent for Advocacy and Policy.

DEMOS,

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Demos respectfully urges Congress to ensure that the EAC be able to continue its work to improve the quality of elections—a vital function in ensuring the success of our democratic institutions.

Demos is a non-partisan public policy research and advocacy organization committed to building an America which achieves its highest democratic potential. We believe that the EAC must continue to be reauthorized by Congress to do this important work.

Thank you for your attention to the Demos position. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Leader Kim Jones at (202) 833-2611 or kjones@demos.org.

Sincerely,

MILES RAPPOPORT,
President.

CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW,
WASHINGTON, DC,
June 2, 2011.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN: The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (“Lawyers’ Committee”) writes to express our opposition to the “To Terminate the Election Assistance Commission, and For Other Purposes Act” (H.R. 672). In the 2000 presidential election, many voters in Florida were wrongfully denied access to the ballot based on faulty voting equipment and a lack of discernible standards for vote counting. This bill would roll back the progress being made to bring more uniformity and equity to the election process across the states.

The Lawyers’ Committee is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, established in 1963 at the request of President Kennedy, to give priority to the rights of individuals affected by racial discrimination. The defense of voting rights is at the core of the Lawyers’ Committee’s work since our founding nearly 50 years ago. We believe that...
abolishing the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) fails to further voting transparency and reliability that was at the heart of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). Predictably, the EAC would be most frequently disenfranchised are also those least able to advocate for their right to vote, whether poor, uneducated, infirm or elderly.

Paced with a crisis to our democratic system, Congress immediately rushed to action to take bold steps to bring our elections into the 21st century by passing HAVA which established the EAC and certifies voting machines for use in elections to avoid a repeat of the 2000 election debacle in Florida; administers electronic voting for our brave men and women fighting overseas so that they are able to vote abroad; and creates voluntary voting guidelines for states, instilling confidence in the democratic process of this country for all voters. Since its inception, the Lawyers’ Committee has been intimately acquainted with the work of the EAC, especially as Barbara Arwine our Executive Director has served on the EAC advisory board. Our work and experience with the EAC leads us to believe that its establishment was the right course, that its existence has enabled people to express the opposition of NDRN and the 57 P&A agencies it represents to H.R. 672, the Election Support and Efficiency Act (ESCEA). With the presidential election on the horizon, it is more important than ever that we ensure the voice of the people is heard and their votes counted.

The work of the EAC to improve and modernize our electoral system is far from over. Moving the functionality of the EAC to the FEC would not only be ineffective, but costly. The Federal Election Commission (FEC), institutionally partisan and consistently ineffective in achieving even its current mandate, is not the organization we need to test and ensure the validity of voting machines, or safeguard the votes of our citizens.

With the presidential election on the horizon, it is more important than ever that we ensure the voice of the people is heard through reliable, transparent democratic process. Termination of the EAC will take us backwards when we are trying to move forward.

Sincerely,

Barbara R. Arwine, Executive Director.

Tanya Clay House, Director of Public Policy.

NATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS NETWORK.

Washington, DC, June 21, 2011.

Re: Opposition to H.R. 672, the Election Support Consolidation and Efficiency Act.

As Executive Director of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), I write to express the opposition of NDRN and the 57 Protection and Advocacy systems it represents to H.R. 672, the Election Support Consolidation and Efficiency Act (ESCEA).

Voting is a fundamental right, and the Election Assistance Commission has played an important role in creating the conditions that allow people with disabilities to register and vote. The EAC’s efforts to improve the accessibility of polling places and the voting process has been crucial.

As we rapidly approach the 2012 elections, the EAC must continue to do its important work. Rather than abolishing the agency just before the 2012 elections, Congress should strengthen the EAC to ensure that its employees—and the employee agency the EAC would be left without—can continue to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. The EAC, established following the 2000 election, has helped improve these results by acting as a national clearinghouse for information helpful to accessible voting and providing technical assistance and guidance for election commissioners and how to make polling places, and the voting process as a whole, more accessible.

There remains much work to be done not only to making physical accessibility, but also relating to other barriers to voting, such as a lack of voting materials in accessible formats for people with sensory disabilities. In some instances, there have been outright denials of the right to register and vote based on false assumptions about a person’s legal capacity to vote. Abolishing the EAC at this point in time would be a step back for people with disabilities and the goal of full accessibility to the voting process, and prevent people with disabilities from participating in this most fundamental civil right.

As for the 2012 elections, the EAC must continue to do its important work. Rather than abolishing the agency just before the 2012 elections, Congress should strengthen the EAC to ensure that its employees—and the employee agency the EAC would be left without—can continue to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. The EAC, established following the 2000 election, has helped improve these results by acting as a national clearinghouse for information helpful to accessible voting and providing technical assistance and guidance for election commissioners, and how to make polling places, and the voting process as a whole, more accessible.

Sincerely,

Tanya Clay House, Director of Public Policy.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. It is clear that what has happened here is that there has been no response to many of the allegations of mismanagement that we’ve heard so far. It is clear from the things that have happened that the EAC, in particular, it is time for this to come to a conclusion. It is an agency whose average salary for its employees—and the employee agency the EAC would be left without—can continue to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. The EAC, established following the 2000 election, has helped improve these results by acting as a national clearinghouse for information helpful to accessible voting and providing technical assistance and guidance for election commissioners, and how to make polling places, and the voting process as a whole, more accessible.

Sincerely,

Curtis L. Decker, JD, Executive Director.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. It is clear that what has happened here is that there has been no response to many of the allegations of mismanagement that we’ve heard so far. It is clear from the things that have happened that the EAC, in particular, it is time for this to come to a conclusion. It is an agency whose average salary for its employees—and the employee agency the EAC would be left without—can continue to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. The EAC, established following the 2000 election, has helped improve these results by acting as a national clearinghouse for information helpful to accessible voting and providing technical assistance and guidance for election commissioners, and how to make polling places, and the voting process as a whole, more accessible.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

As for the Election Assistance Commission, the EAC is the only Federal agency focused on federal elections. This was an outgrowth of the disastrous process of the 2000 election. Remember, 100 million votes were cast, but it took a decision of the Supreme Court before a winner was declared. The experience left a black eye on our elections process. It’s not something America should go through again.

