

which have been allowed to enter our Nation's mainstream. We ask that you undertake a rigorous campaign to establish yourself as a leader who will not tolerate anti-immigrant and anti-affirmative action attitudes.

We also ask for our Government's support for a Latino U.S.A. summit in Washington, D.C. to discuss the issues which concern our families in this country. We also want full participation in the President's Initiative on Race. We are sure that the items which we have outlined can be addressed through communication and mutual respect.

Signed, Familias Latinas en los Estados Unidos.

Mr. Speaker, may I add that a letter has gone from members of the Hispanic Caucus in the House of Representatives to the President asking him to receive the enclosed letter, and with it there will be over 30,000 signatures.

TRIBUTE TO FLORIDA SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCHES

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, many people come to the floor to complain about things or complain about how things are done. But this morning, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to share a success story with my colleagues about the outstanding efforts of a dedicated group in my home State of Florida. I am talking about those involved with the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches.

The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Inc., is celebrating 40 years of making a difference in the lives of our State and of our young people. Over 30,000 boys and girls have benefited from the guidance and care provided by this organization over the past four decades.

Although created to serve Florida's 67 counties, the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches had its genesis in Texas, the result of a trip by two Florida sheriffs in 1955. Sheriff Don McLeod of my home county, Marion County, and Sheriff Ed Blackburn, Jr., of Hillsborough County were in Texas to pick up two fugitives from Florida. While talking with a local deputy, they heard about a nearby camp for needy and neglected boys. They learned that a former wrestler had started the camp with four boys salvaged from the local slums and how this caring individual turned their lives around by providing a home, support, and discipline.

The next day they took charge of their prisoners for the drive back to Florida. One was a young man 18 years old and badly injured, and the other a 17-year-old girl who was 5 months pregnant, two young people who, without proper guidance, got into big, big trouble. The two sheriffs decided that if a former wrestler could make a difference, then certainly law officers working together could repair damaged lives. After all, they knew full well that the youthful victims of neglect, abuse, and indifference too often take to crime.

Sheriffs McLeod and Blackburn presented their idea to the Florida Sheriffs Association. Later that year the Association persuaded the Elks Club of

Suwanee County and a local businessman to donate 140 acres on the banks of the Suwanee River for the ranch. With loans from area banks and contributions to the Association, they began building the Florida Sheriffs Boys Ranch.

Financial contributions, donations of materials, and volunteers helped build the first camp, and four boys moved into the facility in January 1959. Thirteen years later, the Sheriffs opened a camp for girls. And in 1976, a coed facility was built to reunite siblings.

I would like to take note of the support provided by such individuals as Sheriff John P. Hall, Sr., who served as the first treasurer of the Youth Ranches and was sheriff of Clay County, in my congressional district, for a record 36 years. I also commend his children, J.P. Hall, Jr., and Dena Mae Lemen, for continuing their devoted services to the Youth Ranches. These folks are also in my congressional districts.

Mr. Speaker, today there are six camps operated by the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches. The goal of these ranches is quite simple: to prevent juvenile delinquency and develop lawful, productive citizens through a broad range of family centered services. They use the basics, tried and true traditional values, to mend broken spirits and lives.

The success of this program is found in the simple values embraced by most Americans today, basic family values that, when abandoned, lead to anguish and despair. By building character and instilling the concept of service and self-sacrifice, these young people learn the importance of community. Add in study, faith and hard work, and we have the ingredients for a future generation of outstanding citizens.

The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches are a product of a vision for building a better future for Florida's children, a vision which has flourished with the generous support of Florida's citizens.

It is easy, Mr. Speaker, to look to the Government to solve the problems within our society. However, if we want results, we need to look to ourselves and communities for these solutions. There are many examples of this truth, and I commend the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches for making the difference in the lives of 30,000 troubled Florida youths. Thank you for 40 years of service to Florida and Florida's youth.

I also commend J.P. Hall, Jr., and Dena Mae Lemen for coming up here and sharing this 40-year anniversary here in Congress, and I wish them another 40 years or more of success.

TIME FOR ACTION ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, each day that this Congress has been in action, and not very complete action since we began in September, there have been Members of this House who

have come to the floor and have raised the issue of campaign finance, because we realize that unless the House acts within the next month on the issue of campaign finance, that there may be more headlines of people complaining about campaign finance but absolutely nothing will be done to remedy the problems before the 1998 elections. The time for action is now.

As I was home in Austin, TX, this weekend visiting with people, I was reminded again of how much Americans are concerned with the way that their government is operating and with the fact that the cost of these campaigns just seems to go up geometrically with each election. And I came across a book down there in Austin that would suggest that even our children can understand what is at stake with reference to this race for campaign dollars. It is called "The Money Tree" by Sarah Stewart.

It is a book about gardening really, a woman named Ms. McGillicuddy who is quite a gardener, and one day a strange new tree begins to form in her garden. She is not really sure what it is. But before she knows it, it is doing something that maybe all of us have dreamed about at one time or another. The leaves are coming out as long, green hundred-dollar bills.

At first she is pretty happy about the idea that she has got a money tree growing in her yard. She continues to cultivate it, along with doing her other work. But soon she finds that she has many new friends, and it seems like everyone in the area is coming to look at the money tree and to borrow a ladder and interfere with all of her normal work as a gardener, a housekeeper, and someone who takes care of the animals and does other things in her area. She cannot get any of her ordinary work done because people are over there trying to grab those hundred-dollar bills off her money tree.

Finally, after a long time, she decides that maybe she is better off without the money tree, and she chops it down and converts it into firewood. This is a story our children might understand, and a story that people who observe their Congress might also understand. We have Members of Congress and any serious candidate for Congress out trying to find the money tree just about every day of the year, every year, year in, year out.

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Some of those who have experience with gardening and cultivating on a larger scale, like the tobacco companies in this country, seem to have mastered the money tree and its influence over Members of Congress pretty well. They are the top soft money contributors of dollars that are largely unregulated and uncontrolled and which have a truly corrupting influence on the operation of this Congress. That is why many of us are coming out day in, day out now and saying, put a ban on soft money, cut down the soft money tree,