

parties and their candidates. The soft-money loophole that the Federal Elections Commission carved into the post-Watergate campaign reform legislation—and anybody who has run for the Presidency knows how pernicious it is—has made a mockery of our efforts to broaden the base of our campaigns and restore public confidence in the political process.

Unfortunately, much of what is currently passing for a Congressional investigation of the subject is blatant hypocrisy—many of the lawmakers sounding so outraged about fund-raising phone calls by Mr. Gore and President Clinton are experts at taking special-interest money; some of their own campaigns have been fined for taking too much.

And all of it is a smoke screen for Congressional inaction. Speaker Newt Gingrich is leading the way in this regard. Two years ago, he and the President told a New Hampshire audience that reforming our campaign finance laws deserved the highest priority. Last week he pronounced a major bipartisan bill on campaign finance reform, the McCain-Feingold bill, dead-before-arrival in the House.

We know what the problems are: candidates prostituting themselves for big special-interest contributions; the soft-money loophole, which either the Federal Election Commission or the Congress should close immediately; campaigns waged almost exclusively on radio and television; politicians spending too much time with fat cats and not enough time in backyards and living rooms recruiting supporters from the people who ought to count in this country. And then there's the most important problem of all; the profound effect all of this is having on voter turnout and the willingness of ordinary citizens of get deeply and actively involved in public life.

The solution is painfully simple. Either we decide that public financing is the way to go—something that is a long way from commanding a Congressional majority—or we get behind the McCain-Feingold bill and, to the maximum extent possible, limit the ability of candidates to raise large amounts of special-interest money.

In short, we don't need any more educating about what the problems are, or any distracting sideshows, or any pre-emptory blocking maneuvers from the Speaker's office. We need Congressional action, and we need it now.

H.R. 2474, THE RAILROAD TAX
EQUITY ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 1997

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have joined the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. PETRI, in introducing H.R. 2474, the Railroad Tax Equity Adjustment Act of 1997. This is a significant piece of legislation which will remedy a serious tax equity problem which burdens our important freight railroad industry.

Because of the 1990 and 1993 reconciliation acts, the freight railroads have been paying 5.55 cents-per-gallon in fuel taxes into the General Treasury for deficit reduction. All other modes of transportation—highway, air, water—pay only 4.3 cents per gallon. This is an obvious inequity. Now, as a result of the

recent tax reconciliation law, this situation will get even worse. That law transfers the 4.3 cents deficit reduction taxes paid by highway users, including truckers, into the highway trust fund, leaving only the railroad and waterway users paying any taxes toward deficit reduction.

Mr. Speaker, the differential between what railroads pay in fuel tax and what other modes pay—1.25 cents-per-gallon—should be repealed as a matter of equity. In addition, the 4.3 cents in deficit reduction fuel taxes paid by railroads should be eliminated, to the extent such taxes paid by trucks are placed in the highway trust fund and spent for highway improvements. H.R. 2474, the Railroad Tax Equity Adjustment Act of 1997, will accomplish these goals.

The bill has two essential components: First, effective October 1, 1997, the 1.25 cents-per-gallon deficit reduction fuel tax paid uniquely by the railroad industry will be eliminated, reducing the overall deficit reduction diesel fuel tax for railroads from 5.55 to 4.3 cents-per-gallon. Second, in subsequent years, the excise tax rate on diesel fuel paid by the railroads will equal the portion of the corresponding 4.3 cents-per-gallon excise tax paid by highway users, including trucks, which is spent on highway infrastructure improvements in the preceding year. For example, if 2 cents-per-gallon of the highway users' excise tax revenues were spent in fiscal year 1998, the railroad industry's deficit reduction fuel tax in fiscal year 1999 would be reduced by 2 cents-per-gallon to 2.3 cents-per-gallon.

The current fuel tax inequity imposed on America's railroads must be remedied at the earliest opportunity. It is my sincere hope that the Ways and Means Committee will seriously consider including a solution, such as that contained in the Railroad Tax Equity Adjustment Act of 1997, as they develop the tax portion of the ISTEA reauthorization legislation. Furthermore, I fully expect the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to include in its reported version of BESTEA sense of the committee language urging that this situation should be remedied, as provided in H.R. 2474.

In the interim, I encourage all Members to give this issue their utmost attention and join with me and others in cosponsoring H.R. 2474.

RECOGNITION OF ERIN ROXANE
CHEW

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me today in commending Ms. Erin Roxane Chew, a senior at Mercy High School in San Francisco and the recipient of the Congressional Youth Excellence Award in the 12th Congressional District of California.

Erin Chew's scholastic achievements are impressive indeed. She has maintained a high grade-point average while undertaking a challenging class schedule. She has supplemented her regular high school courses by taking a variety of honors and advanced placement courses. Her academic awards include numerous appearances on the principal's honor roll. Ms. Chew has also been

recognized in the "Who's Who of American High School Students."

In addition to her outstanding academic record, Erin has a remarkable record of community service. As her teacher, Carole Turner, said, Erin is constantly inquiring: "Do you have any work for me to do?" "I'd like to see us do a service project to help people outside of school that would get some of our more quiet kids involved." She has volunteered at the Donaldina Cameron House as a day camp leader for children in San Francisco's Chinatown. In Mercy High School, she is active with the California Scholarship Foundation, the National Honor Society, and the Service Club. She is also a teaching assistant in the Math Department, working with incoming freshmen.

Erin plans to attend the University of California, Berkeley next fall where she intends to major in computer science.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in commending Ms. Erin Roxane Chew for her outstanding service to the community and in congratulating her outstanding achievements.

HONORING ARTHUR J.
GLATFELTER—RECIPIENT OF
THE SHIELD AND DOVE AWARD

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 1997

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor Mr. Arthur J. Glatfelter, an outstanding York Countyman who has given so much back to the people of York County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. On October 28, 1997, Mr. Glatfelter and the Glatfelter Insurance Group will receive the Shield and Dove Award from Stepping Stone Counseling and Education Services, Inc., in recognition of their leadership and dedication to ending the plague of substance abuse and addiction.

Arthur Glatfelter has been a well-respected businessman for over 50 years. His success in the insurance industry has allowed him to contribute in countless ways to the betterment of York County. Through his leadership and willingness to reach out to others in the community, he has touched the lives of hundreds of people from all walks of life. He has opened doors for many young people—those who are disadvantaged, at risk for substance abuse, or without hope by giving them the opportunity and encouragement to learn the skills and gain the self confidence they need to become successful adults and share in the American dream.

Community service and a desire to give back are the values which have always guided Mr. Glatfelter, both in his personal life and business associations. The long list of national and local organizations on which he has served and directed include: the YMCA, the York County Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Historical Society of York County, the York Symphony, the Farm and Natural lands Trust, the United Way, the Civil Justice Coalition, the Margaret Moul Home, and the International Association of Fire Chief's Foundation, just to name a few.

I have had the pleasure of working closely with Arthur on a program which he started several years ago called Project Connections.