As State and local budgets are cut, the value of this commission is going to grow.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, by the gentlelady from California.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.
Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. It is amazing that there is a reference to the need that we need to focus on jobs instead of doing something like this. If that’s the case, we’ve passed about the same thing this sorry little House of the Republican-led House that dealt with jobs and dealt with the economy. We have done our job on that, and now they’re sitting over in the Senate who knows where or why awaiting action. So we’ve been doing those tough things, the things that will create jobs if the Senate and the White House would join with us on those things. So that is simply not accurate to say that we haven’t been focusing on jobs because we have done that since we started this year, and we will continue to do so and encourage and urge our colleagues over in the Senate to bring these matters up. They include things that will help on overburdensome EPA regs, with things that will deal with permitting and drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and things that will have a direct impact on our economy and jobs.

You know, it is clear, particularly on the EAC, which was created in 2002 after HAVA, the Help America Vote Act, after the Bush-Gore recount so that we wouldn’t have another hanging chad or butterfly ballot situation, and this agency administered over $3 billion worth of grants to the States for managing the passage of laws designed to be a 3-year agency and program. We’re 9 years into this. And instead of trying to say, okay, and we showed the chart a minute ago with $5.4 million worth of management costs, and yet only a little over $3 million in program costs. And the grants for the machines, Mr. Speaker, are now gone and they are not there.

We have the letter from the National Association of Secretaries of State which is the one that voluntarily resigned in 2005, and again in 2010. Again on the EAC, we have reports from different agencies. We have an IG report criticizing the management practices of the EAC. This report was done in March of 2010. We have a report from the EAC’s financial records back in November of 2008 which I dealt with when I first got on the Committee on House Administration. This report was an audit of the Election Assistance Commission fiscal year 2008 financial statements. The records were so mismanaged, this agency that the other side wants to keep instead of trying to make us more efficient, it was so bad that the agency couldn’t be audited. The records were too bad to tell them how bad it was. So that lengthy report is available to anyone who cares to read it.

Then we have a report from the Office of Special Counsel that was done in 2009. The Office of Special Counsel talks about having to settle a political discrimination case. An agency that is supposed to talk about fairness and helping in elections themselves get sued for political discrimination. And one of those that created that problem is the one that voluntarily resigned and received unemployment benefits for a very long time.

We have the organizational chart that shows that the EAC included a special assistant to a vacant position. I can go on and on, Mr. Speaker, on the mismanagement of the EAC. It is clearly time that there are some things that we need to keep. We are saying that the essential functions of this group, send them over to the FEC, and we can take care of those situations on testing and certification, make the process more efficient, and we’ll save money for the taxpayers.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3463. It might seem, but right behind jobs, one of the top concerns my constituents contact me about is campaign reform. You’d think that campaign rules would be the very last thing people would think about when they’re worried about their livelihoods, their mortgages, and their family’s health care. But they know that the electoral process is at the heart of everything their government can do for them.

The American people are frustrated. They are frustrated by what I call super-sized campaigns. It’s all too much. It’s too slandering. It’s too hard to tell who’s paying for what and who’s saying what. They feel that big donors, big corporations, and ideological groups are running the show, and they’re being left out. But the American people care, and they believe in “we the people.”

Public financing gives the voice back to the middle class. The Election Assistance Commission can help election officials better the process for voters. Neither of these is perfect right now. We acknowledge that, but we should be improving rather than eliminating them. Throw away what public financing we have, what financing worked for every President from 1976 to 2004 and making it harder to bring election improvements together is a step in the wrong direction.

Rather than making it even harder for the average voter to make a difference, Congress should be improving, not dismantling, programs whose purpose is to ensure that every American’s voice is heard in our election. The President’s Election Campaign Fund and the Election Assistance Commission are in need of strengthening, not elimination. They help make sure that all voices can be heard and that all votes will be counted. I support improving these programs.

But the only reason to want to eliminate them is to further suppress votes. These are the same groups who were targeted by Jim Crow laws decades ago. The votes are the same groups who are now targeted by “inactive voter lists” and voter ID laws and
all of the other new tactics designed for a single goal—voter suppression. I urge my colleagues to defeat this bill and defeat yet another attempt to stop American citizens from voting.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I can’t believe what I just heard from my friend from Missouri. Doing away with the Presidential Election Campaign Fund is not a Jim Crow law. And I’ll put my record alongside his on ensuring voting rights to minorities as the author of the latest extension of the Voting Rights Act and one who got the 1982 compromise passed and signed into law by President Reagan.

The Presidential Election Campaign Fund was destroyed 3 years ago by President and then-Candidate Barack Obama. He refused to be bound by its restrictions. Senator John MCCAIN was. And he was put at a significant disadvantage in the general election campaign by running against Candidate Obama, who rejected the Election Campaign Fund’s funds and raised huge and unlimited amounts of money.

Mr. CLAY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. I have a limited amount of time. If I have time left, I will be happy to yield.

This year, so as not to disadvantage themselves, none—that means none—of the Republican primary candidates have signed up for Presidential Election Campaign Fund money. The Obama money machine is running all around the country. We see this in the newspapers. We hear it on television. And because the campaign fund would limit the amount of money that whoever the Republican nominee, if they took these funds, could use in order to spread his message on why Obama ought to be replaced by the vot- ers, we ought to just get rid of this program. We might as well not spend any more money on something that would suppress the participa- tion of the American electoral process.

The EAC helps maintain the integ- rity of the American electoral process. Too many people across the country have lost confidence in the legitimacy of the election results. Dismantling the EAC would further erode that necessary faith in the process.

Let me remind my colleagues there is nothing more crucial to democracy than guaranteeing the integrity, the fairness, the accountability, the accu- racy of elections. Democracy works only if the citizens believe it does. The system must work, and the people must believe in it; but voting shouldn’t be an act of blind faith. It should be an act of record.

The EAC helps maintain the integ- rity of the American electoral process. Too many people across the country have lost confidence in the legitimacy of the election results. Dismantling the EAC would further erode that necessary faith in the process.

