

system, which of course includes the PAC's and the soft money and the independent expenditures.

Just for the record, the Republicans did put forth a campaign finance reform bill during the last Congress, but that bill received a paltry 162 votes in a House comprised of 230 Republicans. I think that was an indication of just how little the Republican leadership wanted to change the campaign finance system.

The record I think is clear that the Democrats have put up serious legislation to deal with this issue and the Republicans have not. The Democrats in this House have known for years that the current system is flawed and is too easily abused, and basically what we will do, with procedural motions or however it has to be done in this Congress, is that we will continue to fight for reform in spite of whatever delays and inaction that the Republicans put forward. Over and over again in the next few weeks and the next few months until the Republican leadership agrees to bring campaign finance reform to the floor, you will see the Democrats continue out there calling for reform, calling for action.

I know there are several bills out there. I know that my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN], and my Republican colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. WAMP], both mentioned their efforts on a bipartisan basis. Clearly there is an effort here amongst the rank and file, I think on the Republican side, to try to come together on some kind of bipartisan bill that we can all agree on, but so far the Republican leadership has not allowed this bill or any kind of campaign finance reform to come to the floor, and I think that they have the blame at this point for not pushing on the issue.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS

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

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I hope that I will lay less blame on the opposition than we heard from the previous speaker on the particular issue that he was addressing, because I want to talk about something that affects all of us and on which we can all participate to bring a good government result.

When I came to the Congress in 1983, I learned very quickly that this Congress, the Congress of the United States, then and now, is very faulty in meeting its budgetary deadlines. September 30 comes and the next fiscal year begins the next day, on October 1. Yet, on almost every occasion since I came to Congress, we have failed to meet that deadline. What does that result?

One thing that happens almost universally is that we enter into a period

of temporary appropriations to keep the Government going pending the final budgetary result, and so those continuing resolutions, the temporary funding, takes us to our next step, another deadline, and then we fail to meet that one and we go into more temporary funding and the full budget is put off sometimes for a period of a year.

That is bad fiscal management under laws which we, the Congress, have passed to govern ourselves in the business of good government. What happened then is that we actually shut down the Government eight times since I have been a Member of Congress. I do not know how many times before that. The Government actually shut down about eight times.

Being desperate to try to bring about an end to this shutdown business, I went before the Democrat-controlled Rules Committee of that era, in 1989 or 1990, and offered a piece of legislation which would end Government shutdowns forever. How does it work? If on September 30, the end of the fiscal year, we have learned that we have not passed a budget timely and before the deadline that would come midnight that day, my bill would call for an instant replay the next day of last year's budget, thus averting the Government shutdown, continuing the effect of Government throughout a period, never depriving the Congress from getting down to business and passing a new budget, but in the meantime we would have an ongoing budget, albeit at last year's figures, until such time as the budget negotiations can produce a final budget.

Well, the Democrat-controlled Committee on Rules slapped me down time after time after time, from 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994. Finally in 1995 I felt that we were going to have a great opportunity here because now the Republicans on the Committee on Rules would be controlling the agenda. So I went before the Republican-controlled Rules Committee for the purpose of introducing my legislation and getting approval for full floor debate. And what happened? I was knocked down by my fellow Republicans in this endeavor.

The reason that has been advanced is that adoption of my legislation would rob the appropriators of the leverage that they see at their disposal of bringing about a certain kind of result and pressure to suit the appropriations process, which is so murky to me that it does not survive close scrutiny. So I am imploring my colleagues to take a fresh look at the legislation which I have offered.

By the way, the Senate, the other body, has adopted in principle the idea behind my bill and they invited me over to a press conference, did those Senators who prefer this kind of legislation, and we had a joint result of an acceptance in principle of the prevent shutdown legislation. They are going to try to include it in the supplemental

appropriations which are forthcoming in the next month or so.

On our side, on the House side, Congressman ISTOOK and Congressman MCINTOSH recently issued a letter in which they support the principle which I have outlined in my legislation. We do not have to stick with the percentages of money figures that we are talking about, but the principle of preventing Government shutdown by a transition piece of legislation that would carry us into a new fiscal year without any shutdown of Government, still leaving the Congress the opportunity to present and pass a new budget.

The other encouragement that I have received is from individual Members of the House and of the Senate who have sought ways and means to try to get this before the Congress of the United States, both in the House and the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, there are many off-beltway groups who deal with the Government that also support my legislation.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in echoing really what some of my other colleagues have gotten up today to talk about on both sides of the aisle, calling for sweeping campaign finance reform.

We live in the greatest representative democracy in the world, Mr. Speaker. But the massive amount of money that has found its way into our political system threatens to eclipse one of democracy's fundamental principles that everyone's vote counts the same.

In the 1996 elections over \$2 billion was spent in our political election system. More than \$2 million of that was soft money. Some individuals contributed \$2 million or more to one political party or another.

Today, Mr. Speaker, elections are financed by a small minority of Americans. Less than one-half of 1 percent of the electorate gives contributions in excess of \$200. Over the past 30 years less than 20 percent of the electorate has contributed to elections.

Americans feel alienated from our political process, and they are demanding that we take action. Everyone involved in this system must be a part of the solution, both Democrats and Republicans. We must limit PAC contributions, restrict the use of soft money and temper the influence of independent expenditures by outside advocacy groups. In addition, we must give the Federal Election Commission real teeth to investigate, report, and discipline candidates who break the rules.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the public airwaves belong to the people. An exponential increase in the cost of television advertising is preventing candidates from communicating with voters. The rise of the digital age presents