bill (H.R. 3796) to reauthorize certain programs established by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECODIFICATION OF EXISTING LAWS RELATED TO NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 1950) to enact title 54, United States Code, ''National Park System'', as positive law, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STUDENT VISA REFORM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 3120) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require accreditation of certain educational institutions for purposes of a nonimmigrant student visa, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC ESPIONAGE PENALTY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 6029) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for increased penalties for foreign and economic espionage, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CHILD PROTECTION ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 6063) to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to child pornography and child exploitation offenses.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STOPPING TAX OFFENDERS AND PROSECUTING IDENTITY THEFT ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 4362) to provide effective criminal prosecutions for certain identity thefts, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 6062) to reauthorize the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program through fiscal year 2017.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 2050

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES ALLOCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 1550) to establish programs in the Department of Justice and in the Department of Homeland Security to help States that have high rates of homicide and other violent crime, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to direct the Attorney General to give priority in the allocation of Federal law enforcement personnel and resources to States and local jurisdictions that have a high incidence of homicide or other violent crime.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) is recognized for 35 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, you know, they say that he who pays the piper plays the tune; but unfortunately in today's campaign finance system, it's just like one Johnny One Note, and it's about millionaires and billionaires.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to speak on an important issue. The fact is that our democracy is for sale to the highest bidder. Super PACs, millionaires and billionaires are taking over our election. They're doing what ordinary individuals don't have any capacity to do, and the impact on policymaking and on elections is debilitating. It makes voiceless the very people, Mr. Speaker, who most need a voice in these very troubling times. Our seniors, young people, poor people, working people, women, middle-income families, and small business owners, all of them have just been shut down because of this system. But it's worse now than it was even in the dark days of Watergate.

Now, before coming to Congress, Mr. Speaker, I spent nearly 15 years of my career actually working on issues related to campaign finance reform, election law, voting rights, and government ethics, from my time as a lawyer

to my service as executive director of several nonprofit organizations; and I just can't think of a worse time than this time that we're living in now.

The complexity of balancing important constitutional considerations is really important, but appropriate public policy is also important; and we're just not striking that balance. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if you think about it, in the days following Watergate and the reforms that came thereafter, much of the way that we thought about our campaign finance system and that we thought about the role of money in politics and its relation to policymaking was almost completely circumscribed by pretty much one decision and a couple of others, the Buckley v. Valeo decision and all the cases that followed.

During that time, we could not have imagined a more desolate campaign finance landscape, in fact, than the one we have here today, Mr. Speaker. Here we are facing the Supreme Court's 2010 decision in Citizens United v. The Federal Election Commission. Now, you would think that a lot of people would not really be familiar with any one Supreme Court decision, but in fact all across this country people are outraged by that decision because it has been devastating to the political system.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my congressional district is in the metropolitan Washington area, in the Maryland suburbs, and so we get the benefit in this area of hearing advertising that comes on television from Virginia. Now, Virginia is a battleground State in the Presidential elections, and so that means that we get to experience in Maryland, where we wouldn't ordinarily, all of the election advertising. What we see is ad after ad. And you can't even read the small print on the ad. You don't know who's paying for it. You don't know where it's coming from. You don't know what's behind it because none of that is disclosed. You hear hammering one candidate or hammering another candidate.

And so here you sit, as an ordinary person at home just wanting to get up and take care of your family and make sure that your kids are okay, and this political system has gone amuck and awash in campaign dollars, money coming from all sorts of sources.

But what Citizens United did was it upended the role of the people in the process and took away our voice in the face of unlimited, undisclosed sources of money that did not, in the past, have a place in the campaign finance mix. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this can't continue. We can't allow it to go unchecked. It's just been too debilitating to people at home. It has an impact all across the board on participation, on whether people feel that they have a voice in policymaking, on the candidates who choose to run for elected office or not. I can understand why the American people feel like, you know what, I just want to shut down because the system simply isn't working for me.

So here we are, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad to have this opportunity to say a few words this evening because we're 97 calendar days away from the November 2012 election, but we're 16 legislative days away. That means that Congress—every elected Member of the House and the Senate—has 16 legislative days, 16 days of opportunity to restore sanity to the campaign finance system, to let the people know that we actually care about whether their voice is important, versus the voices of the millionaires and the billionaires who get to set the agenda. Sixteen days. There's a lot that you can do in 16 days—or you can do nothing. That's the choice that we have today.