We’ve discussed several times—and others have talked about it—if manipu- lating the outcome of elections occurs, how much easier will it be once the EAC is eliminated. Millions of Ameri- cans are casting their votes now on unaudit- able voting machines and the results of most elections are not aud- ited.

Eliminating the EAC would increase the risks that our electoral process would be compromised by vote manipulation, by targeted voter ID laws, by voter system irregularities. Can we afford to take that risk? Certainly not. Do we want problems to go undetected? I would hope not.

The legislation before us actually does three important things: First, it eliminates an antiquated, outdated system of public financing; second, it terminates an obsolete commission; and then finally, and not incidentally, it actually saves money, something that we talk a lot about around here but we very seldom actually do.

When the Presidential Election Cam- paign Act was signed into law in 1973, it was during the time before things like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. The widespread use of the Internet did not exist. That’s no longer the case today. Today, it’s pretty easy to actually contribute money to a Presidential candidate if you want to do it. I would advise anybody, regardless of their political persuasion, to simply type the name of the candidate that they like into the Internet and wait and see what pops up, and they’re going to see all kinds of opportu- nity to donate to that individual.

There is no need to take public money at a time that we’re running $1.5 trillion deficits and divert it to what’s essentially political welfare for Presidential candidates—absolute waste of money. It’s so much a waste that our President, who defends the system but chose not to participate in the system—in 2008, he did not partici- pate. If he hadn’t, he did not do it during the public campaign, actually broke precedent and, frankly, the commitment he had made earlier in the campaign and just chose not to do it. And that’s fine. That was his right. But it was certainly ade- quately funded. His opponent, Senator Clinton, now Secretary Clinton, was also adequately funded. She did not use the public financing system. The one person who did, John MCCAIN, was heavily outspent, although I don’t think that had much to do with his de- feat.

I think, honestly, Americans know how to contribute to Presidential can- didates. They don’t need the Federal Government letting them check off a portion of their taxes and divert it for that purpose.

In addition, public participation in this system has declined radically. It’s never reached even one-third of Ameri- can taxpayers. Why do this?—peaked at 28 percent, and in 2009 was down to 7 percent of American taxpayers who chose to do it.

So we’re not denying anybody the ability to participate. We are giving every taxpayer the option to contribute money to Presidential candidates and to political parties at a cost to the taxpayer when that cost can’t be afforded.

Two weeks ago, we had something that occurred that honestly ought to concern everybody on this floor. And I don’t fault either party for it, but the Democratic Party and the Republican Party both received $17 million for their conventions from the Federal Treasury of the United States; $17 million for two political parties—actually, 34 in total—to actually run their conven- tions from the American taxpayer. Who really believes that that’s a needed ex- penditure? Each one of those parties—and I can tell you because I used to be the chief of staff of one of them—will spend over $100 million on its conven- tion. They don’t require additional Federal help. It’s simply a waste of time and a waste of money.

As for the Election Assistance Com- mission, I say to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), I think the gentleman for yield.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentle- man from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. I think the gentleman for yield.

The legislation before us actually does three important things: First, it eliminates an antiquated, outdated system of public financing; second, it terminates an obsolete commission; and then finally, and not incidentally, it actually saves money, something that we talk a lot about around here but we very seldom actually do.

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In addition, public participation in this system has declined radically. It’s never reached even one-third of Ameri- can taxpayers. Why do this?—peaked at 28 percent, and in 2009 was down to 7 percent of American taxpayers who chose to do it.

So we’re not denying anybody the ability to participate. We are giving every taxpayer the option to contribute money to Presidential candidates and to political parties at a cost to the taxpayer when that cost can’t be afforded.

Two weeks ago, we had something that occurred that honestly ought to concern everybody on this floor. And I don’t fault either party for it, but the Democratic Party and the Republican Party both received $17 million for their conventions from the Federal Treasury of the United States; $17 million for two political parties—actually, 34 in total—to actually run their conven- tions from the American taxpayer. Who really believes that that’s a needed ex- penditure? Each one of those parties—and I can tell you because I used to be the chief of staff of one of them—will spend over $100 million on its conven- tion. They don’t require additional Federal help. It’s simply a waste of time and a waste of money.

As for the Election Assistance Com- mission, I say to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), I thank the gentleman. We already know that in 38 States there is introduced legisla- tion that would suppress the participa- tion and the votes of young, minority, and other groups. And now we see bills lies here in Congress who are trying to eliminate the only Federal agency charged with improving the conduct of elections and making sure that every vote counts. If you like the direction of the State legislatures, you’re going to be this year the legislation before us today to close the Election Assistance Commission.

The voter’s vote should be behind a curtain of secrecy, but the process by which registration and elections are conducted should be transparent. If not, voters will cease to believe that the process is fair and that their vote counts.
elimination of this. They don’t feel the need for it. They certainly don’t see that they’re getting any assistance from it.

So whatever good it played in the immediate aftermath of the 2000 election I think is now at an end. That SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. COLE. I appreciate the gentleman for yielding.

Without putting too fine a point on it, this is a system and this is a commission that simply exists to solve problems that aren’t problems. We have no problem funding Presidential campaigns in the United States. There’s plenty of money—probably too much money—around. There doesn’t need to be taxpayer money. Nor do political parties have a problem funding their conventions. They can do it themselves.

What we need if the system is to serve, the Secretaries of State around the country, has actually asked us to abolish it.

So it’s just fine to prove we can get rid of our current programs, end the expenditures, and actually save the taxpayers some money. And in doing so, I can assure everybody on the floor that our democracy will remain healthy, our elections will be fair, and the American people in their wisdom will figure out which candidate to contribute to if they choose to contribute to any candidate at all.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the third time this year to oppose a measure that would summarily repeal our system of public funding for Presidential elections.

Once again, the House majority seems intent on dismantling the few remaining safeguards we have left against the influence of special interests in politics following the Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling. The fact that they are ostensibly bringing this bill forward as a deficit reduction measure in order to pay for a bill to undermine workers’ rights is the height of cynicism.

