since 1993 and as Acting United States Trade Representative for the last 9 months. I am confident she will make an excellent United States Trade Representative. I urge the Congress to take prompt and favorable action on this legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *January 7, 1997.*

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. THURMAN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

TIME TO SOLVE THE NATION'S PROBLEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am, in fact, delighted to be the first person to give special orders, and obviously the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER] was scheduled to be, but he is presiding in the chair.

I had the great fortune as a freshman Member of the 104th Congress to be the first to deliver a 1-minute speech on this floor. I return to Congress very proud that the members of the 16th District have chosen to ask me to serve them once again in this very high honor in the U.S. Congress.

We had a lot of debate today, a lot of acrimony, a lot of discussion about the future of this Congress and its Speaker. We have concluded that debate with reelecting NEWT GINGRICH, the gentleman from Georgia, as Speaker.

I implore Members on all sides of the aisle, both sides of the aisle, that it is now time to come together, in the spirit of this country, in the pride of this Nation, to start solving our Nation's problems, to start solving our Nation's ills, to focus on things that will make people's lives better rather than focusing on things that will destroy people's individual lives. This Chamber and this Government is bigger than this Member, it is bigger than the Speaker, it is bigger than anybody else's ego. It is about helping Americans help themselves. It is about instilling in our children a knowledge and a wisdom that through hard work, you can overcome any adversity.

But if this Chamber operates much like it did in the 104th Congress, with bitterness and rancor and personal animosity, we will not set an example for the future leaders of this Nation. We will not set an example for children to look up to this body and say, ''I, too, would like to be a leader in the Congress. I, too, would like to serve my community.'' We will denigrate into an embarrassment.

So I ask my fellow Members, from all walks of life, from all localities, to think first about what is good for America, not what is good for the Republican Party or the Democratic Party, what is good for this Nation. A balanced budget, saving our Nation from fiscal crisis. The education of our children, to prepare them for the 21st century, to prepare them with skills that will give them jobs that will allow them to provide for themselves and their families.

To reach beyond partisanship, in a spirit of cooperation, to fight together against crime that threatens every American, crime in our schools, violence against our teachers, crimes in our malls and in our communities that frighten our citizens, regardless whether they be seniors or young adults. To work together on Medicare fraud and abuse, and save our Medicare Program so that we will have a system that ensures that every American will receive Medicare when they grow to the day to need it.

Let us also cause special focus on the illnesses that hurt our American citizens: AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, cancer, leukemia, tuberculosis, to name but a few. Sudden infant death syndrome, to name another. If we would use our energies to focus our resources through the National Institutes of Health to try and find cures for these diseases, we will do more for humanity in this Chamber, we will do more for the future of this world and this Nation than any 5-minute speech or any special order or any rancor or debate.

This Nation has given 435 individuals the chance to represent their communities. I know that the Members are up to the task of facing that challenge. I know that each Member, regardless of their party, deeply loves this Nation.

But I also know that if we proceed in the 105th as we did in the 104th with gridlock, acrimony, personal attack, and negativity, that none of the successes will be possible. We will be mired in failure, mired in debate that is nonproductive. So I ask in this first day of the new Congress that we join together to make every citizen proud of the conduct of each individual Member and all Members of this House; that the Democrats join me in working with Speaker GINGRICH, in assuring that the Speakership is respected, that the institution of governance of the House of Representatives is brought to the highest standard, and that we work together for all of the best interests of this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Oregon [Ms. FURSE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. FURSE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

□ 1800

ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: A HISTORIC DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, we have heard several allusions throughout the day of the nature of the historic event in which we participated, the election of the Speaker of the House for the 105th session. That is more than rhetoric, Mr. Speaker.

Have Members ever heard of the name of Jonathan Dayton? Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey was elected Speaker of the House in the fifth session in 1797. So when we say today's event was historical, we really mean it. It is a repetition of the preservation of our liberties that emanated from the first and second terms of George Washington and the Fifth Congress, which marked his exit from public service, and has run down to today, when we repeated the process in the preservation of those same liberties which they fought so hard to create for us in the first place.

