THOMAS) and deal with that, and then come to some of the allegations that have floated through this Chamber again about how we are impinging on free speech.

The chairman was right when he referred back to Buckley v. Valeo and how it was handled by the United States Supreme Court. Because in Buckley v. Valeo, the court made a distinction between contributions and expenditures, and we wound up with half of what the Congress had passed.

So there is always a risk when an amendment is brought before this body when we seek to pass legislation, there is always a risk that a portion of that legislation may be held unconstitutional. But in trying to avoid the problem created by Buckley v. Valeo, we are really undermining our chances of campaign finance reform.

What we are trying to do here is to pass a soft money ban. I disagree with the gentlewoman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP). We can read all the reports we want. We know who gives money to the national parties. If we can just look at the reports of the Republican Party, we will see $6 million or $7 million in money from the tobacco companies coming to the Republican Party, and that is soft money because it comes from corporations.

Corporations have not been able to give to Federal candidates for decades, and yet, they can give money to the national parties, and that money can be used for issue ads that will go out and will affect Federal elections. That is wrong. That is why we need to ban soft money.

Both the freshman bill and the Shays-Meehan bill do that. They have effective soft money bans. It is disingenuous for people to stand up and say they believe in a balanced bill. They believe it is constitutional. Therefore, we should simply go ahead and adopt a nonseverability clause.

Nonseverability clauses are the exception rather than the rule. What is going on here? There have been innumerable efforts to kill campaign finance reform, real reform in this hall, in this session. What is going on now is an attempt to adopt an amendment that would have a chance of killing in the courts any campaign reform, either Shays-Meehan or Hutchinson-Allen, that passes this particular body. We do not want that to happen.

Amendment 132 should be voted down. We do not want a nonseverability clause. If you simply look at the people who are advocating for this particular reform on the Republican side, they are not sponsors of Shays-Meehan; they are not sponsors of Hutchinson-Allen.

□ 1945

Now, let me go back for a moment to the claims that are made periodically here that we are infringing on free speech. Let us go back to Buckley v. Valeo. That court held clearly that in order to prevent corruption, or the appearance of corruption, the Congress could act to impose restrictions on campaign contributions. It is absolutely clear from that decision and from other decisions that it is constitutional to ban soft money.

In a recent case, the court said if it appears that soft money is being used as a way to avoid hard money limits, then the Congress could reconsider what it has done so far on soft money.

Let us talk about what that means in the real world. In the real world, an individual can only give $1,000 to a candidate, but they can give $100,000 or $500,000 to a political party, and that money can be used for issue ads to affect a Federal election.

That is wrong. It needs to be stopped. We have got to contain the influence of big money in politics, and we cannot be diverted by arguments that we are jeopardizing free speech.

I believe Shays-Meehan is constitutional. I believe the freshman bill is constitutional. But in any bill that we pass, there is always some risk. There is always some risk. And so what we ought to do is stop all the posturing and simply say what we want is a bill to come out of this Congress that will not only pass the House and pass the Senate and be signed by the President, but will withstand constitutional scrutiny, and when it is done, will not be ruled in its entirety unconstitutional because of some minor provision.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania) having assumed the chair, Mr. DICKEY, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2183) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4059, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–585) on the resolution (H. Res. 477) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4059), making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4060, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–586) on the resolution (H. Res. 478), providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4060) making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 1998, TO FILE PRIVILEGED REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Appropriations may have until midnight Friday, June 19, 1998, to file a privileged report on a bill making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Kentucky?

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, just to ask how many nongermane amendments were made in order by the rules that we just filed?

Mrs. NORTHUP. It is an open rule, sir.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. No nongermane amendments, though?

Mrs. NORTHUP. But I was happy to yield to the gentleman's question.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. The gentlewoman did not yield, I reserved the right to object.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XXI, all points of order are reserved.

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN INTEGRITY ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 442 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2183.

□ 1950

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R.

2183) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes, with Mr. DICKEY (Chairman pro tempore) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, pending was the amendment by the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) to the amendment No. 13 by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Is there further debate on the amendment?

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentlewoman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP).

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman yielding to me and giving me an opportunity to answer some of the previous statements.

First of all, I was surprised at how many speakers have talked as though the whole system is corrupted. Maybe I am naive, but I believe that this is a mostly honest system. I believe that there are those people that cannot resist money in return for influence, but I have not seen many colleagues on this floor that are in that position, and I believe most of our Members work throughout the system in an honest way.

And so I think it is important to tell the people, the American people around this country, that while, yes, individuals, corporations and labor unions contribute money because they care about elections, that most Members on this floor can cite many instances when they have turned to those people that are contributors and said, in this case, I cannot support you, I do not agree, even though they contributed, because they believed in most instances they shared a common perspective of public policy.

Most all of us have, on plenty of occasions, looked almost every one of our contributors in the eye and said, not on this occasion, I cannot agree with you.

I was asked why I believe nonseverability is so important, and this is why. I believe almost without a doubt that the courts are going to strike down the provisions related to independent expenditures. So, yes, we can make soft money illegal, and soft money, in my opinion, is the type of money that is used for party building, for general themes. I am not aware that any soft money has ever come into my campaign. It may have, but I am not aware that it ever has.

But people that wish to influence campaigns, and we know they are there, if they wish to influence campaigns, they can begin giving their money to independent organizations, where most of us believe the constitutional problems with this system exists. And in that case the money is not traceable, it is not reportable, and the fact is that those independent organizations can then collaborate or whisper in the ear of anybody they want.

I know that I am going to abide by every law in campaign finance. I know I believe in the system and that I believe in the voters, but I do not want to create a system where money goes so that it can then be sent to candidates, so that the candidate that is willing to break the law the most, who collaborates with an independent organization, who will be so desperate that they ask an independent organization to, in a sense, money launder, which is what would happen, that the person that is willing to break the law the most is the person that has the best advantage.

Some people say that will never happen, but let me assure my friends that in Kentucky we passed campaign finance reform for our governor's races. And what happened? It did not take one session before we began to have parallel campaigns. For example, somebody left from one of the candidate's staffs, went to an organization, worked to raise money, worked to spend money, and none of it reportable, none of it available for the public to see. And what we had was parallel campaigns going on out of sight of the voters.

That is the sort of thing that will begin to change the system for those of us who report every expenditure and who are happy to live within the system. It will put us at the most disadvantage, and the person that is willing to collaborate illegally will be at the greatest advantage.

I am sorry that it is given to those of us that oppose this such evil intentions, because the truth is there are not many people in this House that set a better example than if we just have hard money. No independent money, no soft money. I have raised in my district from individuals, from the $5 contributors, the $10 contributors that give every month, and the large contributors, a whole group of people who have supported me, and I do not need the soft money or the independent expenditures. But there are people in districts who have not had that opportunity and they have been able to get their voice out, they have been able to have the support of the overall party building money that can turn out voters, that can say this is what the Democratic party stands for, that cannot be candidate specific, but they will be the people who suffer.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) has expired.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 2 minutes.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. FARR of California. I object, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Objection is heard from the gentleman from California.

Mr. POMBO. Am I to understand the gentleman from California has objected to my asking for an additional 2 minutes?

Mr. FARR of California. The gentleman had 5 minutes and he yielded it all.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Objection has been heard.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I am one of the authors of one of the bills that are going to be considered, and I find this process incredibly demeaning, although we get up here and talk about how open it is because we have 258 amendments on the floor. But, frankly, the bottom line of all this is that we have to vote on a bill, and the judgment will be whether we put a bill out and put out a good bill.

Congress is able to do that, because we did it in the 101st session of Congress, the 102nd session of Congress and the 103rd session. And, in fact, the bill we put out is more comprehensive than any of the bills we are debating here tonight. So this body is capable. We never brought up 258 amendments to try to make those things. We did not talk about severability in those issues. So I think my colleagues see what is going on here. There is an effort here to try to really defeat the issue.

I find it very ironic that we are debating right now on a nonseverability amendment to a nongermane amendment, because I think some of the people who sponsor these amendments really do not want campaign reform. They want nonreform.

This debate sometimes becomes almost silly, because the public may not understand the legal implications of severability, but they do understand fair play. And what campaign reform is about in America in 1998 is fair play. How do we take so much money out of the system? We have to pass a law to do that, and that law has to do a lot of things. But they are not all connected.

Most people believe in fair play and they also understand that in fair play people can make mistakes. And this nonseverability debate is about we can never make a mistake. Congress cannot make one word of a mistake, because if the court throws it out, we have to throw out the whole thing. If we lived by that in our lives, then one poor grade would throw our child out of school; one overdrawn check would cancel our checking account. In fact, if one Member might get in legal trouble, we should throw out all Members because they all got elected at the same time.

So let us get down to what it is all about. This is about a bill that is a bipartisan bill. We rarely see these on the floor. A lot of effort went in to try to bring a consensus about so that we could get enough votes to pass a bill out of this House in this session.

This bill has a lot of parts to it, and for those who say that we cannot have severability, they have not read the bill. There is all kinds of little things

in here, like automatic penalties for late filing. What if the court threw that out? Do my colleagues think that has something to do with soft money? Absolutely not.

□ 2000

Should that kill the reforms on issue advocacy? Absolutely not. There are all kinds of parts in here that a court could say, for example, that we have not contributed enough money to enforce the law, some of the things that we have in here.

We allow the FEC to refer suspected violations to the Attorney General at any time. Read the bill. If we read the bill we will say, well, if that one sentence were found unconstitutional, should all of this other substantive stuff be thrown out? Absolutely not.

That is why people oppose this amendment, because they see this amendment as a way of destroying the whole effort here of trying to get a well-thought-out bill, a bill that has been compromised by the fact that it has gotten this far in this very controversial session of our Congress.

We need to make sure that we pass a bill that is comprehensive. And frankly, I think my bill, and both the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) and I have been working side by side, I think my bill at this point is much more comprehensive than theirs. But I am up here advocating the support of their bill because I think it is what we can politically do.

Let us not try to destroy this with 258 nongermane amendments. That is silly.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FARR of California. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, the point I also was going to make on severability is, if this amendment were to pass, with all the amendments that can be offered, how easy it would be for the other side to simply offer and pass a clearly patently unconstitutional amendment and the whole bill is dead.

So it could not be clearer, could not be clearer, that this amendment is a poison pill to kill this bill. Because even if everything in the bill is totally 100 percent constitutional, unlike the telecommunications bill, unlike the Brady bill, and unlike a lot of bills we pass, all they would have to do is come in with a nongermane amendment that sounds good but that they know is unconstitutional and it is over.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, one of the previous speakers, and there has been a lot of discussion actually this evening about tobacco and what happened over in the Senate, and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) I believe talked about how I have received a lot of tobacco money. And I wanted to confess tonight that I do represent 31,000 tobacco farmers and tobacco companies through their political action committee using hard money, which is legal, which Shays/Meehan does not try to address at all. So they are not talking about hard money, that I have received hard money from tobacco companies; and I do not apologize for that.

But I would also like to point out that there is a gentleman named Ted Sioeng, who is from Indonesia, and he is the largest cigarette manufacturer in Red China today. I have a picture here of Mr. Sioeng and our President Bill Clinton. Mr. Sioeng gave Mr. Clinton and gave the DNC $400,000. And by the way, it was not hard money, it was soft money.

Now, I do not object to soft money, except in this instance there is a Federal Election Commission rule 441(e) that says it is illegal for foreign nationals to contribute money to campaigns in the United States.

And so, I would just remind the gentleman that his President, I guess he is all of our President, some of us like him more than others, but he accepted $400,000 from this gentleman.

And do my colleagues know something else? They have been trying to investigate these illegal contributions, which led to a lot of this debate about campaign finance reform, and we cannot find Mr. Sioeng. They have been looking for him everywhere. We cannot find him or any of his family.

But I just want to remind the gentleman that the contributions to me were legal hard money through the political action committee of which employees of those companies voluntarily gave the money and PACs came about as a reform measure themselves to encourage people to participate in the political system.

Now people are saying that the only reason we are offering these amendments is that we want to kill this bill, and I would suggest to them that there are some sincere beliefs that this bill goes too far. I think that we should support nonseverability for the simple reason that I think this is a vitally important issue.

