

know Sarah Palin was right, and we need to stand up to them.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3189, WATER RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4015, THE SGR REPEAL AND MEDICARE PROVIDER PAYMENT MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2014; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 17, 2014, THROUGH MARCH 21, 2014.

Mr. BURGESS (during the Special Order of Mr. GOHMERT), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-379) on the resolution (H. Res. 515) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3189) to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use agreement on the transfer, relinquishment, or other impairment of any water right to the United States by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4015) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and improve Medicare payments for physicians and other professionals, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from March 17, 2014, through March 21, 2014, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MONEY IN POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Chamber this evening. I want to talk about the topic of money in politics, which is something I think Americans across the country are increasingly anxious about because it really jeopardizes the voice they should have in their politics, in their democracy in their own government.

Yesterday, there was a special election in Florida's 13th Congressional District, and the results of that election will get commented on at length in the coming days. People will try to make forecasts about what it means for the 2014 election cycle. Generally,

they will analyze it. They will look at the data and they will prognosticate as to what the implications of it are going forward.

A lot of that commentary will miss what I think is the most sinister aspect of the election yesterday that was held in Florida, and that is the tremendous amount of money, the tremendous amount of money that poured into that election, not from ordinary, everyday citizens, not from the people who really have a stake in the outcome. They were the ones asked to go to the polls, but the money that poured in there that bought advertisements, to the tune of about \$12.7 million, almost \$13 million spent on that campaign, about 30 percent of it was donated to the candidates themselves. So 30 percent of that \$13 million was donated to the candidates themselves. The rest of the money came from outside sources—party committees, super PACs, anonymous donors, the ones who have been flooding the airwaves in the last couple of election cycles with negative advertising. That is where the great majority of the money that came into that special election yesterday was sourced, and that, I think, is a harbinger of things to come.

If you look back at the 2010 cycle, you look at the 2012 election cycle, both at the congressional level and at the Presidential level, tremendous amounts of money pouring into campaigns and into elections, much of it coming from sources that don't identify themselves, secret money, these big super PACs who weigh in and try to determine the outcome of elections.

Where does that leave the everyday citizen? Where does that leave the person out there who is sitting at their kitchen table, who is watching their television and is seeing all of these negative TV commercials pouring in? Where does that leave them in terms of their feeling about whether they have a voice in the process?

I talk to my constituents, I listen to the way they feel about the current system of funding campaigns, and there is an increasing sense of disillusionment out there, deep cynicism that election outcomes are determined by Big Money and special interests and that the voices and opinions and priorities and concerns of everyday citizens are being cast aside. That is the legacy of the influence of Big Money and special interests on our politics today.

So yesterday's election in the 13th District of Florida put a fine point on it. It demonstrated how much money can go into one special election. It was historic, \$13 million being spent. More importantly, it is a lesson as to what we are looking at down the road. This idea that if you have got a big wallet you get an extra voice in our democracy, that somehow your opinion and your ideas count more because of the size of your wallet and your ability to throw millions of dollars into campaigns, well, that is not what a democracy is about; that is plutocracy. That

is a government and a system that is dominated by Big Money and special interests and leaves the voices of everyday citizens behind so that they start asking themselves: Does my voice matter? Can I have an impact? Do my ideas count? If I am only able to write a check for \$25 to a candidate who I think will do the right thing for me, can that \$25 check compete against a \$1 million check that some big donor can write to fund a Super PAC?

This is why people across the country, it is not the only reason, but it is one of the main reasons why people across the country are so disaffected with Washington and Congress and government, because they feel like their voice is being drowned out by the big-moneyed interests out there.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do something about this because if we are going to restore the confidence and trust of Americans across this country, they need to believe again that their voice matters. They need to believe that when they are trying to understand the issues in an election and follow the debate and become informed, that that information will come to them from responsible sources, not from these shadowy hidden secret donors out there that have found a way to dominate the airwaves.

So that special election yesterday I think was a warning to us all that this trend towards Big Money and special interests weighing in to what ought to be a democratic process that is owned and invested in by everyday citizens, that that trend is continuing and it is worsening.

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At the end of that path lies deep, deep cynicism on the part of the American people. You can feel it; you can almost touch it when you go out into your district and you talk to your constituents who are angry and frustrated and want to see this place respond to their concerns and to their needs.

So what can we do about this? I said a moment ago that we have got to do something soon; we have to address this cynicism that people are feeling, or they are not going to trust us at all. They are not going to believe that we can deliver for them in the people's House.

This is the House of Representatives. It has the name the "people's House." We run every 2 years. We are as close to the people as elected representatives can be. They want to see that we are listening to them.

Right now—I said this last week—in some ways, when it comes to the relevance of this body to the average American out there, we are hanging on by a thread.

We are hanging on by a thread because, increasingly, they think that we answer to Big Money and special interests, and we stop listening to the average person out there.

So we need to do something about this. We need to fix this. We need to