So the message for the day for our constituents is that the election of the Speaker today is a purely political process. When we say ''political process,'' that does not demean it, because many in the world today will say, he is a politician, or he is involved in politics, denoting the worst in humanity. But the preservation of our liberties to which I have made reference, beginning with the First Congress and then reendorsed in the Fifth Congress and here today in the 105th, became part and parcel of our history because of the political process it involves.

So we had the spectacle today of the minority Democrats nominating their favorite son while the Republicans chose to nominate the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. GINGRICH. What happened? Through the political process, GINGRICH has been elected Speaker of the House. We should honor that. It is the duty and right of the majority to select one of its own to lead the agenda for the ensuing Congress, and we have done so. Now it is time to put everything aside and proceed with that very same agenda.

I also want to comment on some other part of the proceedings here today that was very important but very likely accepted by the general public, because we have not made it clear. When we established the rules of the House, and the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER, alluded to it in his prefatory remarks during the debate on the rules, we were reendorsing, reconfirming here today, historically what the 104th Congress under the majority Republicans was able to fashion; and the 104th Congress, one step of which, in which I was personally involved and of which I am very proud, is the elimination of proxy voting in committee.

When I came to the Congress, I had a matter that I wanted to put in front of the Committee on the Judiciary having to do with the death penalty for assassination of the President, God forbid that that should ever occur, and some other features. On the first time that I proposed this to the Committee on the Judiciary, I was outvoted 30 to 15. Fifteen Republicans voted with me, two Democrats voted on the other side. How could I lose 30 to 15? By the use of the chairman at that time of the proxy vote, which he had in hand, and voted his colleagues on the committee no, no, no, against my proposition.

We have eliminated that forever. The Committee on Rules was bright enough to be able to do so. We reendorsed it today.

I yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER].

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend for his very fine statement. I would say that we did a survey of committee chairmen and others in leadership positions on the impact of proxy voting, to see whether or not they liked it. It has made it, in fact, more difficult, but in trying to get the Congress to comply with the laws that other Americans have to comply with, showing up for work seems to be sort of a natural. We do have that.

But committee chairmen, in the survey that we had that was sent back, overwhelmingly supported the idea of maintaining the elimination of proxy voting. My friend was entirely right on that statement. I thank him for his compliment.

Mr. GEKAS. I thank the gentleman. This is a historic day. Speaker Jonathan Dayton in 1797, the Speaker of the House duly elected by a political process then in the Fifth Congress, would be proud of us if he were here today. We have adopted rules, put our election of committee people into action, and now we are prepared for the work of the people and the agenda of the 105th Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we are about to begin the work of the people's business and all is not right in the House of the people. All is not right with the person who is supposed to lead the 105th Congress to do the business of the people. There is a cloud hanging over the chair of the Speaker, a cloud that has never existed in the history of this Chamber of the people, a chamber that is constitutionally charged to carry out the sacred business of representative democracy.

And yet, we are asked to carry on the people's business like nothing happened, like we haven't swept anything under the rug, like the faint odor of a political deal is not seeping into this hallowed Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of the time when a fellow Texan, Jim Wright sat up there under similar circumstances. There was a time when a cloud hung over his head, when the position of the Speaker, the chair of the third highest elected representative of the people was called into question.

And, Speaker Jim Wright did the right thing. Speaker Wright did what was good for the House of Representatives and the Nation. He cleared the skies over the speaker's chair. He took himself out of the way of interrupting the legislative course that we now are charged with setting. He didn't wait for the Ethics Committee to find a stain on the Speaker's chair. He knew in his conscience what was best for the country and so does every Member in this body.

Do we really want to begin the 105th Congress with the first mark on the Speaker's chair? I think not and I'm sure all right thinking Members feel the same. Jim Wright knew how to bow out with a sense of class and what a true ''higher ethical standard'' for the Speaker really is.