The reforms we need today would destroy one of the most successful examples of reform that followed the Watergate scandal. Dare we forget what that scandal was about? The Committee to Reelect the President, fueled by huge quantities of corporate cash, paying for criminal acts and otherwise subverting the American electoral system.

The hallmark of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974, enacted at a time when public confidence in government was dangerously low, was our voluntary system of public financing for Presidential elections. To this day, this innovative reform stands as one of the greatest steps we have taken to bring transparency and accountability to our electoral system. And it has worked remarkably well, being utilized in the general election by every Republican and Democratic Presidential nominee from 1976 through 2004 and by John McCain in 2008, although in recent years the need for modernization has become evident.

Perhaps the best example of this program’s success is President Ronald Reagan, who participated in Presidential public financing in all three of his Presidential campaigns in 1976, 1980, and 1984. The Reagan case illustrates the positive effects public financing has had in both parties at both the primary and the general election stages. It illuminates the way in which the system benefits candidates who challenge the party’s establishment. It also highlights the system’s focus on small donations rather than big bucks from the large contributors. Note that this is not a free ride; no willy-nilly spending program. Donors must meet the support of thousands of small donors during the primary to prove their viability, and only then do they receive matching funds.

Today one could wish, in light of the positive history of this program and prior Republican support, for a bipartisan effort to repair the system and restore its effectiveness. I don’t know of any policy that exemplifies the maxim “mend it, don’t end it” better than this one.

Earlier this year, Congressman VAN HOLLEN and I reintroduced a bill that would do just that. It would modernize the Presidential public financing system and again make it an attractive and viable option for Presidential candidates. Our bill would bring available funds into line with the increased cost of campaigns, adjust the program to the front-loaded primary calendar, and enhance the role of small donors. The bill has been carefully designed and deserves deliberation and debate.

Instead, we’re faced with yet another Republican attempt to open the floodgates for corporate cash and special interest influence to pour into our political system.

With confidence in government at rock bottom, and the perception of government corruption through the roof, why is the majority trying to re-turn us to the dark days of Watergate? Let’s instead restore and improve our public financing system and move on to real solutions to put our Nation’s fiscal house in order.

Let’s not use valuable floor time to pass a bill that has no chance of becoming law. The American people want us to get to work on important measures to reviwe the struggling economy and put people back to work. So I urge the majority to heed that call. Get to work on passing the Stimulus bills, fixing the Medicare physician reimbursement, extending the payroll tax cut and unemployment benefits, patching the AMT, and reauthorizing the FAA in time for families’ holiday travel.

I’m afraid such pleas are falling on deaf ears in this Chamber these days. But we need to get to work on the people’s business, not the flawed bill that threatens to allow big money to play an even larger role in our politics.

Mr. HARPER. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GONZALEZ), a valued member of the House Administration Committee.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill in its entirety but especially to that provision which attempts to eliminate the Election Assistance Commission.

I need to address a few points that have been made by proponents of this bill because I was there when this original bill came up for consideration years ago, and I’ve been there for the subsequent hearings in the committee of jurisdiction.

First of all, when it comes to the secretaries of state, they’ve been opposed to the creation of the Election Assistance Commission from its very beginning. This is nothing new. Their re-novel of opposition basically used a form letter that didn’t even change the 2006 date. The 2010 opposition letter ac-tually referred and still used the same letter of previous years.

But the most important thing to point out is that there’s a vast number of secretaries of state have multifaceted responsibilities and obligations. One of them is to conduct elections. But each one of us in this body knows who really runs an election, and it’s going to be your local election administrators.

You and I and anybody involved in the electoral process knows that on Election Day you’re not going to find secretary of state personnel at the polling places. When the ballots are mailed for absentee voting, you’re not going to find anyone from the Secretary of State’s Office. They’re not going to count the ballots. They’re not going to be there. It is a local effort, and that’s what the Election Assistance Commission is doing.

It was never meant to have a life span of 3 years. If you read the bill carefully, and Mr. HOYER, who will be taking the floor later, will remind us of the legislative history of that par-ticular bill that created this commis-sion.

If we are to criticize them for an inordinate amount of their budget being applied to personnel, then we must look at the business not on this flawed bill but on the entire Congress, because I assure you, because I also sit on a committee, obviously the same committee, that entertains the budget requests of the different com-mittees. Each one of those committees and individual Members of Congress will tell you that they spend a greater proportion of their budget on personnel than the Election Assistance Commis-sion. And there’s good reason for it.
It was never really intended to fully fund every effort at the local level. It’s to give advice. That’s why I have received in the past, from local election officials in Maryland, Texas, Florida, and Ohio—the local experience in Texas, I can’t overstate, was that we saved $100,000 by the suggestions and recommendations that were issued by the commission.

Lastly, you criticize the commission for not functioning because it doesn’t have a full body of commissioners. But whose fault is that? It’s the individuals on the other side of the aisle that have blocked consideration.

That reminds me. When I was a lawyer, we used to have an old joke about the individual defendant who was there charged with murdering his parents, and at the end of the trial goes before the jury and asks for mercy because he’s an orphan. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. I yield the gentleman an additional 10 seconds.

Mr. GONZALEZ. If you want to help your local election officials, vote “no” on this bill.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROKITA), who is a distinguished member of the Committee on House Administration, a former secretary of state early in his career, and he has served as president of the National Association of Secretaries of State.

Mr. ROKITA. I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, listening to the prior comments, I can’t help but wonder if certain Members of this body can’t help but not do more than one thing at a time. But certainly, your secretaries of state and your local election officials can multitask, and they do an excellent job of executing the States’ elections.

I want to focus on the portion of the bill that eliminates the Election Assistance Commission, Mr. Speaker. As has been said, I have a unique perspective on this. In 2005, as Indiana’s secretary of state, and serving as the president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, I coauthored the successful resolution that was tabled to take time to dissolve the EAC after the 2006 election. As the oldest organization of bipartisan elected officials in the Nation, we at NASS renewed the call to dissolve the commission in 2010.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, from the debates that we had in that organization, it was not a form letter. It was not a form renewal.