So there can't be any doubt that in fact we've entered a really unprecedented era in our political system, where super PACs rule. I didn't even know what a super PAC was, most Americans probably didn't, but we sure do now, where one person, one vote has been more appropriate for a history lesson than a description of the electoral process.

How did we get to this framework that allows a free rein to outside organizations, to corporations and their treasuries, to the wealthy, allowing them to raise unlimited amounts of cash to influence American elections? The question really is that we got here because of Citizens United.

So, 2 years ago, the Supreme Court, in a 5–4 ruling, said, you know what, we're going to invalidate everything we've known about the campaign finance system; the Federal Election Campaign Act—which has been rendered pretty much useless; the bipartisan—and I'll repeat that, bipartisan, Mr. Speaker, Campaign Reform Act that was a way that Republicans and Democrats came together for things like disclosure and limiting contributions and circumscribing the role of money in politics, and in a 5–4 decision, the United States Supreme Court threw it all out. In doing so, what the Court did was it struck down long-time prohibitions against corporate use of general treasury funds for independent expenditures and for communicating in elections.

Now, what the American people need to understand, Mr. Speaker, is that means that no matter what corporation you are, maybe you represent insurance companies or the financial sector or the energy sector or any number of sectors that certainly hire a lot of employees, and they have shareholders, but what the Supreme Court said is we're going to reach into the corporate piggy bank and we're going to allow corporations—for the first time ever, really, in our modern-day politics—to spend their money directly on campaigns.

Now, Mr. Speaker, corporations have name-brand identity, so they don't do this willy-nilly. So what do they do? They pass it through an organization that's a shadow organization so we don't know where that money is coming in directly until after the fact. Maybe we see three-point type on a television screen that flashes right by, Mr. Speaker; but the fact is the American public doesn't know.

□ 2100

Now, there had been long-settled cases in this country that said that corporations actually didn't have the ability to spend out of their corporate treasuries when corporations are formed for all kinds of reasons, but not really to spend out of their treasuries like people, real people can and should in the political process. But Citizens United changed all of that.

Then came another case. Now keep in mind, this is just in the last 2 years that our system has been completely upended. Then came another case called speechnow.org v. the Federal Election Commission. And what the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia decided was that contributions to political action committees that only make supposed independent expenditures can't be limited. That's right: unlimited contributions from political action committees. These have come to be known as super PACs.

And why are they so super? Because it's unlimited money, and it's just gushing into the political system. In States all across the country that are the favored battleground States, people in those States, and States like North Carolina and Virginia and Ohio and other States, can actually see that money firsthand because it's just being spent like crazy.

And you know what? With 97 days, Mr. Speaker, left until the election, there will be more.

In fact, I think that the American people will be so sick and tired of the advertising and not knowing who's behind it and the cross-messaging and things that may or may not be true, but you have no way of checking it, the American people are going to be so sick and so outraged that they will continue to demand, as they have been, that we return some sanity to the system.

These court decisions, of course, have said that corporations have equal rights to those of an individual. Can you imagine that your local corporation that does a great job of hiring people in your community is on par with an individual when it comes to making a political contribution? But that is, in effect, the land that we live in right now.

The result has been a stunning influx of money that threatens to erode our democratic process and leads us to even lower voter participation rates. The danger of Citizens United and the cases that followed was actually heralded by Justice Stevens in his dissenting opinion in the case. And he couldn't have been more prescient. Here's what he said. He warned that it would ''undermine the integrity of elected institutions around the Nation.''

Well, you don't have to look very far, Mr. Speaker, to know that the American people understand and believe that our institution is about as low as you can go. I mean, all of us have seen the numbers; and it can't be separated, the way that the American people feel about our elected officials, feel about our elected institutions, feel about the ability of our institutions to respond to their everyday needs. We must know that that is deeply connected to the role, the perverse role of money and politics.

I don't have to tell the American people. Mr. Speaker, you don't have to tell the American people because they know. They know in their gut that it's actually wrong for corporations to reach in their treasuries and spend on campaigns. They know in their gut that it's wrong for a handful of millionaires and billionaires to control the agenda, to control the policy, to control the message. They know it's wrong.

Now, Justice Kennedy, in his majority opinion—and, remember, the majority won in Citizens United—stated that ''independent expenditures simply do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption.''

