

There is even a bill proposing a constitutional amendment to put limits on campaign spending.

Clearly, the membership of this House is ready to tackle the issue of campaign finance reform and get a bill passed by July 4, the deadline set by the President. It is my sincere hope, Mr. Speaker, that the leadership, the Republican leadership, are ready to meet the President's challenge because I think it is clearly one of the most important issues facing this Congress this session.

HOUSING HOPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized during morning hour debates for 1 minute.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, Housing Hope is an organization founded in 1987 by a consortium of churches concerned about homelessness. From its humble beginnings 10 years ago, it has now become a leader in providing affordable housing to homeless families in Everett, WA, in my district.

Working cooperatively with churches, labor unions, banks, corporations, and government agencies, Housing Hope has launched a \$3.2 million housing development to provide transitional shelter for the homeless, child care facilities, and permanent homes for low-income families. This public-private partnership is a model for the rest of the Nation.

In 1995, for their volunteer efforts on Housing Hope, I nominated members of a union in my district for an award. I am gratified that the President saw the vision Housing Hope is building and presented the union with a Presidential Point-of-Light Award.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking.

Last week in this very Chamber, the President called for Congress to pass campaign finance reform by July 4. The President and, most importantly, the American people are committed to meeting that deadline. That is only 143 days away. History shows us we have the support to meet that deadline if the people in charge of the schedule do not drop the ball.

In the 103d, the 102d, and the 101st Congresses, the Democrats were able to corral enough votes in both Chambers to pass legislation to fix the system. A Presidential veto stopped us once, a veto threat stopped us another time and a Republican filibuster in the Senate stopped it a third time.

The burden now rests with the current Republican leadership to keep

campaign finance reform on track. All of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, have a golden opportunity to at long last correct problems that have plagued this system for far too long. Let us not lose it because of stalling tactics or partisan political games.

The American people are looking for results. Their confidence in our election system depends on it. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking.

COMMENDING MILLER WILLIAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commend a distinguished Arkansas writer and teacher, Miller Williams, who recently composed a poem for President Clinton's reinauguration ceremony.

Mr. Williams, a professor of literature at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville is the author of more than 20 outstanding books of scholarship and poetry. I can add little to the national chorus of praise his colleagues, students, and readers have already offered. His peers have recognized his talent with such prestigious awards as the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Prix de Rome.

In composing a poem for President Clinton's inauguration, Mr. Williams joined the select company of two other great American poets: Fellow Arkansan Maya Angelou and the New England poet Robert Frost.

In his inaugural poem, "Of History and Hope," Mr. Williams celebrates the American tradition of memorializing our past through stories and songs. I congratulate him for his own lyrical and provocative contributions to our Nation's understanding.

I also wanted to say that the people of Arkansas are proud of this contribution. But I also commend him for his contributions to our youth. Mr. Williams has spent nearly 30 years helping students to examine themselves and the history they will inherit. As he suggests in his poem, we cannot control the future. We can only hope to equip the next generations with resources that they will need to make the right decisions. For helping us in this endeavor I offer my thanks and gratitude to Mr. Williams.

MORE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, last week the President of the United States came to this Chamber, and he challenged us to give him a comprehensive campaign reform bill by July 4 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I responded the next day by introducing the campaign finance reform bill, H.R. 600. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you are committed to campaign finance reform, as your handshake with the President a year ago would lead us to believe, then I would urge you to take up this call and this bill and bring it to the House floor.

Daily we are greeted with headlines in newspapers with stories about questionable campaign practices. Regularly we are confronted by our constituents asking for sanity in the election process.

Always we are faced with the burden of our own campaign needs and how to meet them in a way that does not destroy the faith in the political process. We need campaign finance reform, and we need it now.

H.R. 600 is one of the bills introduced in this House. It embodies comprehensive reform, and it meets the principles of reform that we can all embrace. First it is fair. Real reform does not favor one party over another or one candidate over another.

Second, it reduces the influence of special interests. Political action limits, limits on large donors and the elimination of soft money can accomplish this.

Third, it must be a level playing field. That is, campaigns are made to be competitive by enhancing spending limits.

Fourth, there must be access to this body and to this system by nontraditional candidates. Women and minority candidates should be able to run as easily as anyone else.

Mr. Speaker, many of us wrote you a letter requesting action on campaign finance reform within the first 100 days of this session. The President would like to sign the bill on July 4.

You can make it happen if you are committed to reform. I am. The question is, are you? What day will we vote on campaign reform? The Nation is waiting for your answer.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IN 105TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues who preceded me in the well have pointed out, one of most important items on the agenda of this Congress is campaign finance reform. Until we are able to reform this system, we will not regain the confidence of the American people that there is a level playing field in the Congress of the United States for the average American and the special interests.

Day after day the press reports to us of special accommodations that are given to those with the most money invested in campaigns of Members of