I would like to read a quote from Buckley v. Valeo.

> Discussion of public issues and debate on the qualifications of candidates are vital to the operation of the system of government established by our Constitution.

This is one of the most fundamental First Amendment activities. Now we seem to be summarily dismissing this First Amendment and the fact that Buckley v. Valeo has not been overturned and court after court after court after court continue to affirm it. And I think that the real reason that our opponents are opposed to this nonseverability amendment is that they know, without any question, that there are all sorts of provisions in this bill that are unconstitutional.

Now, our friend from Pennsylvania a while ago said, no one has talked to me about how these are interconnected, the provisions of this bill. And I tell him what, when we start broadening the definition of ''express advocacy'' that has a dramatic impact on issue advocacy and independent expenditures and what can and cannot be done. Those three are definitely related.

I want to read an article here from the American Civil Liberties Union. I have never really been a fan of the American Civil Liberties Union, but I am sure that people who follow them know that their main purpose in existing is to be sure that the Constitution is upheld. And they are bringing all sorts of lawsuits around the country on many issues that people do not like because they feel it is so important to protect constitutional rights.

I just want to read to my colleagues.

> What is wrong with the Shays/Meehan bill? Number one. Shays/Meehan is patently unconstitutional. The American Civil Liberties Union believes that key elements of Shays-Meehan violate the First Amendment right to free speech because the legislation contains provisions that would one, restrict the right of the people to express their opinions about elected officials and issues through unprecedented limitations on text, accompanying issue group voting records, and restraints on citizen commentary prior to election, restrict contributions. Two, and uses of soft money.

And remember, soft money is everything the other groups spend that are not candidates.

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I was unable to be in the House and on the floor for the general debate on the rule, and I believe the issue of severability has been well debated here. I rise now in support of the Shays/Meehan bill.

Mr. Chairman, my colleagues, there is only one glue that holds this precious democracy together, trust, trust between the representatives and the represented.

I speak to lots of young college students throughout the State of Illinois. They often rise and look me in the eye and say to me, ''Congressman, we do not trust any of you anymore. You are all in it for yourself. You are all in it for the special interests. No one is in it for us anymore.''

And when I inquire of them as to what it is that has brought them to the point of feeling so distrustful about their government, feeling that their government just does not care about them, they always look me in the eye and they follow up with this statement. ''Congressman, just follow the money. Just follow the money. You will know why we do not trust government anymore.''

Well, I have followed it. And so have my colleagues. We know that huge amounts of money is buying access to our government. And access leads to influence, and influence leads to policies that are not always in the best interest of our people.

If democracy means anything, it must mean that all of our people, all of our people, irrespective of their economic station in life, all of them, must

have equal access to their representative. We must do nothing to disturb the trust between the representative and the represented.

Mr. Lincoln said it 130 years ago in front of a divided nation. He said, here is the bottom line. There is no other. This is the bottom line. Right makes might. Right makes might. Not money. Not power. Not position. Not even the Congress. Right makes might.

Shays/Meehan is not perfect but it seeks to reestablish some measure of balance, some measure of equality between the competing voices that seek to be heard in this democracy.

The constitutional question in that little room in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 225 years ago was whether the common man, the common man, would have a voice alongside the monied aristocracy.

Thomas Payne put it in these words. He said, ''Gentlemen, we have the opportunity to make the world over again, to give common people an equal voice in their government, something unheard of in the whole history of the world.''

There are times when we in this body are charged with making America over again, when equality of voice is denied in our system. Do not do further injury to this glue, to this trust, which holds us together. Pass this bill and reject any amendments which seek to weaken it. It is the right thing for all of our people.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to support the Thomas amendment of the nonseverability clause. Because we need to do it right. We need to pass legislation that is constitutional. We should not do anything else. We know, with pretty clear record, that many provisions have already from previous legislation been termed unconstitutional. So why should we do it again?

It was interesting a little bit ago, just a few moments ago, that we were told by a gentleman that this bill was not quite perfect but it is almost and we should have no amendments because it is what the Senate would accept. I hope some day I hear a senator saying, let us keep this bill as it is because it is what the House will accept. I know that is not going to happen.

I served in state in both the Senate and the House and I know that is not going to happen in the Senate, whether it is in state or in Washington. Though I respect that gentleman very much, we should not be crafting a bill for the Senate.

I think the vast majority here tonight know that that bill will have provisions struck down by the courts. And we do not need the poison pill that the gentleman spoke of a few moments ago. Because this bill, by most people's opinion, has unconstitutional provisions.

The current law has been in place about a quarter of a century. Large sections were struck down in 1976 and left us a patchwork plan of campaign finance, a patchwork.

□ 2015

It has a lot of problems. But let us not build another system where the courts can give us another patchwork quilt that will not work. It will happen again.

Now, think about this a moment. If the court strikes down money to the parties as being illegal but allows the private groups to be legal, and that part remains, we have taken the power away from the parties and we have given it to interest groups that we are talking so much about. That could happen.

Is Shays-Meehan perfect? No, it is not. I think it misses the mark. Because I think we have the soft money problem because we have taken the power away from the people. In most State governments, individual contributions are not limited at all, and soft money does not play the role there that it does in Washington. That may not be true in every State, but it is true in many. The people are stuck with the same contribution limit that was here in 1974. If that were inflation fixed, it would be probably 3 or $4,000. Now, if $1,000 was right then, it is certainly not fair today. Why not empower the individual?

We limit an individual to $25,000 in a whole congressional race. Let me tell Members why I think that is inappropriate. The Shays-Meehan approach will limit free speech. It will particularly limit free speech to those who want to protect the sanctity of life. I do not know a more noble issue than protecting life itself. It will also prohibit those who want to protect the right to bear arms, and I come from rural America and that is a pretty important issue out there, the right to bear arms, the right to defend yourself. I also come from an area where private property rights are pretty important, and those groups will be limited.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to come back to the point of $25,000 for an individual. Why should an individual who happens to believe strongly about life not be able to support every congressional candidate with $1,000 that he wants to? Under the current law, he would not be allowed to do that, and none of that is changed under Shays-Meehan. Why should he not be able to support any candidate that is pro-life? Why should he or she not be able to support anybody who defends the right to bear arms? That is very important to some people, very important to the future of this country. Or private property rights. Why should a person not be allowed individually to give to any person who believes private property rights is vital to the future? Because Congresses have historically walked all over people's private rights. The previous Congresses in my view have infringed on personal rights in many ways. So why should we not? We need to have a bill that makes sense, one that will not be partially struck down by the courts, and we need a severability clause, because if we do not do it right, we need to come back and do it again.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). The time of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) has expired.

(On request of Mr. WHITFIELD, and by unanimous consent, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania was allowed to proceed for 1 additional minute.)

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. WHITFIELD. The question I had, the gentleman had referred to that individuals can give up to $25,000. I just want to make sure that everyone understands on this issue that the most that an individual can give to a candidate is $1,000 in the primary, and so he cannot give them $25,000.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. That is correct. The point I was making is any individual can only give under current law, and Shays-Meehan does not touch that. And we also have a limit that any individual can only give $25,000 to 435 people. He can only give to $25,000, if he gives them the limit.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, it is very clear that some figures my staff worked up today are accurate. In fact, it might be worse than what they worked up. With the rule that we passed today, 258 nongermane amendments to stop any real sense of taking campaign finance reform forward and actually passing it, with this rule brought to the floor by the opponents of campaign finance reform we can keep talking for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for more than 385 days, and we will not be voting still on campaign finance reform. That is what we allowed today. That means in mid-July 1999, we could be voting on campaign finance reform.

Tonight proves, if we keep this up, this is exactly what is going to happen. We are going to kill this thing with all of these amendments. We can talk day in and day out about nonseverability. We can pull it apart, we can look at it under the microscope. What it is all about is stalling real campaign finance reform votes.

The real vote is for the Shays-Meehan bill. If you care about your constituents, you will get to it and vote on it, and then we can get on with the rest of the needs that we have for our government.

How did I get to this place? It was really kind of an awakening. A couple of years ago, I had a meeting in my offices in the district I represent, the two counties north of San Francisco across the Golden Gate Bridge. The League of Women Voters came to my office along with some Common Cause folks and members of the Democratic Central Committee to talk to me about campaign finance reform.

I was not where they were. I was more like where you are over there, I was whining and whimpering and arguing that, ''Well, if we can't have caps on what an individual can spend of their own money, people like me will never get reelected, or elected in the first place, because I don't have any money of my own.''

The people that came, they are wonderful people, they always support me, but they argued with me. They argued about the need to have regular, everyday people feel like they were part of the election campaign system, like they belonged to the political process. They argued with me about soft money, which of course I agreed with. The thing I did not agree was that what are we going to do if millionaires like Huffington, multi-multimillionaires, can spend their own money?

They laughed and they said, ''Woolsey, you know, we agree with you on everything, so we're going to forgive you this,'' and they left, and I won my election well in 1996. But as they left and as I started remembering the things they said, I realized that we do not have to do this perfect. We do not have to have all of it. We have to start. And we have to prove to people that we care that they are part of the process, that it is just not big money, that we are not paying soft money so that the money is not accountable, and that we ban soft money. Shays-Meehan does that.

Also, and they pounded this home, and they were so right, that we have to stop having advertisements and mailers without accountability, third parties sending out information without anybody knowing who it is that is sending that information.

So because of these wonderful people that came to my office several years ago, and because they liked me enough that they thought they could give me a good kick in the fanny, I came from the slow class to the fast class. I am here now. I get it. We need to take a step forward. Shays-Meehan does that for us.

Yes, we want to have a commission. We should add that amendment to the Shays-Meehan bill so that we can have the commission watching and going forward and making it even better. But we have to stop disenfranchising the people in our districts that we work for.

I do not understand who these people that are opposed to campaign finance reform work for, the people that are your constituents, the people that elect you, the people that are your employers, do they listen to you when you say you want more money in campaigning instead of less?

Mr. Chairman, if we respect the people in our districts and the people we work for, we will get on with passing campaign finance reform.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, let me just respond to the gentlewoman from California who complained that we have now passed a rule that is going to take a lot of time here.

First of all, the leadership has given its commitment that we will vote on this issue in August, and I believe they will honor that commitment.

Now, beyond that, when a proposal such as this, which I believe fervently strikes at the heart of free expression and the first amendment, comes forward, then I do not apologize for wanting to take the time to fully explore all the issues and to explore the ramifications and to look at alternatives. I do not apologize for that. I think it is going to take some time, but it is worth it if we can get the point across to the American people that this is going to the heart of freedom of speech.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WICKER. I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to remind the gentleman that the Speaker is the same Speaker that shook hands with the President of the United States 3 years ago, and we still do not have campaign finance reform.

Mr. WICKER. The handshake was about the type of proposal that we voted on yesterday, the commission, which the majority of folks on the other side of the aisle somehow lost interest in when it was finally presented to the floor.

But if I could reclaim my time now, I just would simply say, I do not apologize for taking this issue to the American people and pointing out that this goes to the heart of the first amendment. If Members are for Shays-Meehan, and they think every bit of it is constitutional, then they have nothing to fear voting for this nonseverability amendment. If, however, as I do, if they believe that there are unconstitutional provisions to this amendment, then they also ought to vote for the nonseverability, so everybody, regardless of what side of the issue they are on, ought to vote for the nonseverability.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WICKER. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MEEHAN. What do we do about the fact that somebody could offer an amendment that is clearly unconstitutional? If we were to pass this amendment and somebody down the road offers an amendment that is clearly unconstitutional, our bill is dead then.

Mr. WICKER. Reclaiming my time, I am glad the gentleman brought that up because he made that point earlier. Amendments are not that easy to pass. Amendments do not just get slipped in. We vote on them. We have 17-minute votes. I do not think amendments are going to be quite that easy. But if an amendment passes, it will be passed by a majority of the elected representatives of the people of the United States. I do not see his concern as being valid, that somehow late at night an unconstitutional amendment to this already unconstitutional proposal is going to slip in.