Clearly, the Justice has not really participated in politics because you don't have to look very far to know that, in fact, the corruption is actually rampant. Now, there is the appearance of corruption, maybe not out right. Nobody's buying or selling a vote. That's not the point.

But the point is that it appears to be just really dirty. Most people look at our politics, they look at the nastiness, and you know what, Mr. Speaker? They just want to wash their hands.

Now, it's possible that this flow of super PACS into elections would allow for independent expenditures; but the fact is there's nothing independent about it. It's not independent when a family member starts a super PAC. It's not independent when a former business partner starts a super PAC. It's not independent when former colleagues and coworkers start a super PAC and then begin spending on elections not very far from the candidate. And the American people understand this.

Now, we can try to pretend that it's something different, but it's not different. The operations of these super PACs provide a stark contrast to the flawed assumptions that the Court made in its ruling.

It's up to us in the Congress, in 16 legislative days, 97 days before this important election, to change that dynamic, to say that for the future, that for going forward, we understand that there is no role for this kind of money in our politics. There's no role for it in our elections.

And so, although these organizations have been supposedly declared independent by the courts, the reality is that they flout the coordination rules that have set up, that supposedly would keep them independent, staffers, family, friends of a particular candidate that the super PAC is supporting.

No great secret. In fact, coming out of the Republican primary elections, it was no secret at all who the millionaires and the billionaires were putting their money behind. And so, while the official campaign and the candidate are allowed to keep their hands clean, and I use that term loosely, clean, these shadow arms of a campaign are used to launch unrelenting attacks against an opponent that they pretend or that are unaffiliated with a particular candidate or an election strategy. It's almost laughable. And in fact I think people at home, when they're not tuning out, in fact they're laughing at us.

Justin Stevens' warning materialized initially in the 2010 election. I know that I recall that because for the first time in our history, corporate and wealthy individuals really began to flood the airwaves. And here we are in 2012, and in that 2-year interim, boy, have they figured out this system, Mr. Speaker. And it's all over the place, flooding the entire electoral process.

In the 2010 election cycle, the spending by corporations and outside groups actually multiplied fourfold from the 2006 election, going to nearly $300 million, astonishing at that time. But you know what? You haven't seen anything yet.

Let's take a look at where we are today. From 2008 to 2010, the average amount spent for a House seat, that is, for a winning candidate, increased 32 percent, from about $2 million to over $2.7 million. But as we know, the worst really was yet to come.

At the start of the 2012 Republican Presidential primaries, we really began to see the creep and the crawl and the impact and the danger of Citizens United. And the results, as I said, were on full display in Iowa. Super PACs there actually outspent candidates 2–1. That's right, the so-called independent expenditure groups outspent the actual candidates. The super PACs had a bigger voice than the actual candidates for the Republican primary.

Republican Presidential hopeful and former Speaker of this House, Newt Gingrich, who, at the time, actually supported the Supreme Court's decision, what did he see? He saw his poll numbers plummet after a barrage attack of about $4 million in negative advertising that was paid for by Restore Our Future, a super PAC supporting former Governor Mitt Romney and run by his former staffers.

The same group then poured nearly $8 million into the Florida primary, with Winning Our Future, a super PAC supporting former Speaker Gingrich spending a $6 million ad buy.

Let's look at the numbers. And I'm sure the American public, Mr. Speaker, must be saying, I can't believe they spend that much money on politics. But surely they do.

And after being targeted by Restore Our Future, former Speaker Gingrich, who, keep in mind, said that he had supported Citizens United, concluded, ''I think,'' referring to the anonymous ads, ''that it debilitates politics.'' He said, ''I think it strengthens millionaires and it weakens middle class candidates.''

I couldn't agree with him more. I could not agree with him more.

□ 2110

Mr. Speaker, the landscape has continued to darken as we march toward the general election with groups that are collecting and planning to spend enormous sums of money.