Furthermore, the vote for the renewal was 24–2, with 13 Republicans and 11 Democrats calling for its dissolution. That is not a partisan basis. We recognized, on a bipartisan basis, that the Election Assistance Commission cannot be justified on the grounds of fairness, justice, opportunity, or necessity.

EAC bureaucrats do not make elections fair. In fact, EAC makes them less fair by producing biased, inaccurate reports on the state of elections in our Nation and offering recommendations based on these junk studies. EAC bureaucrats do not enfranchise voters. States and individuals do that, as our Federal Constitution dictates.

Giving unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats in Washington more power over elections does not lead to more just election outcomes. If anything, it interferes with a just outcome because these bureaucrats, many with an ideological axe to grind, face little or no accountability for their actions, and they know it.

Voting is fundamental to our system and the legitimacy of our government. Ensuring qualified American citizens have an opportunity to vote is essential. The Constitution tasks the States with execution and maintenance of elections, not Federal bureaucrats.

Like I said, Mr. Speaker, I believe States do an excellent job. And by managing elections closest to the voters on the local level, we stand the best chance of ensuring opportunity for all and correcting injustice if the opportunity to vote is denied or interfered with.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. LANGEVIN. As a former secretary of state for the State of Rhode Island, and now a Member of the United States Congress, I have serious concerns about this bill.

Mr. Speaker, voter participation is the cornerstone of our democracy and a fundamental civic duty that empowers every citizen to effect change within our society. Unfortunately, many individuals with disabilities have been historically shut out of the voting process due to lack of accessibility. That’s among my particular concerns with this bill.

We have made impressive strides in recent years to close that gap, and the Election Assistance Commission, established under the Help America Vote Act, was an important part of that effort. As a Member of Congress who lives with a disability, cofounded the bipartisan Disabilities Caucus, and has worked at both the State and Federal levels to modernize and make accessible our voting systems, I find it unconscionable that the Republican leadership is considering this bill to abolish the Election Assistance Commission, an agency whose fundamental mission is to promote security, accessibility, and trust in our electoral process. Nowhere is the need for new resources more clear than in our Nation’s oldest and most vulnerable communities.

According to CBO, elimination of this program would save taxpayers $477 million over the next 5 years and return nearly $200 million to the public Treasury for deficit reduction immediately.

I know some people think $500 million isn’t much. Where I come from, that’s a lot. We can eliminate something that the American people have rejected by a vote of 93-7. It seems to me to make sense.
Mr. Speaker, in the last Congress, the Committee on House Administration held hearings on the issue of taxpayer financing of campaigns. And one of our witnesses asked this question. He said, if the voters are not willing to pay for the program, then why should it continue?

As for the Election Assistance Commission, this agency has been the subject of two hiring discrimination lawsuits, spends over 50 percent of its budget on administrative costs, and is asking this Congress for $5.4 million to manage programs totaling $3.5 million.

In short, Mr. Speaker, this bill before us eliminates an unused government program, shuts down an obsolete government agency, saves the taxpayers $400 million over 5 years, and returns almost $200 million to the Treasury. How could we not vote for it?

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time we have available?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Let me just take this from 30,000 feet for a minute and reiterate what the gentleman from Ohio said.

We have too much private money in the people’s House. We can’t get anything done now because it somehow may affect what Wall Street is doing.

We had a China currency bill on the floor last year and 350 votes, 99 Republicans. We can’t even get it up for a vote now in the House because Wall Street doesn’t want it. We’re in dire straits with trying to balance our budget.

We need to ask people making more than a million dollars a year to help us close this gap so we can reinvest back in our country. Nothing is happening because Wall Street doesn’t want it.

We’ve got oil and gas still getting benefits when profits are going through the roof. We can’t close that loophole because the oil and gas industry doesn’t want it closed.

There is too much private money in the people’s House. We need public funding of every citizen kick in fifty or a hundred bucks, and we run elections by letting people on the airwaves making these debates, making these discussions having a little bit of money to do it.

We’ve got to reform this country and set us on a path to prosperity. No wonder we can’t invest in public education, public health, public infrastructure, because the private interests are running the whole show here.

Mr. HOYER. First of all, we ought to reiterate what the gentleman from Ohio said. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. GINGREY, chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Administration Committee.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, maybe the President will listen to the advice of the gentleman from Ohio and sign up for public financing of his re-election effort.

But mainly I rise today in strong support of the combined efforts of my good friends, Mr. HARPER of Mississippi and Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, to reduce Federal spending by ending the public financing of campaigns and conventions and to terminate this Election Assistance Commission.

As Presidential campaigns in this day and age are becoming increasingly expensive to the tune of billions of dollars, the idea of having taxpayers contribute matching funds to them has become ludicrous. Ending this practice would save $617 million over 10 years and I commend Mr. COLE for his work to reduce spending.

Mr. Speaker, following is my statement in its entirety:

I rise today in strong support of the combined effort of my good friends, Mr. HARPER of Mississippi and Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, to reduce federal spending by ending the public financing of campaigns and conventions, and to terminate the Election Assistance Commission.

As Presidential campaigns in this day and age have become increasingly expensive to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, the idea of having taxpayers contribute matching funds to them has become ludicrous. Ending this practice would save $617 million over 10 years and I commend Mr. COLE for his work to reduce spending.

As for the EAC’s mission, this agency has outlived its usefulness and mismanaged its resources—albeitwhile costing taxpayers millions of dollars a year.

In the midst of our record levels of debt, we must scrutinize where every dollar of taxpayer money is being spent to ensure we are allocating these funds responsibly and delivering the best possible value to our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the Election Assistance Commission’s budget request for 2012 devoted 51.7 percent of its budget to management and overhead costs. It should be hard for anyone to argue that an agency that spends $5.5 million dollars managing programs totaling $3.5 million dollars is a responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

The EAC has more than doubled in size—without an increase in its responsibilities—since it was originally supposed to sunset in 2005. It is long past time, Mr. Speaker, that we allow government programs that have outlived their usefulness to be shut down, rather than maintain unnecessary and redundant layers of bureaucracy.