Do we really want to return to the ''in your face'' style of politics on the very first day of this new Congress? Do we really want to begin a new Congress waiting to see what the Speaker's fate is for his admitted ethical transgressions? Do we really want to be lead by someone who is destined to be disciplined by the 105th Congress?

I respectfully submit that the example of former Speaker Jim Wright is one that needs to be the model for this righteous body. Anything less is an insult to the dignity and the integrity of the office of Speaker.

Mr. Wright acted on behalf of his country and stepped aside, Mr. GINGRICH also knows the right thing to do.

LET THE PUBLIC DECIDE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Let the Public Decide Campaign Finance Reform Act. Two developments over the last year have demonstrated that for all practical purposes there are no longer any campaign finance rules in this country. One development is the series of court decisions which have resulted in special interest groups being able to get around virtually all limits of existing campaign finance law. They are allowed to do so by engaging in so called independent expenditures or by issuing promotion schemes which maintain the fiction that such groups are not involved in individual campaigns. The second development is the recent series of news stories involving large contributions of so-called soft money to both political parties. The result is that wealthy people and groups can skirt the intention of Congress to limit the amount of influence that wealthy individuals or organizations can have on the political process.

Merely tinkering with existing campaign laws will have no real effect. It will do no good for instance, to pass feel good legislation which would cut the $5,000 limit on contributions by political action committees if companies who finance those political action committees can make indirect expenditures 20 or 30 times as large through other means.

For me, the last election was the last straw on campaign finance. I honestly believe that this problem can only be addressed with a flat out elimination of all private money in general elections. That will eliminate the soft money problem and many of the other spectacles we have seen recently. The legislation I am pushing contains a congressional finding that the existing system has so corrupted public confidence in its own form of government that Congress must take major steps for campaign finance which so far have been blocked by the courts. We are doing so because some constitutional scholars suggest that we may be able to move the Supreme Court to change its mind if Congress makes such a finding. But, if the Supreme Court continues to block the kind of reforms I have in my bill, the bill provides for an immediate consideration by the Congress of a constitutional amendment which would give Congress the authority it needs to regulate campaign spending.

The only way to fundamentally change the current system is to take out all private money from financing general elections. I make no apology for reaching that conclusion. In a democracy, elections are not private events; they are the most public events that occur in our national life. Elections belong to the people and they should be financed that way, not by the well-heeled and well-connected.

The Let the Public Decide Campaign Reform Act would:

Forbid all private funding in general elections. But, the public must understand that political campaign cannot be financed through immaculate conception. Elections would be financed by voluntary contributions from individuals to a Grass Roots Good Citizenship Fund. To raise the necessary funding, the Federal Election Commission would be required to conduct a major national television advertising campaign informing the public of the opportunity to eliminate the influence of interest groups on elections by making voluntary contributions to that fund. Those voluntary contributions would be supplemented by a one-tenth of 1 percent to be paid by all corporations with profits above $10 million.

Eliminate the ''soft money'' loophole, which allows huge amounts of money from wealthy individuals and corporations to go to political parties and benefit congressional candidates.

Establish spending limits on how much congressional candidates can spend, with some flexibility because of the different costs to run for office in different parts of the country.

Allow the American public to determine the amount of money each candidate receives in the general election by basing the amount on the electoral support that the candidate or his preceding party nominees received in that district over the last 5 elections. It would also allow third-party and independent candidates to receive public funding based on their demonstrated public support.

Allow private money to be contributed only to primary elections based on the principle that each political party has its own basic constituencies, and that the parties themselves have a role in deciding how their own nominees are chosen;

Distinguish in primary elections between broad-based ''little people'' PAC's and ''High Roller'' PAC's, and limit contributions from ''High Roller'' PAC's.

Under my bill, the American people themselves would actually be able to decide how much will be spent on congressional campaigns and how much each candidate will receive. Democracy cannot function if American