Mr. MEEHAN. If the gentleman will yield further, there have been a number of amendments that have passed in the telecommunications bill, the Brady bill, bills that we have passed that the court has said are unconstitutional, and they have stricken that part of the bill. But what the gentleman is asking us to do is pass an amendment where if a comma is unconstitutional, a word, a phrase, the whole bill is gone. It is a poison pill to campaign finance reform.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, it will only be a poison pill if somehow the gentleman from Massachusetts or the gentleman from Connecticut go to sleep and allow that poison pill to go through.

In the brief time that I have remaining, let me tell Members why I think this proposal is unconstitutional. First of all, because the minority leader of the United States House of Representatives really admits that it is unconstitutional.

Let me show my colleagues this poster which the Members have seen several times before, but this is the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), House Democratic Leader, February 3, 1997, Time magazine:

> What we have is two important values in direct conflict: freedom of speech and our desire for healthy campaigns in a healthy democracy. You can't have both;

an admission by the minority leader that what he wants to do and what his political allies want to do is unconstitutional. You have got to amend the Constitution in order to accomplish their goals. That is one reason that I think this Shays-Meehan proposal is unconstitutional.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WICKER. I decline to yield further.

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Mr. Chairman, further I think this proposal is unconstitutional because of the unprecedented limitations that it places on political advertising and political issue expression, and let me explain.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) has expired.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for an additional 3 minutes.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Mississippi?

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized under his reservation of objection.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Being recognized on my reservation of objection, Mr. Chairman, does the gentleman plan to yield during that additional 3 minutes?

Mr. WICKER. Really, Mr. Chairman, I do not think I have time to yield.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Then I would be constrained to object.

I object, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield to me first?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. This is just incredible, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The Chair would like to clarify that the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) is recognized for 5 minutes and yields to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

Mr. DELAY. Now we have not only does the other side, Mr. Chairman, not allow us to extend time——

Ms. RIVERS. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Does the gentleman from California yield for parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. No, I do not yield.

Ms. RIVERS. I have to be recognized for a parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman from California does not yield for a parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate it. Then they come, and this is amazing, Mr. Chairman: If we are going to have an open and honest debate, we need to extend time particularly when the gentleman just yielded time to the gentleman from Massachusetts to get into the debate, and then the other gentleman from Massachusetts walks on the floor and objects to an extension of time after the gentleman has been very courteous to yield time back and forth.

This is really strange. It is such a lack of courtesy. And then for the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. RIVERS) to stand up and demand time, it is just they have got to be kidding.

I think it is really strange, Mr. Chairman, that now after the gentleman from Massachusetts has objected to the gentleman from Mississippi getting extra time, now he wants us to yield to him. This is unbelievable, and I hope the American people are seeing what is happening on this floor. They want to cut down debate; we want to open debate, and we want an honest debate in exchange.

Mr. Chairman, I will be glad to exchange with the other side of this issue, and with that I will yield back to the gentleman from California so the gentleman from Mississippi can finish his thought.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, let me talk about the unprecedented limitations on freedom of expression in this proposal before us tonight.

It costs $62,000 a page in the New York Times to buy a full-page ad, $62,000. I want to show my colleagues today $82,000. What I want to show them today is $164,000 worth of expression, the editorial page of the New York Times. The New York Times Corporation can purchase, can put out this much expression every single day of the year.

It costs $75,000 a page to buy an advertisement in USA Today. What I have here before us today is 2 pages, USA Today. The Gannett Corporation puts out $150,000 worth of expression each day, and there is no government agency coming in with a microscope saying what kind of speech is this? Is this issue advocacy? Is this express advocacy? If they print a voting record, the FEC does not come in and say, ''Well, now did they write the right kind of comments down at the bottom of that voting record?'' And that is as it should be. I applaud that. That is freedom of speech, that is freedom of expression, and that is America.

But under the proposals that we are going to be debating tonight and the rest of this process X Y Z Corporation wants to take out an $82,000 ad in the New York Times or a $75,000, or Right to Life wants to spend $75,000 of its contribution money to take out an ad in the Gannett newspaper. Then the strong arm of the Federal Government comes along with a magnifying glass and says, ''Did you say it right? Is it during the right period of time? Is it during the 60 day period right before the election?'' And there is a huge government agency coming in with even more bureaucracy then we have now.

This is an unconstitutional invasion of the right of individuals, of corporations, of public interest groups to purchase time, to purchase space in a newspaper and freely advocate as American citizens. It is unconstitutional. I think that is the very reason we need the nonseverability clause.

Mr. Chairman, I urge the adoption of the amendment and the defeat of the Shays-Meehan substitute.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I urge the defeat of the Shays-Meehan substitute and support the Thomas amendment.

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. RIVERS. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. For the edification of the majority whip:

The reason the gentlewoman from Michigan got up before was she and we were under the assumption that the normal procedure would be followed of alternating between the parties. I think a good-faith error was made, but the gentlewoman was not trying to usurp anything. The normal procedure is to alternate between the parties. Through a slip-up that had not happened. The gentlewoman had the reasonable expectation that a Republican, having completed, it would next have gone to her. That is why the gentlewoman did raise that question.

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak today on 2 issues: the severability that has been discussed here and also the free speech issue. I want to speak especially though to the idea that the unwillingness of the sponsors to include a severability provision in this bill is somehow an indictment of the bill.

As I said earlier, research shows us that only four bills in this entire Congress have progressed without a severability clause, four bills out of 4,965 bills. Virtually every Member in this House who has sponsored a bill, including everyone sitting on both sides of the aisle has routinely included that in their bill.

Now are we arguing that this is the only constitutionally controversial bill that this body has ever considered? Absolutely not. The argument seems to be that an unwillingness to accept a severability clause indicates a weakness, that somehow people who are supporting this believe that there is a problem constitutionally. I will point out if, in fact, the numbers I am given are correct and we see a lack of severability clauses in only a handful of bills, that means the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution routinely does not have a severability clause in his bills, that the chairman of the whole Committee on the Judiciary routinely does not have a nonseverability clause in his bill.

There seems to be a standard for this bill unlike any other, and I think that that is a problem. Virtually every issue that comes before this body has this sort of clause. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) made a very good argument, that these items do not hinge on one another, that if they lose one, it does not cause the fabric of the bill to fall apart. They have value independently. No case has been made why this is different than any of the other bills that we have had considered.

I want to speak now to the infringement on free speech. The argument that is being made very subtly is that somehow Shays-Meehan creates regulation where none has ever existed before, that there are new regulations on activities that have previously been unrestricted in our political activities. This is not true. Independent expenditures have existing rules that any organization who wishes to take part in that kind of activity must follow. Those groups that wish to do issue advocacy must operate within the existing rules. Laws exist right now to govern how they must behave in these activities. Those who wish to participate in giving soft money still have rules under which they must operate, and the expenditure of soft money is regulated by laws in existence. They are not working very well, but they exist.

It is important for people who are listening to this debate to understand that there are existing regulations. It is impossible to argue that these activities cannot be regulated when they already are. The system provides for government oversight of these activities. We are arguing about what that oversight should look like, not whether or not it should be there.

The whole question that was raised earlier about soft money and that somehow it is a benign issue because candidates really do not know where the money comes from:

Well, I would be interested to know if there is anybody in this room who has never been to a national fund-raiser or a State fund-raiser where they have sat at tables from people who routinely give money to their party. I suspect there is not. But even if there is someone who has somehow missed that activity, all they need to do is read the paper. The Hill, Rollcall routinely lists who was at each event and how much money they gave. Nowadays you can even pick up a local paper in Michigan. We can read about how much money Amway gave. We can read about this person, that person. We know where the money goes, which means if I can read it, my constituents can read it. Everybody knows. One would have to be beyond naive to think that the public does not care or, even more unlikely, is not affected by the money in politics and the way it is handled.

Thomas Jefferson said when a man assumes a public trust he should consider himself as public property, which means we must have higher integrity, less selfish, more reasonable, more thoughtful, more forthright and committed to doing what is right for the entire Nation.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, I want to clear the record.

The gentleman from Massachusetts totally misrepresented what was going on here. I know the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. RIVERS) was overseen by the Chair, and I apologize for that. But the point was the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) had yielded to the gentleman from Massachusetts for a discussion and then ran out of time and was asking for an extension of time, and the other gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) ran down and objected to the time, cutting off debate from the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. Chairman, that is what happened on this floor. It is really unfortunate.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to remind people that in that disastrous 1974 law which, thanks to its nonseverability clause we are still saddled with its oppressive regulations of this day which have given birth to PACs, soft money, hard money, issue advocacy, independent expenditures, all of the symptoms of the disease that our liberal friends here are trying to focus on rather than the cause of the disease, which is the government regulation itself, that one of the parts of that disastrous law that was struck down, because it was a comprehensive law, just like Shays-Meehan is trying to be. And part of that was a ban on soft money. It was struck down, one of the first things to go. It has been gone since 1976. That was banned. Been tried before.

Mr. Chairman, they are doing the same unconstitutional thing again. It will be struck down.

I listened to the arguments from the other side: Well, no, we cannot go for the nonseverability clause of the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) because the evil majority might sneak through some amendment they know is unconstitutional. We do not have to sneak anything through. This bill is unconstitutional, open and shut. It will be so declared when it goes through the courts. All we want then is a nonseverability clause in so the whole thing falls and certain vestiges do not remain that further clutter up the system and make matters only worse from what they are today.

Since this whole scheme of regulation was invented some 25 years ago, political participation in elections has declined, public cynicism has shot up. We hear people are spending more and more time fund-raising because these hard dollars have been unadjusted. The limits, since 1974, remain in place. That means we have to work a lot longer to raise the same amount of money. It becomes that much harder for challengers, because it is always easier as incumbents once they are there, and that is why we say this is an incumbent protection bill.

If we were acting in our own self-interest tonight, every one of us would vote for Shays-Meehan. It would lock in our seats in Congress because it makes it so much harder for a challenger to raise money and to be able to take on the system.

Eugene McCarthy even, the great liberal, admits he never would have been able to make his campaign if he could not have gotten a few large contributions from wealthy people across the country. He was clearly not in the mainstream in terms of appealing to what most people wanted, but he had a political and important statement to make.

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He was able to raise the money because he was not fettered by the very campaign law that we have in force which would be made worse by Shays-Meehan.

This is an important point to think about. Do we want just homogenized pabulum for the future of our political campaigns, something that will appeal to everyone, so in effect it appeals to no one; or do we want the sort of vigorous debate that was contemplated by the founders that the Supreme Court recognized in Buckley v. Valeo that is the essence of the American Republic, the American democratic experience?

That is why the Supreme Court gave us Buckley v. Valeo, wiping out much of the disastrous law, unfortunately, because it did not contain the gentleman from California, Mr. THOMAS', nonseverability clause, leaving much of it in place. That is why we have this myriad of problems that we are trying to address, and I say focus on the problem, not on the symptoms.

Soft money is a symptom. If we do somehow succeed in banning soft money, we will increase independent expenditures, because we still have a Constitution, and the court still says it is the right of people to speak independently, and it is their right. But when we skew the campaign law in such a way that responsible speech is discouraged, i.e., from the candidate who wants people's votes, who therefore has incentive to be responsible in the use of his speech, we disfavor that in favor of the independent expenditure.

We do not even know who they are. They can spend unlimited amounts of money, raise unlimited amounts of money in contrast to the candidate, and they are the ones who have more incentive to make the less responsible statements.

Why do we not empower the candidate? Why do we not do as the Nation's largest State, California, and a very large State in the East, Virginia, already do it? And it works well. They do not have the limits and they allow people the freedom.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). The time of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) has again expired.

(On request of Mr. MEEHAN, and by unanimous consent, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania was allowed to proceed for 2 additional minutes.)

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to have the time.

Did the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) want to address a question?

Mr. MEEHAN. No. I wanted to give the gentleman the time.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Chairman, we believe as Republicans that we ought to leave the First Amendment alone.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, is the gentleman aware that there are no spending limits in this bill?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I am perfectly aware that there are no spending limits in the bill.

Mr. MEEHAN. So the gentleman is aware that there are not constitutional problems in this bill?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Oh, there are terrible constitutional problems with this bill. How can the gentleman say that? This bill is filled with problems.