Eliminating this red tape would save American taxpayers $33 million dollars over five years, while at the same time preserving the EAC’s necessary functions—voting system testing and certification—at the Federal Election Commission, which can more efficiently handle these responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, the National Association of Secretaries of State—who are the direct beneficiaries of the EAC’s services—have themselves called for the EAC’s dissolution. This body should follow suit today. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished Democratic whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. First of all, we ought to be talking about jobs. The contention that this bill funds bills that are about jobs is spurious, in my opinion; and no member, in my opinion, would assert that that is the fact. We ought to be dealing with jobs.

But what are we dealing with?
Now, I know of what I speak, I tell the gentleman from Georgia. I understand. I was a Member of the House Administration Committee for, I think, some 15 years. I, along with Bob Ney, was the sponsor of the Help America Vote Act, which led to the Election Assistance Commission. So I know something about the Election Assistance Commission.

It was created because in the year 2000 we had a disastrous election which was solved finally but not very acceptably by most people, whether your candidate won or lost. So the Election Assistance Commission was created for that purpose, for the first time in history, of having some Federal presence in the oversight of Federal Elections. Not mandatory, but advisory.

Now, what we see, frankly, throughout America in Republican-controlled legislatures in many, many States is an effort to make voting more difficult to, in effect, suppress the voice to require more and more documentation of people who have already registered to vote and claiming problems that exist that do not exist.

Now, if you want to obfuscate the election process, if you want to suppress the vote, if you want to make it more difficult, what is one of the things you want to do?

Eliminate the Election Assistance Commission, whose responsibility it is to advise and counsel on best practices to assure that every American not only has the right to vote but is facilitated in casting that vote and in making sure that that vote is counted. That’s what the Election Assistance Commission does.

And what do they want to do with the Election Assistance Commission’s responsibility? Transfer it to the Federal Election Commission, whose sole responsibility is to oversee the flow of money into elections. They neither have the expertise nor, frankly, do they have the time. They hardly have the time to do what they’re supposed to do right now.

Now, the Bush administration did not fund the Election Assistance Commission very robustly. Like every agency, it requires and should have proper oversight, and should, in my view, be more vigorous in the carrying out of its responsibilities. That is not, however, a reason for eliminating it. The elimination of it is to make voting more obscure, with less oversight and less assurance to our citizens that they not only have the right to vote but that a vote will be cast and counted correctly.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Mississippi has 1 1/2 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to a distinguished member of the Judiciary Committee and a former judge, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMER). Mr. GOHMER. Let’s cut to the chase. This is a tax credit for people who want to contribute to the President’s campaign fund. They can check this box and it doesn’t cost you anything. No, but it takes $40 million plus a year away from the fund that could be used for other things, including for Social Security, and it gives it to the President’s campaign fund.

I stand with our President, Barack Obama, on this issue, who found that the fund is worthless and that it’s an impediment to getting elected. So I stand with President Obama in saying let’s get rid of the fund and not use it anymore, and let the $200 million in that fund go to something helpful instead of being an impediment to being elected President.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The Presidential campaign fund currently has over $150 million. Tens of thousands of Americans put that money there. They put their money to go for this purpose. We would be fooling and deceiving our very own citizens if we were to pass this bill. They put that money there to be able to have the small say that they can—...
studies would be beneficial for the Election Assistance Commission. However, I strongly oppose H.R. 672. Termination of this Commission is not in the best interests of the election process. The EAC serves a vital role in the conduct of Federal elections as well as the smallest municipal election. During an election, information sharing is vital—communication and democracy. The EAC can serve as a clearinghouse of information so that local jurisdictions receive real-time, necessary data during the conduct of a Federal election.

North Carolina adopted uniform procedures as a part of the EAC’s mission while still allowing for local input and decision-making that fits individual jurisdictions. Many of the problems Federal elections face can be traced to a lack of consistency and efficiency. The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is the Agency that can provide that needed consistency and breadth of guidance. In fact, in its short history, the EAC already has adopted standards for voting systems that can allow for nationwide uniformity. Elections jurisdictions can then use these as a baseline when choosing voting systems and vendors.

One of the most disturbing trends occurring in the field of elections is the rapid turnover of voting system officials and members staff. Although elections comprise a mere fraction of a percent of total budgets, the elections budgets are continuously reduced. Already understaffed, we are reaching a point of compromising our ability to adequately perform necessary duties. The EAC is essential, filling a vital role in democratization of elections. The EAC has no regulatory or enforcement mandates, understaffed, and currently does not provide these services much longer. There has been movement in the House to eliminate the EAC since last year, labeling it “wasteful” and “unnecessary.” However, election administrators on the local level feel differently.

Although it has been argued that the EAC has outlived its usefulness because the Help America Vote Act funding it oversees has been exhausted, the EAC has become far more than a distributor and auditor of money; the EAC is a repository and resource center that offers guidance, performance measures, election materials, and administrative knowledge. Effective designs of polling place signage, webinars on topics such as contingency planning, minority language glossaries of election terminology, Quick Start Guide publications regarding Developing an Audit Trail, Conducting a Re-count, Acceptance Testing are all pertinent reminders for veteran election officials as well as critical learning tools for those officials newly elected, appointed, or hired.

Even more important is the status of voter communication and education. The signifi-
cation or compatibility between the two ef-
strengthens the EAC’s role in the elections process. The EAC serves a vital role in the conduct of Federal elections as one of the greatest gifts Congress could give to the nation is its continued support.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration by the Election Officials of Arizona.

Yours sincerely,

GARY O. BARTLETT, Executive Director.

ELECTION OFFICIALS OF ARIZONA,

October 14, 2011.

The Next 2000 Election May Be Just Around the Corner

Honorables Members of Congress

Representing the State of Arizona,

Is another 2000 election disaster lurking? At this point it may not be a question of when, but rather a question of where. While pundits, newspapers and politicians debate the process, election administrators across the country are worrying about the issues that will directly impact an election. The number one issue facing local election officials today is limited and ever-shrinking budgets combined with aging equipment, technology, and workers.

