

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 10, 2002]
CRASH KILLS TWO IN STERLING

Two people were killed after a two-car crash involving a drunk driver last night in Sterling, Virginia State Police said.

The crash happened on Route 28 near Route 625 about 8:30 p.m., police said. The victims were believed to be a man in his sixties and a boy.

One of the drivers was also injured in the crash and was flown to an area hospital, police said.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, not surprisingly in this political city the debate over campaign finance reform has taken the shape of people talking about which party would be advantaged, but there is a more profound issue, more profound even than the kind of subtle corruption that campaign money takes. It goes to the nature of democracy.

We have two systems in this country. We have an economic system, capitalism, which is based on inequality. It is inequality which drives that system which has been so productive of wealth and which is so broadly supported. If people are not unequally rewarded for their labor, if people are not unequally rewarded for the wisdom of their investment decisions, if people are not unequally rewarded because they respond to consumer demand, capitalism does not work. So inequality, some of us want to keep it from getting excessive, but it is at the heart of that system.

We also have a political system, and the heart of that political system is equality. That was the genius of the American Constitution, not fully realized at the time, a goal that we have been striving towards with some success ever since. What we have in our public policy is a tension between an economic system built on inequality where people are unequally rewarded and unequally powerful and a political system in which people are supposed to be equal, in which people's preferences are supposed to count each equally one for one.

What we have in America today is a corruption of that system in the broadest sense. As money has become more and more influential in politics, the inequality of the economic system has damaged the ability of the political system to function in a way that carries out equality. We cannot allow the inequality that is a necessary element of our capitalism to swamp the equality that is supposed to be the element of our political system.

That is why the Shays-Meehan bill is so important. It reduces the role of money. Soft money is a way that the unequal part of our system gains undue influence over the place where it is

supposed to be equal, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the profound philosophical reason why campaign finance reform ought to reduce the role of money, ought to reduce the extent to which inequality undermines formal equality.

Interestingly, some of those opposed to the bill have implicitly acknowledged this. I have heard people say, on the Republican side mostly, we cannot go ahead with that kind of a forum; if we get rid of soft money, the next thing we know, labor and environmentalists and all those people will dominate the election. We have, in fact, had people almost explicitly say that the danger in campaign finance reform is that the people will have too much to say.

Well, that is the way it is supposed to be in the political part of the system. The financial, the economic system has inequality, but in the political system people are supposed to have equality. That is also the answer to those who say that somehow this violates freedom of expression in the first amendment.

I should note, Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat interested to see Members that I have served with for a very long time who for the first time in their careers have become champions of free speech. That is, there are Members who have supported virtually every restriction on free speech, including censorship on the Internet and other rules that the Supreme Court has thrown out, and they have voted for them cheerfully, but when it comes to the power of money to swamp the equal part of our political system, suddenly they become advocates of free speech. Indeed, it seems that many of them are for free speech as long as it is not free. They are for free speech when it costs money, when they can buy it.

In fact, if we look at the purpose of our Constitution and our political system, if we look at the role that equality is supposed to play, we understand, because we do not just interpret the Constitution in the abstract, we interpret it in its context, our political system is meant to be one in which people are equal, and what we are doing with campaign finance reform is restricting the ability of money to swamp that equal sector.

It does not impinge on free speech as we have ever understood it. Everyone in this country will be as free as they ever want to say what they want to say, to speak out. We do say that they cannot use money, they cannot use the inequality that has accrued to them through the capital system to undermine the electoral system.

So, for that reason, precisely because the very heart of the democratic political system is at stake, I hope that we will pass the campaign finance reform bill in an appropriate form, in a form that can go right to the President's desk, because it is essential that we vindicate the equality principle against those who are the beneficiaries of inequality who are seeking to erode it.

TRIBUTE TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is February 12, 2002, and on this calendar date 193 years ago today, just scarcely two lifetimes ago, came into the world the 16th President of the United States of America, the father of the Republican Party, the leader who ended slavery and at the same time saved the Union.

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I speak, of course, of President Abraham Lincoln, born humbly in Kentucky, raised proudly in Indiana, who then moved and pursued a public and adult career in Illinois.

The Bible tells us, "If you owe debts, pay debts. If honor, then honor. If respect, then respect. I thought today, in the midst of all our debates about other pressing national issues, as now having the privilege of being able to call Abraham Lincoln, the Congressman Abraham Lincoln from 1848, a colleague, that it would be all together fitting to rise today and remember the occasion of his birth, and to do so, Mr. Speaker, with his own words.

Abraham Lincoln spoke of many issues, but of course freedom and the abolition of the evil of human slavery were chief among them.

April 1859: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, cannot long retain it."

August 1858: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy."

July 1858: "I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created equal."

And in June of 1858: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the union to be dissolved, I do not expect the House to fall, but I do expect it to cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other."

Abraham Lincoln was also a man of very profound faith, which inspires many millions to this day, writing: "I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day."

In September of 1864, he wrote: "In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book." And in the creation of the very first proclamation of Thanksgiving and a national day of prayer in October of 1863, the President wrote: "I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe this last day of