Does the gentleman really believe for a minute that this bill is constitutional?

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield further?

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MEEHAN. So the gentleman did not favor the reforms after Watergate either?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I certainly did not. It is a disaster. It gave birth to the cancer we face today that you cite as the reason for your reform; your side gave us all of this monstrosity.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, so the gentleman is not in favor of any limits at all?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I thank the gentleman. That is correct. No limits.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman from Pennsylvania yield?

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

The gentleman from Massachusetts asked if we supported the 1974 law that was passed after the Watergate hearings. You bet we did not. Because there were things in there like limiting the expenditure of campaigns to $70,000. I mean, a whole campaign spending $70,000, trying to reach the voters. In the Senate they limited it to 8 cents per voter, 8 cents per voter. Do you know why they did all that? I say to the gentleman from Massachusetts, it is so they could stifle challengers and give advantages to incumbents.

That is exactly why we oppose the 1974 law that, most of it was struck down by the Supreme Court over time, and that is why we are very concerned about the severability of this one. We do not want another law like the 1974 Watergate incumbent protection plan, because it is all interrelated, it is all put together, and the gentleman from Massachusetts says, if we put one unconstitutional amendment here, it is a poison pill. Well, one more poison pill in a bottle half full of poison pills will not make a difference.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of both the Shays-Meehan bill, as well as the bipartisan freshman campaign finance reform bill. I think these bills take a large step in the direction we need to go in this country, the ability to take the big money out of the political system.

I find it amazing though, Mr. Chairman, that opponents to these bills claim that if there is a ban on soft money that our constitutional freedoms and liberties and free speech are in jeopardy, yet when I go home back to Wisconsin and listen to the people, they know, just commonsensically, they know there is too much money in the political system, too much big money being contributed, too much influence of money out here in Washington, D.C.

Why is this so important? Why do we need to have this debate and pass this legislation as soon as possible? As this chart demonstrates, Mr. Chairman, we are seeing an explosion in the arms race for big money in the political system. Back in 1987–1988, roughly $45 million in soft money contributions were contributed to both political parties. That jumped up to $86 million in the 1991–1992 campaign season, and then suddenly in 1995–1996, the last campaign season, it exploded to $262 million in soft money contributions to both parties. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

This is only going to escalate unless this body, the only body that can do something about it, takes some action as soon as possible. That is what this debate should be about. That is why these campaign finance reform measures are so important, because the people know there is too much money going into this, and it is only going to get worse.

I just have a couple more points to make. That is why we need to take action.

I am proud to have a Senator in my home State of Wisconsin, Senator RUSS FEINGOLD, leading the charge in this effort in the U.S. Senate, teaming up with Senator JOHN MCCAIN from Arizona in sponsoring the McCain-Feingold bill, one that suffered a fate that was unbecoming of this United States Congress. I commend the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) for the work that they have put in for many years of getting finance reform passed.

But perhaps it was a group of freshmen, and it behooves us as freshmen to sit up and take notice and keep our eyes and ears open to see how this place operates. Maybe it was a group of freshmen who had to come together and take a look at this from a fresh perspective, with new insight, and decide to work in a bipartisan fashion to try to eliminate the poison pills for both parties and draft something that would have a chance of passing; and I am very proud to have been a part of that process and the product that we produced. I want to encourage my colleagues that if Shays-Meehan goes down, we support the freshman bill.

But the severability clause is important, the amendment is important to discuss, because I do not believe the soft money ban is unconstitutional. I think we have solid constitutional case law that supports us with Buckley v. Valeo, which says that we can limit money, that is, soft money contributions, in order to prevent the corruption or the appearance of corruption in the political system. Anyone who takes notice of how decisions are made out here would see the appearance of corruption every day, with the amount of contributions being contributed.

I have a lot of respect for my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP) who was here a little bit earlier talking on the floor; but I was flabbergasted by some of the statements coming out of her mouth that she did not know where the soft money contributions were coming from to the parties and that she did not see any influence of big money in this political system. Well, I do not know where she has been for the past year and a half in watching this democratic process of ours work. I do not know where she has been for the last couple of weeks in watching the tobacco legislation and the fate that it suffered unfold in the U.S. Senate.

There is a direct link to big money in the political system. We are seeing the results of this day in and day out. But perhaps the most egregious example of what big money is doing in corrupting this political system of ours happened last year.

I came as a fiscally conservative Democrat, believing in fiscal responsibility, but also the need to invest in priorities in this country. I was very proud to be a part of the negotiations in trying to reach a bipartisan, balanced budget agreement that would put our fiscal house in order; and after the days and the weeks and the months of negotiating that balanced budget agreement last year, it finally came to a vote on this floor.

I cosponsored an amendment that would have given us 10 hours to look at that budget agreement, page through it, to see what all was in it before we were forced to vote on it. And it was voted down, that amendment, along party lines, and I could not understand. This amendment was not that unreasonable. The least we can do is step back, pause and look at the agreement before we vote on it, and I did not understand why it went down to such defeat as it did.

But I did 3 days later when it was discovered that the tobacco companies received a $50 billion tax cut that was never, we never had any hearings on it, it was never part of any of the discussion or the debate on the House floor. We certainly did not have any separate vote on this tax credit, and yet it was in there. The only reason it was in there was because of $11,293,000 worth of contributions from big tobacco.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) has expired.

(On request of Mrs. NORTHUP, and by unanimous consent, Mr. KIND was allowed to proceed for 3 additional minutes.)

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, just to close, and I will just be a brief second

before I yield to the gentlewoman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP), all we have to do is just take a look at where the contributions are coming from, and we start seeing a track, we start seeing the appearance of corruption, if not corruption outright, of what is taking place right now.

How did this $50 billion tax cut get inserted in this budget agreement without any knowledge on the House floor? Well, it was because the chief lobbyist of the tobacco industry went to the Republican leadership in this Congress, literally the night before final passage of this bill, and said, hey, because a pack of cigarettes is going to be taxed an additional 15 cents, we need a break in all of this. So there was a corresponding tax credit for the next 25 years for that tax increase on a pack of cigarettes, and it was done behind closed doors without anyone else's knowledge.

Again, we just have to follow the money. There are 11,293,853 dollar reasons for why something like that would take place in this democratic process of ours.

Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to yield to the gentlewoman from Kentucky.

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Chairman, I think it is important, considering what the gentleman says, that somebody respond to the cynicism of what he said, and particularly, about the tobacco bill.

I do not take, and never have, a penny of tobacco money, and yet the tobacco bill over on the Senate side is simply too big. There are reasons that people oppose it. I think that that is the sort of discussion that ruins political discussion on its value, and every time somebody disagrees with you, to say, see, they took money; or see, it is all the influence of evil.

The fact is, I do not take money, and I thought the bill got way out of hand; and it is a perfect example of why that kind of a bill that is that complicated can never pass unless we get some leadership from the White House that is involved in it and calls for it every single week.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, I think I got the gist of the gentlewoman's point there. The gentlewoman may not take the money, the parties take the money, and to be fair, the Democratic Party is also dipping into the tobacco till, perhaps not to the extent that the Republican Party is. No one has clean hands on this floor.

But the only body, the only people who are capable of cleaning it up are the ones right here, right now, and we have that ability to do it.

There is cynicism across the country, and perhaps there is some even in the gentlewoman's district, because I know there is in mine, those who feel that this democratic process is being taken away from the average citizen on the Main Streets of rural western Wisconsin, and it is going to large money, special interests that are dominating the political agenda out here in Washington; and that is what this debate is all about.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KIND. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman has received a lot of money, big money, $10,000 from a lot of unions, different unions, and I could go through them, but we do not have time because the gentleman does not have the time. My only point is, is the gentleman influenced by this big money that he received in his election?

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, every Member in this House is raising some money. The money that I was receiving was from hard-working men and women.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) has expired.

(On request of Mr. DELAY, and by unanimous consent, Mr. KIND was allowed to proceed for 2 additional minutes.)

Mr. KIND. The point, Mr. Chairman, is that understanding constitutional case law right now in the court's eyes, in the court's holding, is a quid pro quo relationship constitutes corruption, and a quid pro quo relationship is defined as a relationship where money is exchanged for preferential treatment. Perhaps there are coincidences that are beyond belief out there to take a look at legislation that is being passed out here that would certainly fit under any constitutional definition and would give us legal standing to ban soft money, as these bills do.

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Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KIND. I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I would ask the gentleman, is soft money given to candidates directly?

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, no, it is contributed to the party. But we all know standing in this body, too, we all know standing in this body as well the soft money which was originally set up for getting out the vote, and that is now being diverted for independent expenditures and issue advocacy ads.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman would again yield, soft money cannot be used for independent expenditures. Soft money is used for issue advocacy. There is a big difference. Independent expenditures is expressly advocating the defeat or election of a candidate and soft money is not used for that.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, if the gentleman is claiming that soft money is not filtering back into the States and being used in issue advocacy ads, he has not taken a close look at our campaign system in our country today.

I can cite countless examples of how that is happening. The original intent of soft money contributions has been perverted beyond recognition today. That is a strong argument of why these finance reform bills are necessary today.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Why? What is wrong with issue advocacy?

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, part of the issue advocacy component of these finance reform bills is merely asking these groups who are behind the ads to identify who they are so the American people know who is financing this and perhaps will have a better understanding of what the political motivation might be. Neither one of these bills would prohibit issue advocacy ads.

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILLMOR. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) a question, if he would consent to answer it. The gentleman indicated in his debate that we spend too much money on campaigns. I just wondered, I want to ask him what does he mean? What is too much money? Too much money compared to what? What amount of money is appropriate?

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILLMOR. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, let me show the trend. This gives a better idea of what too much money means to the average American throughout the countryside: When we start with soft money contributions of $45 million and $86 million and suddenly it explodes to $262 million.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Can I get a simple answer to the question? How much is too much money?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN PRO TEMPORE

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). The Chair would ask each Member to yield and reclaim time so that only one person is speaking at a time.

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, how much is too much money? I keep hearing this assertion made out here, we spend too much money on campaigns. How much should we spend?

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILLMOR. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, where I come from, and perhaps this may not be true in my colleagues' congressional districts, but the average person in western Wisconsin believes that under the current finance system, even though it is legal for a wealthy individual or group to contribute a million dollars to either political party, that is

too much money. That is ridiculous. It is unbelievable that this democracy of our size allows that to happen. That is too much money.

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman refuses to answer the question. I just wonder, since if we add up all the money that was spent on congressional House races in the last campaign, it amounted to about $218 million. That breaks down to about $3.80 per voter who voted in the election. $3.80. That is less money than we spent on bubble gum in this country.

The gentleman from Wisconsin, every time he talks about corruption and money corrupts keeps talking about the fact, and every time he says that he denigrates every Member of this House.

Mr. Chairman, he raised money just like we all do, and he is claiming that somebody in this House is affected by the money being raised. He will not answer the question, will not answer the question if he is affected by the tons of money he raised.

I am not affected by the money I raise. The gentleman talks about tobacco money. When the tobacco interests and the companies came to me to talk about the settlement that they made and the agreement they made with the President of the United States, I told them not only no, but hell no. I was not about to do what the tobacco companies wanted me to do.

So this whole notion that money corrupts. Then the gentleman has got to look at himself and look at himself in the mirror. Look in the mirror. Look how much money he raised. Has it corrupted him? No, it has not. He is a fine gentleman. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman is a fine gentleman and he is very much involved in this process.

So the point I am trying to make is that the Shays-Meehan bill and others are trying to restrict people's involvement, restrict their involvement in the political process as much as they can. For what reason? Frankly, they have good intentions, but the result of their intentions is incumbency protection.

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, it is quite obvious that there is not too much money in the system just by the facts. The amount of campaign spending as a percentage of GDP is relatively constant at 4 to 6 percent. We keep hearing these exaggerated claims that they cannot back up with any specifics.

Then, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) pointed out the charges that the system is corrupt, somehow we are all corrupt but nobody ever names anybody who is corrupt. We are supposed to create that pervasive feeling.