Direction on how to address these concerns exists and the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is an independent federal agency created in the wake of the 2000 election to help solve these problems. The EAC provides assistance to election administrators in the form of best practices, guidance, and the testing and certification of voting systems. Basically, the EAC provides an outlet and a voice to administrators to share their experiences, consider alternatives, de-
liberate their outcomes, and establish con-

December 1, 2011
Mr. Speaker, since its creation, the Federal Election Commission has served the valuable purpose of preserving the voting and civil rights of our citizens which was born out of the scandal know as Watergate. The Presidential Election Campaign Fund succeeds in its purpose by leveling the playing field when it comes to candidate funding in campaigns. By terminating taxpayer financing of presidential election campaigns and party conventions, the Republican majority seeks to permanently tilt the playing field in favor of special interest groups and corporate money at the expense of the American people.

Presidential campaigns are currently funded through the voluntary $3 check-off on income tax returns. Given the size of the deficit and the national debt, the amount of money saving by terminating taxpayer financing is de minimis—less than $1 billion—but will achieve a goal long sought by conservatives who have never believed that public financing of campaigns is a permissible use of federal revenues.

The Election Assistance Commission is charged with developing standards for voting systems, advising and counseling on best voting practices, assuring that every American has the right to vote, as well as to facilitate such vote, and to make sure that every single vote is counted. The precedent-setting work of the Election Assistance Commission has been recognized by nations around the world. The Election Assistance Commission has also played a central role in improving the accessibility of voting for the country’s more than 37 million voters with disabilities.

Let us not forget the Election Assistance Commission was born out of the 2000 presidential election fiasco with its unforgetable contributions to the political lexicon: “hanging” chads, “pregnant” chads, “dimpled” chads; “butterfly ballots”; and “voter intent.”

In response to the 2000 debacle, the Election Assistance Commission has performed valuable work to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of our nation’s election systems. It has played a central role in collecting accurate and comparable election data. With our nation’s highly diverse and decentralized administration system, central data collection is essential if we are going to improve our citizens’ trust and confidence in election results. The Election Assistance Commission develops and fosters the training and organization of our nation’s more than 8,000 election administrators.

Mr. Speaker, every vote counts—and every vote should be counted—and that is why we must preserve the Election Assistance Commission and oppose this legislation. It is important to note that abolishing the Election Assistance Commission will not save taxpayers money, but rather simply shift costs to the Federal Election Commission, FEC, and local governments. The FEC is not an agency that can make decisions in a timely and responsive fashion due to its partisan divisions. Congress, by mandating standards and environmental protections, central data collection is essential if we are going to improve our citizens’ trust and confidence in election results. The Election Assistance Commission develops and fosters the training and organization of our nation’s more than 8,000 election administrators.

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Mr. Speaker, the American people elected us to work on their priorities and real problems, like the lack of jobs. They do not want us to waste time on inconsequential matters of interest only to the Tea Party. H.R. 3463 is unnecessary and a diversion from addressing the real challenge facing our country. Therefore, I strongly oppose H.R. 3463 and I would urge my colleagues to join me in defeating this misguided and reckless legislation that puts the integrity of our election systems, and public trust in our democracy, at risk.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, the last thing we need to do in this House as this legislative year draws to a close is to further the corrupting influence of special interest money in presidential campaigns. But this is what the Republican majority seeks to do, explicitly written in this legislation.

Last January, the House Republicans stumped one part of this bill through the House—provisions that terminate the system of public funding of presidential campaigns that was established in the wake of the infamous Watergate scandals, under Richard Nixon’s presidency, nearly 40 years ago. It’s not enough to pass this bill once—the Republicans insist we pass it again today. It is not enough that virtually unlimited amounts of private money can now slosh through our political system in the last year alone, thanks to the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court last year—we have to pass a bill that aspirates the supply of public money in our presidential campaigns.

The Republicans are also practicing gross hypocrisy when this bill ends public financing of presidential campaigns, the Republican Party is seeking $18 million in public funding to support their nominating convention next year. Everyone knows that this bill is dead on arrival in the Senate and would be vetoed by the President—because it is a corruption of good government. But that does not impede the Republican leadership in the House today. Rather than work with us on real legislation that would deliver real jobs, real investment and real growth to the American economy, the House Republicans would rather waste our time and continue to deliver nothing to the American people.

To treat our democracy so cavalierly is disgraceful; to persist in policies that, should they ever become law, would turn our system of representative democracy into the electoral fiasco of 2000. It passed by just one vote, elections without the certainty they need. Agencies will be tied in knots and leave businesses to protect Americans through safety and environmental protections.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, while the Republican sponsors of the two bills before us contend they will create jobs, their claim is spurious. Economists have told us again and again that easing regulations has a negligible effect on job creation. This bill, as drafted, this bill that asphyxiates the supply of public funding to their nominating convention next year. Everyone knows that this bill is dead on arrival in the Senate and would be vetoed by the President—because it is a corruption of good government. But that does not impede the Republican leadership in the House today. Rather than work with us on real legislation that would deliver real jobs, real investment and real growth to the American economy, the House Republicans would rather waste our time and continue to deliver nothing to the American people.

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The bill before us today, H.R. 3463, will break faith with the American people by ignoring their direction. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in defending the will of American taxpayers against the Republican Party’s attacks on their hard earned taxes to that purpose. The Commission’s sole purpose is to provide the resources they need to ensure everyone eligible to vote can cast their ballots and have them counted. We cannot risk having our elections determined by “hanging chads.”

Instead of trying to erode our ability to protect voters, and instead of promoting regulatory bills that will not put Americans back to work, Republicans should join with Democrats to pass real jobs legislation.Democrats have two plans on the table to create jobs and grow our economy—the President’s American Jobs Act and our Make It In America plan. We two plans on the table to create jobs and grow our economy—the President’s American Jobs Act and our Make It In America plan. We

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, once again, this House is taking up a proposal that represents a direct attack on the will of the American people. Public financing for Presidential elections, which began in the 1970s, is one of the few opportunities where Americans are allowed to specify how they want their tax dollars spent. As Members of Congress, we are charged with representing the interests of our constituents. In this particular instance, however, we know precisely what the American people want. By voluntarily checking this box on their tax forms, more than 10 million of our fellow Americans have made their intentions explicitly clear. The Presidential Election Campaign Fund exists because individual Americans expressly opted to dedicate a portion of their taxes to that purpose.