American Crossroads and Priorities USA reportedly plan to raise and spend $240 million and $100 million respectively on the election. Just recently, National Public Radio reported that Republican super PACs and other outside groups, including Karl Rove, the Koch brothers, and Tom Donohue of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—supposedly independent—plan to spend a combined $1 billion before election day. That's right. The American people need to understand that. $1 billion. Unless we think that this is just about Republicans, Democrats are trying to play, too. It doesn't matter who is playing. It's wrong.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, as of August 1—that's today—705 groups have organized as super PACs and have reported receipts of over $318 million and independent expenditures already of more than $167 million in the 2012 election cycle. That's as of today and here we are. They've got 97 more days to raise more money, to spend more money and to do all of that undercover. I want to put it into stark contrast because just a couple of weeks ago, just 2 weeks ago, the numbers stood at 678. Today, it's 705—who knows what it will be next week?—with receipts of $281 million. Now those receipts are $318 million. Can you do a little math on a multiplier? Because this thing is like rapid fire all across the country in this election cycle. The growth is really out of control.

Citizens United will continue to allow super PACs to permeate the airwaves with distortions and with half-truths, all of it in an attempt to alter the political discourse. This is not about what candidates are saying individually. It's hard to even hear directly from them because we're hearing so much from the super PACs.

I can recall many years ago when I began working on issues of campaign finance reform, it was the Republicans who said, Do you know what, we don't want all that other regulation, but we love disclosure. It turns out that now, in the day when the majority opinion in Citizens United declared that the one thing that wasn't off limits is actually disclosure, Democrats have put forward a disclosure bill called DISCLOSE, introduced by my colleague from Maryland, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN. Many of us have signed onto it. That

disclosure bill was brought up in the Senate. It has been brought up over here in the House. And do you know what? It has gone nowhere. It's the same people who over the last 20 years or more, even since Buckley v. Valeo—certainly more—said we support disclosure. We are robust supporters of disclosure, but not today. Not today, Mr. Speaker. Not today. They don't want to disclose anyone—any individual, any corporation—that's behind these contributions.

Why is that?

It's about politics, Mr. Speaker. It's because maybe it's working in the favor of those who don't want disclosure, who don't want their names out there, who don't want the American public, whether it's in my district or in any other district, to know who they are and to know what's being spent.

Of course, I envision that, like many Members of Congress, you could run the risk as a Member of Congress, to be sure, in speaking out against this nasty, dirty, unlimited money in our politics, and they'll all gang up on you. I'm going to take that risk, Mr. Speaker, because I happen to believe that the American people are sick and tired of it. They want us to do something about it. It's important for us to speak out about that because otherwise we lose everything. We lose participation. We lose people wanting to be involved and engaged in politics and wanting to run for elected office. Those who pay the piper just get to carry on in the process. We can't allow that to happen.

So I believe in disclosure, but I don't think we can end at disclosure. I think we have to go a step farther. We want to promote that kind of transparency, though, in the political process. We want to enhance the public reporting by corporations and unions and all outside groups. I'm happy to let anybody know who is funding my elections. All of us should be pleased to do that because we know that it contributes to the public confidence in us as elected officials. I want to stand by any ad and say I approve of this message. Well, a corporation should stand by and say that it approves of that message, too. I want to know who is behind those ads.

I think we still have 16 legislative days left in this Congress. Bring DISCLOSE to the floor. It's time to do the right thing. Now, I don't control the agenda on the floor, Mr. Speaker. The Republican majority does. They do have the capacity to bring reforms to this floor before we do anything else.

I also think this campaign finance problem requires some other things, too, which is why I've supported the Fair Elections Now Act. It's in the Senate as S. 750, and here in the House it's H.R. 1404. It's modeled after successful programs in the States. There are some people who believe the States are the laboratories for democracy. I share that belief. The States have experimented with ways in which you could fund campaigns to encourage different and more diverse people to run for elective office and with ways that you could clean the dirty money out of the system so that we're not governed by making phone calls and asking people for money to fund our campaigns. I think that the Fair Elections Now Act actually does that, and it's why I've supported it.

What would happen is we would create a voluntary program where congressional candidates could actually qualify for funding to run for competitive elections and campaigns. In exchange, what those participating candidates would do—and what I would do as a candidate—is agree to strict campaign limits and to forgo all private fundraising.

To the American public, Mr. Speaker, what I would say is, If you don't own your elections, then who does?

Right now we know that we don't own our elections. We need that kind of reform. So I believe those interim reforms are really necessary. Yet as an attorney and as somebody who has spent decades working on campaign finance, I think that we have to go farther.