Mr. Chairman, this is destructive of our institutions and I for one have determined, that is why I introduced the bill to take off all the limits, I am not going to put up with this left-wing morality play. I am going to answer the charges every time they are made that we are spending too much money.

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD).

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, there is not anything more important than the discussion of public issues.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR) has expired.

(On request of Mr. WHITFIELD, and by unanimous consent, Mr. GILLMOR was allowed to proceed for 30 additional seconds.)

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD).

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, there is nothing more important in the discussion of public issues than for the public to be informed. In 1996, Procter & Gamble spent more money promoting its products, $5 billion, than we spend in campaigning for all elections in the U.S., Federal, State and local, $2.2 billion.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN PRO TEMPORE

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Before we proceed, the Chair reminds Members to refrain from profanity.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to make one note before I yield to the gentleman from Maine. We are hearing a lot of comment, people wanting to know how much is too much and talking about whose interests are being concerned. The perception of the American public is clear. They are upset about what is going on in politics and they have the clear perception, whether or not it is reality with respect to each and every Member here.

The perception is that money is a corrupting influence and that money is having an impact, so much so that when Bill Moyers spoke recently to a group, he did an interesting exercise. He had an entire group stand up and asked a third to sit down and identified that that third of the group represented those people who do not bother to register anymore.

Then he had a second third sit down and identified that that was the group of people in this country that while they may bother to register, they do not bother to go out and vote. So the remaining one-third of people represented just that small portion of people in this country that actually are voting now and, in effect, are electing their representatives.

Whatever the reasons are that the other two-thirds are not voting, one clear reason that people express as one reason is that they have the definite perception that money is adversely impacting this system.

Mr. Chairman, one of the speakers earlier talked about Mr. McCarthy running for President. Senator McCarthy, as a liberal, talked about the fact he did not have a campaign unless he had large contributions. Let me turn that around for a second and speak of what a well-known conservative, the Senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater had to say.

> The fact that liberty depended on honest elections was of the utmost importance to the patriots who founded our Nation and wrote the Constitution. They knew that corruption destroyed the prime requisite of constitutional liberty: An independent legislature free from any influence other than that of the people. Applying these principles to modern times, we can make the following conclusions: To be successful, representative government assumes that the elections will be controlled by the citizenry at large, not by those that give the most money. Electors must believe that their vote counts. Elected officials must owe their allegiance to the people, not to their own wealth or to the wealth of interest groups that speak only for the selfish fringes of the whole community.

The American people no longer believe that that is the case, and that is one of the problems that we have, and the perception one of the reasons that we have to address campaign finance reform.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN), who has asked for some time on this.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) for yielding. I want to get back away from some of this rhetoric about free speech back to what the Court itself has said. I want to get back to what the Court itself said in Buckley v. Valeo.

We know this debate is degenerating when we start talking about individual Members and what individual Members raise and whether there is actual corruption with respect to decisions made by any individual Member.

What the Supreme Court has said very clearly in Buckley v. Valeo, that the Congress has the constitutional right to regulate elections in order to minimize corruption or the appearance of corruption. And the Court said it is unnecessary to look beyond the act's primary purpose, to limit the actuality and appearance of corruption resulting from large individual financial contributions, in order to find a constitutionally sufficient justification for contribution limitations.

The question was raised earlier, I believe by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD), what is wrong with soft money? I will tell my colleagues what is wrong with soft money. Right now we have a system, what is left of it after Buckley v. Valeo, that imposes individual contribution limits for individuals and for PACs in the amount of money that can be given to Federal candidates.

Since 1907 in the case of corporations, and 1940s in the case of labor unions, neither corporations nor labor unions can give to individual candidates. Soft money is no longer a loophole, it is a highway. It is the means by which very

large contributions, hundreds of thousands of dollars from some corporations, millions or up to millions of dollars in some cases, are funneled to the national parties. Then they are used for television ads.

Those ads may be issue advocacy, as the gentleman from Kentucky said. But what do those ads say? Watch them in the last cycle. They say: Congressman So-and-so is voting against the environment. Congressman So-and-so is doing this or such. Call him and tell him to stop.

Those are ads intended, they are absolutely intended to have an effect on an election and they are the reason why we need to ban soft money.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to just touch on a couple of points that I have heard during this debate. The first has been there is too much money spent in politics, or there is too little money spent in politics. I think neither one is actually the case.

Mr. Chairman, I think rather what we have is a structural problem in politics that the Shays-Meehan bill begins to address. That structural problem that we have is that we have got diffused cost and concentrated benefit.

Our Federal Government, as we all know, is a very big thing. It is $1.7 trillion worth of spending every year. And if we look at that issue of diffused cost and concentrated benefit, as a conservative we can see it in troubling spots. Again, people do not buy votes. I would agree with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), I would agree with the gentleman from Arizona, I would agree with a whole host of folks on that very point. But it does buy influence. It helps in access.

The guy that is giving a Member $10,000 is a guy they are ever going to pick up the phone for or open the door to. Again, they cannot give $10,000; that is a rhetorical statement.

Take for instance the sugar subsidy vote. That is a classic example. I mean, here is a program that costs the American consumer another $1.2 billion a year in the form of higher sugar prices. It is hardly the kind of thing that I could sell back home in a town meeting. There are always a handful of domestic sugar producers and consequently districts that are affected in our country. Yet all those benefits go down to truly the hands of the few.

In the case of the sugar subsidy, we are looking at $60 million a year that goes in personal benefit for instance to the Fanjul family. The Fanjul family, they are not American citizens. They hold Spanish passports, but they are on the Forbes 400 list and they have yachts and helicopters and a whole host of things.

□ 2115

All this bill is about is trying to limit their level of access versus the level of access of a person in my district who lives in a very simple trailer in Moncks Corner, South Carolina. I think that that is part of the issue that we are dealing with, not too much money, not too little money, but an issue of diffused cost and concentrated benefit in a very big government.

Two, one of my colleagues was earlier holding up both the New York Times and I think it was U.S.A. Today, pointing out how the editorial page in the New York Times was, I think, $85,000; and U.S.A. Today, I think it was $75,000. The point was, hey, they are not controlled in the way they get to advocate a point, but Shays-Meehan would control others.

That is a good thing as a conservative. They are not in the business of arguing for ethanol subsidies. They are not in the business of arguing for grain contracts or for weapons treaties. They are not in the issue of government contracts, for that matter.

But what you have here is a case when you do want their interests limited, because you do not want somebody trying to sell missiles to China to have unlimited access on that front.

The third point that I would make just in the debate that I have been hearing is there has been much discussion, I think I even heard the words verbatim ''we believe you ought to leave the First Amendment alone.'' But the bulk of the people that are suggesting that, and I would say that with all due respect to my colleague from California, would be people that may have voted for, for instance, the religious freedom constitutional amendment last week.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SANFORD. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman is talking about me. The whole religious liberties constitutional amendment was to protect the First Amendment of freedom of religion. It had nothing to do, as the gentleman suggests, in shutting down freedom of religion. It is too big, two different things.

Mr. SANFORD. I think that is the jump in logic. In other words, to suggest that limiting of soft money is eliminating of speech is not the same thing.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield, the courts have held so.

Mr. SANFORD. But in a 5–4 Supreme Court decision, they have also held in a different version a separation of church and States than the one that you voted for.

Mr. DELAY. No, no. The Supreme Court said that we could not practice openly and freely religion in the schools. You are right. We have as a body the opportunity to say, no, you are wrong. We are going to pass the constitutional amendment protecting the freedom of religion. It had nothing to do with shutting down the freedom of speech or religion.

Mr. SANFORD. Which is a great thing. In other words, that is what we are charged to do by the Founding Fathers. I think in the same way, it is a very legitimate point, a very legitimate point to say that, in this debate, we ought to look at limits on the degree to which people can influence a giant $1.7 trillion yearly machine.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I listened with great interest to the debate this evening. I rise to support the Thomas amendment. I also rise to discuss some very interesting comments made by my friend from Massachusetts, followed up by my friend from Maine.

I appreciate my friend from Massachusetts quoting the late great Senator from my State, Barry Goldwater. I think it is important also to remember the context of Senator Goldwater's quote, because, ladies and gentlemen of the House and ladies and gentlemen of America who join us beyond these walls via C–SPAN, a check of the complete Goldwater record indicates that our late great senior Senator was talking about liberty and freedom of expression within the context of those who had that right denied by the coercive actions of organized labor bosses who reached into their pockets against their will to advocate causes with which the rank and file disagreed.

Indeed, I note with interest, this dispatch from U.S.A. Today, May 30, 1996, Dateline, Portland, Maine, the campaign in which my friend from Maine was involved, ''By air, the AFL–CIO has spent more than $500,000 on a series of television ads criticizing Jim Longley's votes on Medicare, student loans, and private pensions. The ads have helped make Portland the political advertising capital of the Nation. From April 1 through September 15, 6,968 ads aired or 41 per day.''

My friend from Maine also offered elucidation of what he called the soft money process. I believe he should know firsthand, as chairman of Clinton-Gore 1992, which was the vast recipient of vast amounts of soft money, firsthand, the Clinton-Gore ticket and the minions of the Washington labor bosses got help that was never really documented.

Again, let me give credit to the left, because in employing so-called campaign finance reform, they ensured in 1974 and years before that there would be no legitimate documentation of the amounts of money spent by the Washington union bosses to the extent that a study from Rutgers University shows us that, instead of $35 million spent by Ball Sweeney and his ilk, they instead spent between $300 million and $500 million to try and influence elections in the Congress of the United States.

Yet, the self-same recipients of that ultimate special interest money would come here to this floor and act as the paragons of virtue and tell us that we need to change our system.

Barry Goldwater was right about something else. When he discussed Bill

Moyers, and I thought it was interesting to see the jump from Bill Moyers to Senator Goldwater, when he said, when he said how hypocritical.

The fact is that we have seen the corruptive influence of people reaching into the pockets of other people against their will, subverting those First Amendment rights, free from documentation, free from the spotlight of the Washington media, except in rare cases. We see all too often through the clear glasses that Senator Goldwater wore, which I wear in representation on my lapel, the real story here and the real culprits.

Two things should happen if we want real campaign reform. Number one, I would suggest to my friends on the left and those well-intentioned friends here on the right, if you want real campaign reform, obey existing laws.

I would note with interest the comments of my dear friend from Wisconsin who seem to imply that the reason the White House strayed into suspect ground and may have violated these rules was because of the current system. No, I would suggest otherwise.

I would suggest that there was a clear, sadly mistaken desperation for cash and a win-at-all-costs mentality that cannot be excused by any type of misdirection play, by any type of masquerading in the public interest to claim that somehow let us clamp limits on those who seek donations of free will from free American citizens.

Let us, instead, maintain the current system, allowing the union bosses to reach into the pockets of every working American who happens to be a member of a union, subverting their rights, and taking their money to go to causes with which they may disagree.

I would suggest, again, to this body, that we should adopt the Thomas amendment. And I would suggest further to this body that let us have a clear examination of what, in fact, has transpired in the past election, in elections before, and let us tell the entire story. Senator Goldwater was talking about the freedom to use contributions, not to have money cynically taken away.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me. Before the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) leaves the hall, I would just like to raise a question.

The gentleman stated that one of the things we should do is to obey existing law. I agree. I agree with that. The gentleman was not in any way suggesting that money spent in any individual campaign of any Member was not consistent with existing law, was he?

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman from Oregon yield?

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman is making my point for me. What I am suggesting that, through previous design of so-called campaign finance reform, a large segment of this society, through coercive tactics, have their contributions undocumented. To that extent, the law is silent.

Mr. ALLEN. The law is silent.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Under a lawyer's definition, that would be existing law. It makes the point that there are those following the human impulse of gaining the system for their own selfish needs.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I yield to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, the point the gentleman makes is actually the right point, because nothing that happened in that election broke existing law. The fact is that the gentleman would like to change the law as with respect to labor dues. So he would seek to change existing law.

But the fact is, what we are here about today is to try to deal with the influence of money in politics. That does not mean that there is some level that is so big that we have to deal with it. What happens with bubble gum, what happens with yogurt is irrelevant.