In January, House Republicans voted to ignore the explicit intentions of the American people and eliminate the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. Thankfully, the Senate heard Americans’ call and killed the bill. This year, millions of Americans again checked the box on their tax forms for calendar year 2010, once again making it clear to the government how they wanted their taxes spent.

I urge my Republican colleagues to let their own YouCut website as a representative site, with at most, a few hundred thousand followers. They disdain 10 million citizens but revere the few. This is selective representation in its most rawest and worst form.

One of the bills adds 35 pages to what is currently a 45 page page, and is likely to add months to the rulemaking process. Agencies will be tied in knots and leave businesses without the certainty they need.

To pay for this expansion of the federal regulatory process, Republicans would have us eliminate the Election Assistance Commission. I was proud to be one of the authors of the Help America Vote Act, which established the EAC in order to fix the flawed system that led to the electoral debacle of 2000. It passed with a strong bipartisan vote of 357–48. The Commission’s sole purpose is to provide the resources they need to ensure everyone eligible to vote can cast their ballots and have them counted. We cannot risk having our elections determined by “hanging chads.”

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Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to reaffirm a fundamental value of our democracy: elections must be decided by the American people, not the special interests. I come to the floor to defend the right of American citizens to vote in every election. I come to the floor on behalf of clean elections.

Republicans, instead, have brought to the floor legislation that would both diminish the
the previous question is ordered on the
tect the right to vote for all Americans.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice

The right to which I’m referring is

The bill was ordered to be engrossed

vote and cast ballots in elections for Federal
office, including the Uniformed and Overseas
Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant
to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes in
support of his motion.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker
and my colleagues, I offer the final
amendment of the bill which, if adopt-
ed, will not kill the bill or send it back
to committee. Instead, it will proceed to final passage, as amended.
The purpose of my amendment is sim-
ple. It deals with one of my most valu-
able rights as an American citizen.

It is a right which many Americans
who are registered to vote in elections for

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It is a right which many Americans
throughout the course of our history
have shared blood, sweat, and tears to
protect, including our colleague and
my dear friend, Representative JOHN
LEWIS of Georgia. He marched from Selma to Montgomery and endured
bad dogs and fire hoses and tear gas to pre-
serve this sacred right.

The right to which I’m referring is the
right to vote, as enshrined in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution
and further protected in the landmark
Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Help
America Vote Act of 2002 and various
other measures.

Today, nearly five decades after the
Voting Rights Act was signed into law
and nearly 10 years since the Help
America Vote Act, there is still an un-
precedented attack on voting rights in
States across this country.

Yet, the underlying legislation before the
House today would abolish one of the
key provisions of the Help America
Vote Act, the Election Assistance Com-
mision, which was designed to avoid a
repeat of the turmoil surrounding the
2000 Presidential election in Florida,
where problems with absentee and
military ballots played a large role and
led to many of these ballots not being
counted.

If the commission is abolished, it will
undermine America’s faith in the in-
tegrity of our elections. According to
the Brennan Center for Justice, more
than 5 million Americans in 2012 could
be disenfranchised. The Brennan Center
for Justice has estimated that tighten or restrict voting that were put
into effect just this year. The number is
larger than the margin of victory in
two of the last Presidential elections.

Seniors, the disabled, and our Na-
tion’s veterans are now being turned
away from the polls for not having the
photo identification. Popular reforms
like early voting and same-day voter
registration are being rolled back.

Mr. Speaker, this situation should not
be happening in the United States of
America today.

My final amendment, therefore, is
simple. It states that any successor to the Election Assistance Commission

The Clerk read as follows:

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be happening in the United States of
America today.

My final amendment, therefore, is
simple. It states that any successor to the Election Assistance Commission
shall remain responsible for the administration or enforcement of laws relating to the rights of the elderly, the disabled, members of the uniformed services, and overseas citizens to vote and cast ballots in elections for Federal office.

In signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Lyndon Johnson said that “the vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down the walls of injustice and securing that our democracy is open for all Americans to deliberate, to participate, and to engage with each other.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes,” and I yield the balance of my time to my colleague, Representative MARCIA FUDGE of Ohio.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, there is no doubt that a concerted voter suppression effort is under way in this Nation. Abolishing the Election Assistance Commission, an agency charged with ensuring that the vote of every American counts, is just another step in the voter suppression effort and would completely remove oversight of the most important process in our democracy.

Does it make sense to remove oversight at a time when Republican-led legislatures across this Nation are passing laws to obstruct voting? No, it absolutely does not.

In the first three quarters of 2011, 19 new State laws and two executive actions were enacted to limit the ability of American citizens to vote. They would make it significantly harder for more than 5 million eligible voters to cast ballots.

Many of the bills, including one signed into law in my home State of Ohio, include the most drastic voter restrictions since before the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Seniors will be denied their right to the franchise, and it will be more difficult for voters. Minorities and students will face more challenges than ever before. Soldiers honorably serving our country will be left with their absentee ballots uncounted. And let’s not forget the people who died for our right to vote. People were slain to let’s not forget the people who died for our right to vote. People were slain to ensure the vote of every American citizen to cast their vote.

Mr. HARPERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Mississippi is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I am amazed that an argument could be made that in any way the elimination of the EAC would result in disenfranchising any voter. We all believe that every person who should vote, that needs to vote, that’s allowed to vote, that wants to vote should be allowed to do so.

I would like to point out that all of those that are speaking in opposition that were here in 2002 when HAVA passed voted for HAVA. And in HAVA, it contained the provision that created the EAC, which was only supposed to last for 3 years. This is not a complicated lift to do away with this. Does that mean when they voted for this in 2002 that they were trying to disenfranchise voters? Obviously not. In no way is this intended to do anything but clean up an agency that has an average employee salary of $106,000 a year, has been sued for political discrimination, problems with the military, an agency that cannot be corrected but needs to be eliminated.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this motion to recommit and to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.
Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. HALL changed their vote from "aye" to "no." So the motion was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2011

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. R. 527.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Webster). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 477 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the House for the consideration of the bill, H. R. 527.