I think that what the Court says is, Congress, you don't have any authority to regulate except by doing disclosure. To me, what that means is that it requires the serious consideration of an amendment to the Constitution. I don't take that lightly. In fact, as an advocate and as a donor long before I came to Congress, I spent the better part of my career shunning attempts by reform groups who would come to me and who wanted me to work on reforms that required us to amend the Constitution. I always said no.

The reason is that I think amending the Constitution is a serious step and requires serious consideration, but here the Supreme Court really hasn't left us any choice. In fact, in a couple of cases from Citizens United, they inasmuch have said so. They said pretty directly, Congress, you don't have the authority to regulate campaigns except to the extent that you do disclosure.

So I have made a proposal to amend the Constitution. I worked with Laurence Tribe, a noted constitutional professor. I worked with colleagues here in the Congress, including the then-House chairman of the Judiciary, JOHN CONYERS in the last Congress. I reintroduced that amendment in this Congress because I think that the time is now. I've always questioned the rationale for the Court's decision, but I've done a reality check because writing this decision requires us to start in the Halls of this Congress. It requires us to continue on to the States with a constitutional amendment. So I've introduced this amendment.

I know that, since then, there have been a number of other constitutional amendments introduced. Just last week, I testified over in the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution where there is the consideration of a constitutional amendment in the Senate. Now is the time.

The other thing that we could do in these legislative days, in addition to bringing the DISCLOSE Act to this floor, is to convene serious hearings among serious people about amending the Constitution so that we can restore sanity to our system and to make sure that our citizens' voices count more than those voices of those just digging into corporate treasuries.

I don't think there is even one way to do this, but I think it's important to put something on the table. I urge the consideration by this House of House Joint Resolution 78, which is an amendment to the Constitution. It goes on the very limited track of saying that Congress, indeed, has the authority that it needs under our Constitution to make the changes that we need to of the campaign finance system in order to make sure that elections are owned by the American people.

□ 2120

It's a really simple thing to do, and let's take it to the legislatures.

Because so many of my colleagues have introduced constitutional amendments also, many of us have actually joined with people all across this country. In fact, millions of people across this country are calling for us to be on the side of democracy, and we've signed on to a declaration for democracy. I'm a proud declarant for democracy. We have 275 cities and towns from New York to Boulder, to Los Angeles, all across the country, big cities, small cities, who have called on a declaration for democracy to pass anti-Citizens United resolutions. We might differ on the subtleties on what this resolution might be, but that's the job of the United States Congress, to hear it out, to hear all sides, to hear from constitutional scholars about how we need to do this, but to do this together for the American people.

Over 1,854 public officials across the country, including 92 Members of the House, 28 senators, and over 2,000 business leaders across the country have said it's time for us to take a stand for democracy. They've signed their name to our declaration for democracy. I would encourage all of our colleagues, before you leave town, sign your name to the declaration for democracy. Show the American people that we stand on their side.

There's no doubt that it's a bold step to amend a document that's only been amended 27 times, and some would question the need to fix the problem with a constitutional amendment. But the Supreme Court pretty much answered that question unequivocally. The Supreme Court has also said, You know what, if Congress wants to do something, then Congress has to act in this way. I don't question that the Supreme Court made this decision. I accept that. It was a 5–4 ruling. That's the way our system works. The other part of our system is that free thinking Members of the United States House of Representatives and of the Senate

come together to do what's right for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, here's what I would say in closing. Millionaires and billionaires are really doing simply what ordinary citizens can't do anymore. They've got all the strings. I can understand, Mr. Speaker, that there are people at home who just really aren't sure where they fit in this system. They're not sure what it means for their elected officials to be responsive to them because they believe that there's somebody out there who has more money and, as a result, more power and, as a result, more influence than they do at home.

I've traveled all across this country, and I have to tell you that it doesn't matter whether you're in Maine or Montana, or you're all the way down through the South of this country and all across this great landscape, people really want to feel that they have some power, that they have some influence. Mr. Speaker, they just don't have that right now.

I just don't even know another way to say that there's a ''for sale'' sign on the doors. I see poor old Uncle Sam here. He's looking mighty sad, Mr. Speaker. I've never seen a more sad looking Uncle Sam. Part of the reason is because he's shackled. He's shackled by $100 million from Priorities USA Action. Uncle Sam is shackled by $300 million from Karl Rove and American Crossroads. Uncle Sam is shackled by $61 million from only 26 billionaires. Uncle Sam is shackled by $39 million from who knows who else. And poor Uncle Sam, sad with his hand out, is shackled by $400 million from the Koch Brothers, shackled by $100 million from Sheldon Adelson.