What we are talking about and what the reformers are saying is this, we need to break the link between Federal candidates, Federal office holders, national parties, agents of the national parties, and giant contributions.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield so that I might ask my friend, the gentleman from Maine, a question?

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. No.

Mr. ALLEN. The gentleman has had his time.

We are trying to break the link, because as the Supreme Court has said on several occasions, we can, this Congress can enact reform in order to prevent appearance of corruption or corruption.

What the Court has also said in another case is that it is because of the risk that corporations that accumulate wealth in the course of their business activities, because of the risk, that those corporations, big money in this society, could unduly influence elections. The Court has said it is appropriate to regulate or to bar contributions from corporations.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mr. ALLEN. Most recently, in the Colorado Republicans case, which was the case dealing with hard money limits, the Court said, if it appears to Congress, if it appears to Congress that the existing hard money limitations could be circumvented because of contributions to the political parties, i.e., soft money, then the Congress could rethink whether or not it wanted to change limits or create limits on contributions to the national parties.

That is why we are here. Because what used to be a loophole is now a highway because there is too much money in this system, soft money. It is being used to influence Federal elections. We need to shut down this system.

It is, in fact, soft money, these unlimited contributions from corporations, from unions, from wealthy individuals to the national parties in the last cycle that is subverting our political process. That does not mean that you go to any one individual and say this result was influenced by big money.

What we have got in this system, in this country right now is a political system gone awry. We need to change it.

What we have got with the Thomas amendment is an attempt to subvert the Shays-Meehan bill. That is what is going on here. The folks who are trying to improve the Shays-Meehan bill with this amendment, with this proposed amendment, are not supporters of reform generally. They are trying to undermine reform. There is no question about it. It may be an argument about free speech, may be an argument about other forms of money. But the fact is that we have got to have campaign reform. We have got to have it in this session. It means a ban on soft money. It means voting down the time.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Chairman, let me just briefly end by talking about this is really something the American public wants. It is something that we have with the Shays-Meehan bill. We have a bipartisan bill. All you have to do when you talk about influences, all you have to do is look at what has happened to the tobacco bill.

Somehow or another, we have to restore the faith in the American public so that everyone has a voice in our system. We need campaign finance reform, and we need it now. The Shays-Meehan is our best chance.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make a couple of comments as I listen to this debate tonight. First of all, I am reminded of the words of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) last night, after an extended debate, that we should remind ourselves that we need to, under the 5-minute rule, move forward at some point and conclude debate and continue on to the next amendment.

The present amendment is the Thomas amendment. I know that we are engaged in a vigorous debate on the underlying amendment, the Shays-Meehan provision, but I think that we need to keep our eye on the ball and to move on so that we can get to other amendments in this process.

I also wanted to make the point that I appreciate my fellow freshmen are here. The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP), I believe it was, made mention that freshmen are still warm to reform. I see my friend the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) and

the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN). Both of those gentlemen have been very active participants in the freshman task force.

□ 2130

And the freshman bill that will come up later on addresses some of the serious problems that have been raised.

My friend, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH), makes mention of the last campaign and the problems in it. And I do not believe that a lack of enforcement, and I say this as a former Federal prosecutor, the lack of enforcement of laws has never been a reason for us not to improve the law.

Certainly we ought to enforce the law, but it is a separate issue when it comes to improving the law. And there were problems in the last campaign that chased after soft money, and for that reason, we should remedy it.

A question was raised, whether we could cite any instances of corruption. Well, that is what some of these committees are investigating, the instances of corruption that deal with soft money and contributions from corporations. But I do not think the issue is necessarily corruption.

I believe the issue is confidence of the American public in our system. And I will point to instances on both sides of soft money.

On the Democrat side, the $600,000 contribution from the Loral Corporation to the Democratic National Committee at a time when that organization was under investigation when they were asking for approval of a technology transfer to China. That hurts the confidence of the American public, and it should not have been done. We should ban that kind of contribution; whether it affects the system or not, there is the perception of it.

On the Republican side, I will cite the instance of Microsoft. When they are under investigation by the Department of Justice, they should not be able to give $200,000 in contributions to a national political party. Whether it affects the debate or not, the perception of the American public is that it does. And that is what I am concerned about, is the confidence.

So I believe soft money is an issue. I think it is an important issue that we must address. And even though I oppose the Shays-Meehan bill for other reasons, I compliment my fellow freshmen for being concerned about this issue and wanting to improve the system.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask a question of my good friend from Arkansas. In his days as a prosecutor, did he petition for the legislature to change laws in lieu of prosecuting those who had broken existing laws?

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, certainly we should never do anything to substitute for law enforcement. The gentleman is absolutely correct. And I am fully supportive of strengthening our ability to enforce the laws. Our committees should be investigating any wrongdoing.

But the problem is clear, and that is soft money. That was the problem, the chase for, in the last campaign. And we should not neglect addressing that problem because of enforcement problems.

I want to come back, and I love this debate, but I think the gentleman from Connecticut is entitled to a few moments here, so I will be glad to yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) if he has some areas that he wants to wrap up. And, hopefully, we will conclude this debate.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman. I have not asked for my 5 minutes, but I will just say that we have strayed a bit from the amendment, and I am concerned that we have the potential for hundreds of amendments, so we maybe should try to come to a debate on certain amendments and then go on to the next amendment. We can still make some of the same points, because they are related.

But what the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) proposes is to strike the severability clause, which basically says that if any provision in this act or amendment made by this act, or the application or the provision or amendment to any person or circumstances is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this act and amendments made by this act, and so on, are still constitutional and remain in effect.

That is a clause that is in most bills. It was in the congressional accountability bill, under the Contract With America, voted for by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and other Republicans, all other Republicans. It was in H.R. 65, the Victim Restitution Act. The gentleman from Texas voted for that as well. It was in the Regulatory Transition Act of 1995 as well as in our Contract With America. This was introduced by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TOM DELAY). It is the same severability clause, and it passed as well.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

First, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that this is the first night of extended debate, and I would say we are all learning from this process. We are all learning as to how much time we should be asking for. We have Members who come and others who are waiting. I kind of hoped that the way the process would work was that we would ask for 5 minutes, and if we asked for an additional 2 minutes, it would be granted without objection, and if there is a reason to extend even further, that it will be the same for both sides. But I think there were some moments where we probably erred in that process.

Also, there were times in this debate where I heard some strong attacks and concerns with other Members, and we just started to go to it and forget what we are debating. We have lots to debate here, and I truly believe we will cover all the territory by the time we do all of the amendments. But right now, what we are debating is the severability clause and whether we should take it out of the Shays-Meehan amendment.

In some cases we pass bills with the severability clause and in other cases we are silent. And when we are silent, the court basically follows the process of considering a severability clause included. But this is a case where the amendment is actually saying that if any part is unconstitutional, the whole bill should be eliminated. There are only a handful of times in a number of years that this provision has been offered. That is my understanding.

And so I say, first, I believe the severability clause should be included, like it was in with most of our Contract With America, like it was with the bill that the gentleman from Texas introduced in the Contract With America, the Regulatory Transition Act of 1995. He introduced it, we voted on it, it passed.

It was in the telecommunications bill, thank goodness, because one small part was declared unconstitutional and the rest remained intact. It was in the Brady bill, thank goodness, because one part of the Brady bill was declared unconstitutional, but not the rest of it.

I believe that some want this amendment because they think that this whole bill that we have—which deals with soft money, which deals with recognition of sham issue ads, which codifies Beck, which has improvement of FEC disclosure and enforcement and deals with franking and foreign money and fund-raising on government property not being allowed—some think they are all intertwined. I do not. I think some parts can stand on their own.

Obviously, everybody will make up their mind. We are going to vote on this tomorrow. But I believe that the other danger is that other amendments will be attached. We will oppose some amendments, but some will be attached because nobody will have the courage to vote against certain amendments because they will be difficult politically. And I would not want to risk the chance that those amendments in particular would then disqualify the rest of the bill.

So I would conclude by saying that we need to oppose this amendment. It is a provision that is in most bills and it certainly should be in this one. And when I see parts of the legislation in 1976 that were declared unconstitutional and other parts that were not, I thank goodness the other parts still stayed there. We can always come back and make changes where we think there is an unconstitutional element that has been taken out, and just come back and address that issue.

So I strongly oppose taking out the severability clause and, in particular,

replacing it with a statement that says if any part is unconstitutional, the whole bill goes. That, to me, is just an attempt to kill meaningful campaign finance reform.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SHAYS. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman keeps referring to the fact that I introduced bills and voted for bills that had severability clauses. I do not know what that has to do with this case where we are making the case that when we are talking about an overall campaign structure, one affects the other.

That is the case we are trying to make here; one affects the other.

Mr. SHAYS. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman, the gentleman did make that case, but in addition, acted like this was a very extraordinary event and that somehow, by our putting the severability clause in the bill, we feared that another part was unconstitutional.

What is fair is fair. I do not believe that when my colleague introduced and voted for the Contract With America, those various bills, that he feared that various parts were unconstitutional. I just want to say that this is a very usual clause to be in a bill. It should stay there. And I hope tomorrow, when we all come to this Chamber, we vote to defeat this amendment.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by commending the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) for all of their work on this legislation. They have spent many, many, many months crafting this legislation to address many of the underlying problems that we have in our current campaign financing system in this country; problems that threaten this institution, that threaten many of our democratic institutions; problems that are corroding the way we make decisions in the House of Representatives, in the United States Senate, and within the administration.

They are problems that the American people demand that we address and that we rectify and that we once again bring them back in to our democratic decision-making process and not bring them in based upon the size of their wallet, the size of their contributions and who they know, but rather, on the merit of their arguments. That is what this, the People's House, is supposed to be doing.

This discussion about the severability amendment is simply a ruse to attack this legislation and to certainly set it up for later attack if it looks like, in fact, it is going to pass. We draw, very often, very complicated legislation in this House. And we know, very often, that we are treading to the end, because people, in fact, are trying to affect court decisions when they draft legislation, when they draft amendments. And to protect the underlying legislation, very often we put severability clauses in those pieces of legislation.

We do it in the State legislatures, we do it in city councils, and they do it in the United States Congress, and we have for many, many, many years.

In this particular legislation, the gentleman from Connecticut and the gentleman from Massachusetts have addressed a number of the problems that we confront in our campaign finance system. Each and every one of those remedies could stand by themselves, and they are very, very important to improving our system. They are very, very important to improving the participation of the American public in that legislation. That is why we want the severability clause, because of those provisions by themselves.

So if a constitutional challenge is brought on one of these single provisions, we will retain the best of this legislation, and that will become part of our campaign financing system, and we will, in fact, have a better campaign financing system than we have today. We will have a less corrupt campaign financing system than we have today. We will have a campaign finance system that encourages people to participate, which our system does not do today. That is why we need this severability.

To throw this up and suggest that somehow this is a trick and this is to allow us to do a lot of unconstitutional things is just simply not the case. The authors of this legislation are far more careful about their legislative duties than that. The people that they have consulted have guided us and are relying on past court decisions.

Yes, we may not do it perfectly, but we should not be in a position where one challenge against a very small part of this legislation can throw out so many other parts of the legislation that are very, very, very important to us.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MILLER of California. I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague from California for yielding to me, and I want to commend all of the sponsors of the Meehan-Shays legislation for the work that they have done, the source of encouragement that each one, especially the original sponsors of the bill, has been to all of us that have yearned for and hoped to make the kinds of changes that we are seeking to make in the campaign financing system that we have today.

We hopefully all remember the day that we came to this floor and we raised our hands and took our oath of office, and we had families sitting in the gallery. I do not think that there is a moment in my life that quite matches that one: my hopes and aspirations for the future, the good wishes of my constituents, whether they voted for me or not.

We start out, really, I think, with 100 percent goodwill. I think the only thing that could match that day was the day that my two children came into this world.

I have to tell my colleagues that if there is one thing that is constantly rubbing down or taking the polish or the gleam off of that magnificent day, that very first day when I became a Member of Congress, is the system by which we are elected, that is, the money in the system. We know it is broken, we know it cannot be defended, but right here on the floor tonight we are debating an amendment that is being offered to this very good piece of legislation.

