

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection it is so ordered.

PAUL KIRK ON "WHAT WE CAN DO FOR DEMOCRACY"

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, Paul Kirk, who is well known to many of us as a distinguished past chairman of the Democratic Party, recently wrote an eloquent and insightful article on the state of politics in America today. Entitled "What We Can Do For Democracy," Mr. Kirk's article discusses the growing political apathy of Americans, and challenges citizens to take a more active role in government. This issue goes to the heart of our democracy, and I believe that all of us who are concerned about it will be interested in Mr. Kirk's ideas. I ask that his article may be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Boston Globe, Nov. 3, 1999]

"WHAT WE CAN DO FOR DEMOCRACY"

(By Paul G. Kirk, Jr.)

Alarms have sounded; no one has panicked; the response has been universal. Much time and an estimated \$200 billion have been spent on readiness and remediation plans to avert a Y2K computer calamity. But how well are we responding to a Y2K alarm of greater consequence—the distressed health of America's democracy?

John Kennedy once admonished: "Democracy is never a final achievement . . . it is a call to an untiring effort." In this twilight of "America's Century" and before the dawn of a new millennium, now seems a logical time to take stock of our effort.

A few weeks ago the Kennedy Library observed its 20th anniversary by inviting more than 75 distinguished business leaders, college presidents, public officials, nonprofit executives, and journalists to begin the assessment. They found the following symptoms:

An all-time high level of cynicism, disaffection, and citizen disconnect from politics coincides with an all-time high level of powerful interest money being spent on political campaigns.

Money is now the all-consuming obsession of candidates and parties, the deterrent to political competition, the barrier to equal representation, the controlling factor in nominations and elections, and the corrupting influence of public policy decisions.

62 percent of Americans eligible to vote in the 1998 midterm election chose not to, while less than a majority voted in the 1996 presidential election.

Those of us who know less, care less, participate less, and vote less than other eligible voters are the 18- to 24-year-olds.

Personal consumption and borrowing are at an all-time high while our savings rate is at an all-time low.

Record market growth and new prosperity will likely result in the largest transfer of individual fortune and economic capital to the next generation in our history.

Concurrently, the abrogation of any obligation to transfer to the next generation some appreciation of civic capital and public responsibility is more palpable than ever in our history.

Writing of an earlier democracy, historian Edward Gibbon put our symptoms in perspective: "When the Athenians finally wanted not to give to society but for society to give to them, when the freedom they wished for most was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free."

Let's face it. We, too, have become so obsessed with self-gratification and gain that

we view our rights and freedoms as entitlements and ignore the civic duties and responsibilities that ensure them.

George Santayana warned: "Those who fail to remember the past are condemned to repeat it." To avert a repeat of an Athenian calamity, Americans' attitudes must change.

When the Kennedy Library conference asked what we must do to strengthen citizenship and service for the future, the attendees responded:

The present "access for sale" culture must be replaced with comprehensive campaign finance reform that provides some public financing and free TV time to candidates who agree to reasonable spending limits. Only this can renew citizens' trust that our votes matter and our voices will be heard equally.

Civic literacy education must be ingrained from grade school through college with extra-curricular citizenship activities that include possible school credit for community service.

An attitude of welcome inclusion and continuing citizenship education must be available to all "new" Americans.

Each measure is critical, but who will assure their adoption? John W. Gardner counseled that the "plain truth is that government (and other powerful institutions) will not become worthy of trust until citizens take positive action to hold them to account." You and I can ignore the alarm, thus contributing to the calamity, or we can take positive action to rescue our democracy.

Citizens must launch a campaign to renew our national character and the spirit of citizenship and participation. One by one, our individual response can inspire a collective national chorus reminding others that our freedom and democracy are directly dependent on our own patriotism, active citizenship, unselfish service, respect for pluralism, and intolerance of the present condition.

Mark my words. If you and I commit "an untiring effort" to this national civic campaign, communities, organizations, educators, religious and business leaders, the media and opinion shapers, political candidates and parties, and, yes, the President of the United States whom we elect one year from now will follow.

Think about it. It's called "consent of the governed." It's our democracy, and it's a noble campaign you'll be proud to win.●

U.N. ARREARS PACKAGE

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to call on Congress and the President to make sure the UN reform package is signed into law before we recess. As Chairman of the International Operations Subcommittee, I have worked hard to help forge a solid bipartisan United Nations reform package.

Our message in crafting this legislation is simple and straightforward. The U.S. can help make the United Nations a more effective, more efficient and financially sounder organization, but only if the U.N. and other member states, in return, are willing to finally become accountable to the American taxpayers.

The reforms proposed by the United States are critical to ensure the United Nations is effective and relevant. Ambassador Holbrooke has been pushing other member states to accept the reforms in this package in return for the payment of arrears. He has succeeded beyond all reasonable expectations, by

gaining our seat back on the budget oversight committee—the ACABQ. But he needs this bill signed into law in order to convince the UN that reform will bring certain rewards.

But passing this UN package is not just about a series of reforms for the future. It impacts directly on the ability of the US mission to achieve our goals at the United Nations right now. The US does not owe most of these arrears to the UN. It owes them to our allies, like Britain and France, for reimbursement for peacekeeping expenses. And our arrears are being used as a convenient excuse to dismiss US concerns on matters of policy. Depriving the US government the ability to use these funds as leverage is irresponsible; after all, our diplomats need "carrots" as well as reasonable "sticks" to achieve our foreign policy goals.

Unfortunately, the Clinton Administration and my colleagues in the House of Representatives are jeopardizing the payment of our arrears over a policy that I call "Mexico City lite." While I support the proposal to prohibit US government grant recipients from lobbying foreign governments to change their abortion laws, I do not believe it should be linked to the payment of our UN arrears. If these unrelated issues continue to be tied, then there is a good chance neither proposal will be enacted.

I am hopeful that my colleagues in the House and the Administration will see the wisdom of adopting measures that will enhance America's ability to exert leadership in the international arena with the revitalization of the UN. The State Department Authorization bill should be allowed to pass or fail on its own merit—not on the merits of the Mexico City lite policy. This agreement is in America's best interest, and the best interest of the entire international community.●

MAYOR JOE SERNA

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, a great American died this past weekend: Mayor Joe Serna Jr. of Sacramento, California. Mayor Serna was much beloved by his constituents, family, and friends. We will all miss him terribly.

Joe Serna and I became friends while working closely together on gun control, education, and other issues of mutual concern. He was a man of great vision, courage, energy, warmth, and humor.

He was also a living embodiment of the American Dream: a first-generation American who helped to reshape the capital of our Nation's largest state.

Joe Serna Jr. was born in 1939, the son of Mexican immigrants. As the oldest of four children, Joe grew up in a bunkhouse and worked with his family in the beet fields around Lodi.

Joe never forgot his roots. After attending Sacramento City College and graduating from California State University, Sacramento, he served in the