We could put a lot more up there, Mr. Speaker, but it's time for the United States Congress to remove the shackles of money from Uncle Sam so that we don't continue to sell our democracy. It's time for us to remove the shackles. It's time for us to say to the millionaires and billionaires, You've got to play just like the person who gives $5 or $1. Not a lot of people give money to political campaigns. I can certainly understand that.

Mr. Speaker, I would close by urging us to use the 16 legislative days that are left to restore democracy, to restore sanity, by acting for the American people to restore the campaign finance system.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTS FOR LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) is recognized for 35 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Today, Mr. Speaker, we mark the 20th anniversary of Priests for Life, and I'm pleased to yield 1 minute to my colleague, JEAN SCHMIDT, of Ohio.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you for giving me 1 minute.

I do want to celebrate the 20th anniversary, and I want to celebrate three pro-life advocates in my own hometown. The first is Archbishop Dennis Schnurr, who has been unequivocally in the forefront of this movement. I have stood with Archbishop Schnurr in front of Planned Parenthood of Greater Cincinnati praying the rosary. I have walked with him in the Cross the Bridge for Life. I've watched him get on a bus with schoolchildren and come up here to Washington for the March for Life. Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Binzer is another pro-life advocate who has walked the walk and talked the talk. And most importantly, my own parish priest, Father Michael Cordier, who again has come up here to Washington with a group of students from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Andrew to March for Life, but most importantly in his own personal life has witnessed his brother and his sister-in-law with a very challenged girl, Sophia Cordier, who not only exemplified what the meaning of life is, but as she passed into her eternal reward earlier this year, has become an emblematic portion of the right-to-life movement in greater Cincinnati.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 3 minutes to Mr. WALBERG of Michigan.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady. I thank you for commanding this time to call attention to people, heroes of life like Father Frank Pavone.

Congressman RON PAUL, one of our colleagues, shared a poem with me on the floor one day. It caught my attention. It's called ''The Anvil'':

> Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith door, and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
> Looking in, I saw upon the floor old hammers, worn with beating years of time.
> 'How many anvils have you had,' said I, 'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
> 'Just one,' said he, and then with twinkling eye, 'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'
> And so, thought I, the anvil called the master's Word, for ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
> Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard, The anvil is unharmed, and the hammers gone.

Father Pavone and others who command the interest in life understand the power of truth, the truth that comes with the Creator, a Creator who has designed life itself for good and for the best interests of all.

In our great document, the Declaration of Independence, it said:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable, God given rights, among them, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

□ 2130

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would just refer back to the truth. Tonight, as we think about life and honor and organizations like Priests for Life and others who understand the truth that are contained in words like this, ''Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward''; of the prophet Jeremiah, of whom it was said, ''Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart,'' that's life before even the womb was open.

And then that beautiful psalm, Psalm 139, says:

> For You formed my inward parts. You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret and skillfully wrought in the depths of the Earth. Your eyes have seen my unformed substance. And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.

Father Frank, we thank you for your work and the Priests for Life. We thank all of those who stand for life.

Mr. Speaker, I thank this body for the opportunity to speak for the principle that God created life for a purpose, and we must adore it and continue it on.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to Representative CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey, the leading voice for the pro-life cause and for the unborn across the United States.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my good friend for yielding and thank her for calling this very important Special Order.

For two decades, I, along with countless others, have been moved, inspired, and motivated to defend the weakest and most vulnerable among us by the remarkable life and pro-life witness of Father Frank Pavone. Ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood by Cardinal John O'Connor in 1988, Father Pavone celebrates 20 years since the founding of Priests for Life, the organization he so effectively leads.

A prolific writer and gifted speaker, Father Pavone takes the gospel message of love, forgiveness, truth, and reconciliation both to friendly audiences who draw encouragement from his messages and to those—especially post-abortive women—who suffer and are in deep pain.

I have heard Father Pavone challenge priests to more robustly defend the sanctity of life, especially in their homilies. In promoting the gospel of life, he insists no venue should be forsaken or ignored. Whether it be from the pulpit or in the public square, Father Pavone couldn't be more clear: Speak out with candor, clarity and