In my view, it seeks to throw some dust in the wheel, to clog up the wheel, throw sand into the wheel, to jam it up.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

If we are going to talk about constitutional issues and freedom of speech, it seems to me that none of us have very much freedom of speech if we are drowned out by millions of dollars. And so we have to, in the House of Representatives, in the Congress, really speak to the hopes and aspirations of the American people and say to them, yes, we are capable of addressing this; we can rebuild the confidence that the American people should have in this institution.

They know it is broken. They know much of what goes on here is not on the level.

□ 2145

They know that money speaks to this process and that it warps it and that it is corrosive.

We have and should have to corral the political will in this place to reform the system. No bill is perfect. Why? Because human beings are not, so no piece of legislation is perfect. But this is sound. It addresses the things that are really broken down.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, would the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, I would love to yield, but I do not have the time. I would like to complete my train of thought. I have been on the floor since a quarter of 7 this evening to do this.

We can do this, but we have to be very careful to distinguish excuses, throwing sand in the wheels and jamming them up and those issues that really mean something. We are all pros here. We are all pros here. We know what can be done with parliamentary maneuvers. Try to explain that to your constituents. They know it is not for real, they know that there are excuses coming out of this place.

Why do we not reach for the brass ring and say to the American people, ''You know what? We can do it.'' It says, ''In God we trust.'' In the people we trust. 68 percent in the poll in the

Wall Street Journal of the American people said they wanted this system reformed. We can do it, Republicans and Democrats.

Yield and do not succumb, my colleagues, to these things that are being thrown in as excuses, because that is what they are. Let us come through the 105th Congress the last few days that we have, legislative days, and show the American people that we are worthy of their trust, that we can move legislation through this place where it is not encumbered by any money except the interests of the people that we have come here to represent.

Remember that first day our excitement. If we can come to this floor having passed this legislation, having it signed into law, I predict that every day we come to this floor we are going to have that same exhilarating feeling that we did the very first day when we raised our hands, took our oath, and saw all of the endless opportunities without anything getting in the way.

Again, I thank my colleagues. They have given me a great deal of courage and inspiration by what they have fought for and kept the faith. And we are going to keep the faith, and I have trust that we can do this.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. ESHOO. I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for yielding.

I rise to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) for their leadership and their courage for bringing us to this moment of truth. Are we for campaign finance reform, are we for cleaning up the system, or not?

My colleague mentioned the first day when we were all here and raised our hands and pledged to take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. The greatest enemy to our Constitution, foreign or domestic, is the money in the political system that undermines and mutes the voices of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, when Washington was first established as the capital of our country, it was a swamp. In 200 years, it has returned to being a putrid swamp contaminated by the impact of campaign money into the system. Again, against the wishes of the American people.

I rise against this amendment because I see it as an attempt to unravel and undermine the courage of the Meehan-Shays, Shays-Meehan bill. This is a good bill. It strikes a balance.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, would the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. PELOSI. I am sorry, I do not have the time. The gentleman knows I would if I could.

It strikes a balance. That is why we have to keep it intact. We have come to the moment of truth. I ask my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on Shays-Meehan, ''no'' against the Thomas amendment. Let us face this moment of truth. The American people are watching. Let us drain the swamp.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Thomas amendment.

I think when we look at what happened with the campaign finance reform after Watergate and the provisions that were struck down by the Supreme Court, we see a patchwork of legislation that is left that has led to a lot of the problems that we have here today.

Mr. Chairman, I want to refer to a news article that was in the Clayton County, Georgia News Daily back on May 23 of this year. The longest reigning speaker of the house of any state legislators in Georgia, his name is Tom Murphy. And the quote in the headline was by Mr. Murphy. ''I worry about the future.''

It goes on to say that:

> If Tom Murphy could do it all over again today, he would steer clear of politics. Murphy, the longest tenured serving speaker in the country, told the Clayton College and State University Alumni Association that politics has deteriorated into an arena of viciousness and untruths. The candidates are getting so careless with the truth that I worry about the future of this state and the nation. What truly worries me in the next few years, unless something happens, is you will not get a decent person to run for office.

Mr. Murphy never mentioned finances. He never mentioned money. He mentioned untruths and viciousness. That is what we need to focus on. The gentleman sent me an article the other day of a quote, and the quote reads as this. It is titled ''Honesty'':

> We can afford to differ on the currency, the tariff, and foreign policy; but we cannot afford to differ on the question of honesty if we expect our republic permanently to endure. Honesty is an absolute prerequisite to efficient service to the public. Unless a man is honest, we have no right to keep him in public life. It matters not how brilliant his capacity. Without honesty, the brave and able man is merely a civic wild beast who should be hunted down by every lover of righteousness. No man who is corrupt, no man who condones corruption in others, can possibly do his duty to the community. If a man lies under oath or procures the lie of another under oath, if he perjures himself or suborns perjury, he is guilty under the statute law. Under the higher law, under the great law of morality and righteousness, he is precisely as guilty if, instead of lying in a court, he lies in a newspaper or on a stump; and in all probability the evil effects of his conduct are infinitely more widespread and more pernicious. We need absolute honesty in public life; and we shall not get it until we remember that truth-telling must go hand-in-hand with it, and that it is quite as important not to tell an untruth about a decent man as it is to tell the truth about one who is not decent.

That was by Theodore Roosevelt in 1900.

Mr. Chairman, yes, we can change campaign laws. And there are probably some that need to be changed. We have not investigated thoroughly enough yet to determine just which ones. But that is not the problem. The main problem is compliance and untruths. The change in statutes will not change either compliance or untruths.

It has been mentioned about unions and dues from union members and how in the 1996 campaigns some of them were erroneously used. I have with me a flyer that was published in Georgia. On the back of it it says the ''Georgia State AFL–CIO Not Profit Organization.'' On the inside the cover says their rules and it walks through several things, Medicare, pensions; and it goes on to say, and this is entirely against the law, the current law, this is where compliance has not been adhered to, it says, ''Vote no on Collins. Vote no on Milner and Collins.''

That is where your noncompliance comes in. The untruths are in the breeding of this. We can change the law. We can change every law in the campaign finance arena. But if we do not change the hearts and the souls of those who are involved in the government, we are not doing anything.

That is the problem. It is not written words down. It is inside the individual. It is not how we get here as much as what we do to get here and what we do after we get here.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, this has been a long evening. But then again, this has been a long wait. I have been in the Congress now for 6 years trying to find some way to get campaign finance reform passed. And I remember when I first got here, sort of a brash young freshman legislator and I got together with another member from Oklahoma. He is a great Member, had a lot of experience, Mike Synar.

Mike had a lot of courage and he was smart. And he sat down with me and he said, ''If you want to work on campaign finance reform, boy, let me give you some tips. The first thing you have to do is you have to work with Republicans. Because if we, as Democrats,'' and we were the majority party then, ''if we, as Democrats, propose our bill, it is not going to have credibility. We have got to get Republicans on board. So the first thing you need to do is find a group of Republicans who are interested in truly passing campaign finance reform.''

And that is what we did. Every year that I have fought for campaign finance reform, I have worked with Republicans so that we could level the playing field equally among Democrats and Republicans.

The other thing that Mike Synar said was, ''You know what? My experience is that independent expenditures are the thing that are going to kill American politics because congressional elections are not going to be about the people who live back home anymore.''

Mike Synar knew something about independent expenditures, because the

National Rifle Association and other groups spent millions over the years trying to defeat him. So he said, ''Whenever you come up with a bipartisan bill, you got to make sure that you deal with independent expenditures.''

And here we are, 5 years later, finally on the verge of having a vote before this House. And it gets emotional at times because I know how it feels having worked so long and so hard on a bill to have it misrepresented on the floor. It gets frustrating.

Members say the bill is unconstitutional. We have been working with constitutional scholars on this for the last 5 years to make sure it does pass constitutional muster. And other Members bring up the campaign reports of whatever Member stands up. It is irrelevant.

The bill that is before us does not deal with each individual Member's campaign report. It deals with soft money and independent expenditures. It deals with giving the FEC the teeth it needs to enforce the laws.

Why would we want to go after soft money, my colleagues ask? We have spent millions of dollars investigating and having public hearings on the soft money abuses in the system. Everyone in America, whether they be Democrat or Republican, agrees the soft money system is totally out of control.

This is relatively new by the way. In 1976, there was not any soft money spent in the presidential election. In 1980, only $19 million was spent. In 1984 there was $22 million spent. In 1988, there was $45 million. 1992 it goes up. In 1994, it goes up. And now it is $263 million. This is a recent phenomenon in American politics, soft money or the expenditures over and above the legal limits that are in force that are in law and that are constitutional. That is what this debate is really all about. That is why we are here.

I want to tell my colleagues that I believe we are on the verge of a majority of Members, Democrats and Republicans, who are ready to vote for Shays-Meehan but it is going to be tougher than that. As if it was not tough enough to form a consensus among Democrats and Republicans, a lot who have had great ideas about campaign finance reform. No, it is getting even tougher.

□ 2200

We have the potential of 260 to 270 amendments. Tonight we have been debating since 5:30 and we are not through the first one yet. That is what we are up against. It is a challenge. Tempers are going to get short at times, short fuses, when representations are made that are not accurate. But I believe we are on the verge of a historic vote, a vote that will have Democrats and Republicans joining together, not only in a bipartisan way but a bicameral way, because the other body has already voted, a majority, for this bill.

We can pass this bill. We can pass this bill. I urge Members of both sides of the aisle to defeat this amendment tomorrow morning, because it is a poison pill. It kills the bill. And after we are finished with that, I urge Members to get rid of these poison pill amendments and pass this bill and have the courage to move forward.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, this week the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights celebrates and commemorates its 35 years of fighting for justice in America. Its theme is Answering the Call for Equal Justice.

As I listened to my colleagues, I want to agree with the gentleman from Georgia. It is a question of compliance. But it also is a question of laws. The call for justice is, one, to have the right law, but, as well, to be able to comply.

The Shays-Meehan legislation dealing with real campaign finance reform brings both of those to the table. It calls for justice for America. It emphasizes democracy. It puts the control of politics in the hands of the people. And it provides us with the law which we should obey.

We can spend a lot of time tonight talking about money in the Buddhist temples, or maybe we should talk about the alleged loan schemes to funnel $1.6 million of foreign cash into U.S. elections through the National Policy Forum which then-RNC head Haley Barbour solicited these funds on board Hong Kong businessman Ambrous Young's yacht in the Hong Kong harbor. We can stand up and call the roll of the many times that we have not complied with our own laws. But maybe those laws are faulty, and maybe men and women have frailties and character flaws. Now we have the time to deal with real campaign reform.

We have already heard that 81 percent of the moneys that fund campaigns come from men, only 19 percent from women. What it simply says is we have got to even the playing field. We have got to enhance, if you will, the pennies, the nickels and the dimes that women give, the dollars, the five-dollar bills, so that the moneys lift everyone equally. But obviously some of our gentlemen control these large pockets of soft money. They control PACs. And so there is an unequalness there.

I want to see everyone have an access to this political process and to be heard. My good friends on the other side of the aisle realize that this amendment on severability is a poison pill, so that if you find one sentence in the Shays-Meehan legislation as being unconstitutional, all the work that we have done throws out, throws out a very valid piece of legislation.

What the American people would like to see is the real words of the candidates, one on one. They would like to see some of our media provide the free time so that we can be heard one on one. This legislation goes to the question of all the signs of outside dollars that may come in and influence negatively the process of the American people. I believe the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights is right, calling for and answering the call for equal justice. The Shays-Meehan legislation frankly tells you how to do it. Take all of the excess money out of this process. Let democracy be run truly by those who go to the polls every single time there is an election, by those who read and analyze, by those who believe in philosophies and make their decisions at the voting booth based upon the decision that has been given to them by this Constitution and by this flag, the right to make a democratic choice.

I would hope my friends in the 258 amendments that we have, we do not even have 258 more days in this year, much less in this session, would realize that we need to get down to the business that the American people have asked for. We need to lift all boats at the same time. We need to equalize and make sure that the least of those who have nothing more than their vote can be heard in the halls of Congress.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, let me say something. There was a lot of disagreement over this legislation, and I am not here to point any fingers. But we voted on bankruptcy legislation just a couple of weeks or so ago. In this article by the Wall Street Journal, it said that the lawyers and bankruptcy judges and law professors and even the National Bankruptcy Commission said the bill was not the right bill. But in the same article, it said that the American Financial Services Association paid a lot of money in campaign contributions, and we have a bill that may hurt working men and women. I hope we can fix it. But what we really need to do is to fix it permanently and ensure that the loudest voice in this House is that of the average working man and woman. That is why we need to get rid of this amendment and support the Shays-Meehan legislation.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, there is a movie that I enjoyed, it was called Groundhog Day. Some of my colleagues may have seen Groundhog Day. Maybe the Chairman saw it. I know they have theaters in Arkansas, Mr. Chairman.

I am a member of the Committee on House Oversight. We have heard all of these arguments. The House of Representatives was set up, and fortunately we have the Committee of the Whole and here we are tonight as the Committee of the Whole and we are repeating all of those arguments. We had 40 Members and these Members are very well intended. I heard the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE), I heard the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), I heard the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), I heard every one of the sponsors almost, or I read their testimony for their proposals. The problem is we have 435 experts. The gentleman from

Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) was just here and showed his brochure of how he was offended and beaten up by soft money or union money.

The problem we have here is this soft money, and we would love to ban it, I would love to ban it, we looked at this, the problem we have is we have $263 million here, but we heard the gentleman from Arizona who said that there was a half a billion dollars of union money that you could not even put on this chart in addition to that. And, Mr. Chairman, we are all going to be here again because we are not going to be able to solve this unless we can solve all of these problems. We do have an impediment. The impediment to soft money, and we have heard it, is the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the first amendment, the free speech clause.

We have been through this debate in committee, we are going to be through this debate again. Our committee tried and we did our best. We brought out four bills, one on disclosure, one banning soft money, one banning union money, and one banning very clearly foreign contributions. And unfortunately we are here again.

So we will repeat on campaign finance reform Groundhog Day. We are going to hear all the arguments again. We are going to have the same votes again. It is just a prediction. It is going to be another Groundhog Day.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I think this has been a pretty good debate, although Members do not want to seem to yield to questions. I think that is unfortunate, so I am going to try to put this in perspective and bring us back to Earth.

There are two different kinds of campaign money. One is hard money, one is soft money. The hard money that we are talking about is money that goes directly to candidates to elect or defeat candidates. That is heavily regulated and supported by the Supreme Court to do so. What the Shays-Meehan bill wants to do is stop the soft money.

Now, the gentlewoman from Texas talks about the Lawyers for Civil Liberty.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights.

Mr. DELAY. The Lawyers for Civil Rights under Shays-Meehan could not raise the money to advocate the kinds of issues the gentlewoman advocates under Shays-Meehan. They would be regulated. I do not understand why she would support Shays-Meehan.

She talks about leveling the playing field. The Supreme Court said that the concept that government may restrict speech of some elements of our society in order to enhance the relative voice of others is wholly foreign to the first amendment. We are not trying to level the playing field here. What they want to do in the Shays-Meehan bill, they want to ban soft money. Ban it altogether. And, therefore, bring moneys under the hard money type of regulations. They want to recognize people like Lawyers for Civil Liberty; if they want to run ads against TOM DELAY because he does not support their advocacy, they want to call those sham type ads and they want to regulate those, too. I do not want to regulate your group. I want them to be able to come at TOM DELAY and let us have a discussion of the issues. They want to codify Beck. But the problem is that you have to remove yourself from the union in order to take advantage, you have to resign from the union to take advantage of their Beck codification. This is all tied together. This is all part of what we are talking about here.

The gentleman from Georgia is absolutely right. Honesty does not come from a bureaucrat. Honesty does not come from the Shays-Meehan bill. You cannot bring honesty to this Chamber, and I might say, this Chamber is not corrupt. This Chamber is not corrupt.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). The time of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) has expired.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. MICA was allowed to proceed for 3 additional minutes.)

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I continue to yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, the point here is that honesty does not come from a bureaucrat or from a law. I have said it before and I will say it again, I do not know one Member of this body that is corrupted by money. As the gentlewoman said, we ought to lift all boats. Under Shays-Meehan and other kinds of restrictions, she would not be elected. She would not be able to get 58 percent of her money from PACs, because they would eliminate PACs. They would eliminate soft money. They would not be able to elect a woman and let her get in a boat and be lifted. That is what we are trying to say here.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAY. I cannot yield. I do not have the time, and I am trying to finish so the other gentlemen can use the time. You would not yield to me, so I just have to keep moving.

Mr. Chairman, the point I am trying to make here is, real reform is opening up the process, not shutting it down in favor of incumbents. That is what they are trying to do. This is all interconnected. The Thomas amendment is saying that if one part of this is struck down, then it all should be struck down, because the Shays-Meehan bill is connected and interconnected.

Therefore, I beg Members to vote for Thomas. Because if you are for real reform and not shutting down the process, if you are for real reform and opening up the process and inviting more people in, then you would not only pass the Thomas amendment but defeat the Shays-Meehan bill.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD).

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, the cosponsor of the bill from Massachusetts mentioned that they had 127 legal scholars working on this project. They issued a report called Buckley Stops Here, the 20th Century Fund, not-for-profit group.

This is paid for by what we would call soft money, contributions. And we want them to use soft money to speak about an issue and try to overturn the Buckley case if they want to do that. But if Shays-Meehan is adopted, they are going to curtail the speech of not-for-profit groups because in essence they do not like what these groups are saying.

You are curtailing the amount of money that can be given to 501(c)(3) organizations and you are expanding the definition of express advocacy.

Mr. SHAYS. Express advocacy involves——

Mr. MICA. Regular order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

The Chair would like for each Member to yield and to reclaim his or her time so that one person will speak at a time.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman has 30 seconds.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, and I am sorry I do not have too much time, but I tried to point out and I serve on the committee, we looked at this, we have been there, we have done it. We see $263 million in soft money, another half a billion not even on that chart. We are not going to resolve this because you do not have the votes on either side, and 218 votes in this House beats the best argument.

□ 2230

So people want the laws enforced, people want disclosure, and people want a ban on foreign money. Those are the things we can agree on. Those are the things that we brought out as a committee.

The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has done his best. I urge his amendment.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of Meehan-Shays.

Americans want fundamental change, a complete overhaul of the campaign finance system. They want meaningful limits on frenzied political spending, and they want them now.

Finally, today, we have an opportunity to give the Americans what they want. We have an opportunity to end the abuses of the electoral process.

We must ban soft money, rein in the exploitation of issue ads, limit individual contributions, and restore the faith of the American people in our political process. We must pass Meehan-Shays.

The Republicans have tried to kill reform time and time again by breaking promises, strong-arming reformers off of the discharge

petition, and by introducing a hodgepodge of bills that the House already rejected and a constitutional amendment that they didn't even believe in. Now, they are attaching hundreds of poisonous amendments to a bill that would genuinely reform this system.

Why? Because the Republican leadership is trying to protect a broken system that works for them. The Republican leadership wants to keep the flow of big money coming from special interests and silence the voices of working men and women and their families. The Republican leadership wants to kill reform.

Representative RAY LAHOOD even admitted last week that the Republicans were ''trying to talk it to death.''

But talk is cheap. Today, I challenge my Republican colleagues to act. Prove that you are not in the pockets of the special interests. Restore America's faith in its elections. Support genuine campaign finance reform and bring a true victory home to the American people. Vote for Meehan-Shays.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Does any other Member seek recognition?

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I wonder what the process is to encourage the Chair to ask for a vote on this issue, and then I think we will have a rollcall vote tomorrow.

What is that process?

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Are there any other Members who would like to speak on the amendment?

If not, the question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

The question was taken; and the Chairman pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 442, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) will be postponed.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Am I correct to understand that once the Thomas amendment has been considered and now that we have to roll that vote that we could not consider another amendment tonight?

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. It is the Chair's understanding that there will be a motion to rise.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Am I correct that there was an understanding that we would cease debate at 10 o'clock tonight or when we completed debate on the Thomas amendment? If that is correct, it would appear to me that we are slowing down the process of amendments that need to be considered. I think we could do another amendment tonight within 30 minutes, as tired as everybody is.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. A motion to rise, if made, is preferential.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HAYWORTH) having assumed the chair, Mr. DICKEY, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2183) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS OF THE MEXICO-UNITED STATES INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to the provisions of 22 U.S.C. 276h, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Mexico-United States interparliamentary group, in addition to Mr. KOLBE of Arizona, chairman, and Mr. GILMAN of New York, vice chairman, appointed on April 27, 1998:

Messrs. DREIER of California,
BARTON of Texas,
BALLENGER of North Carolina,
MANZULLO of Illinois,
BILBRAY of California,
SANFORD of South Carolina,
HAMILTON of Indiana,
FILNER of California,
DELAHUNT of Massachusetts; and
REYES of Texas.

There was no objection.

NASHVILLE'S HOUSE THAT CONGRESS BUILT

(Mr. CLEMENT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute, revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to report on my experience with the House that Congress Built and to urge all my colleagues to participate in this project.

Last year Congress passed House Resolution 147, which encourages all Members to participate in and to support activities to provide homes for low income families. So far 361 Members of Congress have agreed to participate in the House that Congress Built to make the American dream of home ownership a reality for low income families.

On Friday, June 12, I teamed up with the Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity and the Homebuilders Association of Middle Tennessee to break the world's record for building a habitat home. We not only broke the record, we shattered it. With 250 builders and 50 supervisors. Working tirelessly, the 3 bedroom 1,000 square foot home was built in an amazing 4 hours 39 minutes and 8 seconds. It was an unbelievable experience that I had the opportunity to participate in.

I also had opportunity to meet Millard Fuller, the founder of Habitat for Humanity International. It appears now we will be in the Guinness Book of World Records. I urge all my colleagues to join Habitat for Humanity in building homes in their districts. And let me mention it again—we built that home in an amazing 4 hours 39 minutes and 8 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to report on my experience with ''The House That Congress Built'' and to urge ALL my colleagues to participate in this project.

On Friday, June 12, 1998, I teamed up with the Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity and the Homebuilders Association of Middle Tennessee to break the world record for building a Habitat home. We not only broke that record . . . we shattered it. The record had been 5 hours, 57 minutes and 13 seconds. With over 250 framers, builders, drywallers, electricians, plumbers and landscapers working tirelessly, the three bedroom, 1000-square-foot home was built in an amazing 4 hours, 39 minutes and 8 seconds.

I was very proud to be a part of this team. The hard work that Habitat for Humanity and the Homebuilders Association of Middle Tennessee devoted to this build is inspirational and heart warming. Witnessing the hard work of 250 builders and 50 supervisors who worked on the house was truly a sight to behold.

This project was a blessing to participate in because it gave me an opportunity to get to know the family who now owns the Habitat house. This personal contact is extremely important because it puts a face on poverty. When we give poverty a name and not merely a statistic, the problem reaches into our hearts and we feel compelled to do our part in helping to eliminate poverty housing in our country.

This home was built for Marilyn Winston and her 12-year-old son Ramonze. They had never owned a home and were living in a drug-infested and violence-filled neighborhood. Ramonze could not go outside to play. Marilyn, a registered medical assistant, is very devoted to the education and safety of her son and works very hard to provide for him. In their new home, Ramonze has his own room, a yard to play in and a safe neighborhood to live in.

At this building, I had the privilege to meet Millard Fuller, the founder and president of Habitat for Humanity International. Millard was a self-made millionaire at age 29, when he and his wife, Linda, sold all their possessions, gave their money to the poor and struck out on a search for a focus in their lives. Their experiences led Millard to create Habitat for Humanity International, dedicated to providing homes for low-income families.

Today, Habitat has over 1,400 affiliates in North America and partners in more than 50 nations. The 70,000th home will be built in September.

I think we can all agree with the principal benefits of home ownership. A home is not merely a shelter—it provides a family with an opportunity for growth, prosperity and security.