know Sarah Palin was right, and we need to stand up to them.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3189, WATER RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4015, THE SGR REPEAL AND MEDICARE PROVIDER PAYMENT MODERNIZATION ACT Of 2014; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 17, 2014, THROUGH MARCH 21, 2014.

Mr. BURGESS (during the Special Order of Mr. GOHMERT), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113–379) on the resolution (H. Res. 515) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3189) to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use agreement on the transfer, relinquishment, or other impairment of any water right to the United States by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4015) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and improve Medicare payments for physicians and other professionals, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from March 17, 2014, through March 21, 2014, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MONEY IN POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Chamber this evening. I want to talk about the topic of money in politics, which is something I think Americans across the country are increasingly anxious about because it really jeopardizes the voice they should have in their politics, in their democracy in their own government.

Yesterday, there was a special election in Florida's 13th Congressional District, and the results of that election will get commented on at length in the coming days. People will try to make forecasts about what it means for the 2014 election cycle. Generally, they will analyze it. They will look at the data and they will prognosticate as to what the implications of it are going forward.

A lot of that commentary will miss what I think is the most sinister aspect of the election yesterday that was held in Florida, and that is the tremendous amount of money, the tremendous amount of money that poured into that election, not from ordinary, everyday citizens, not from the people who really have a stake in the outcome. They were the ones asked to go to the polls, but the money that poured in there that bought advertisements, to the tune of about $12.7 million, almost $13 million spent on that campaign, about 30 percent of it was donated to the candidates themselves. So 30 percent of that $13 million was donated to the candidates themselves. The rest of the money came from outside sources—party committees, super PACs, anonymous donors, the ones who have been flooding the airwaves in the last couple of election cycles with negative advertising. That is where the great majority of the money that came into that special election yesterday was sourced, and that, I think, is a harbinger of things to come.

If you look back at the 2010 cycle, you look at the 2012 election cycle, both at the congressional level and at the Presidential level, tremendous amounts of money pouring into campaigns and into elections, much of it coming from sources that don't identify themselves, secret money, these big super PACs who weigh in and try to determine the outcome of elections.

Where does that leave the everyday citizen? Where does that leave the person out there who is sitting at their kitchen table, who is watching their television and is seeing all of these negative TV commercials pouring in? Where does that leave them in terms of their feeling about whether they have a voice in the process?

I talk to my constituents, I listen to the way they feel about the current system of funding campaigns, and there is an increasing sense of disillusionment out there, deep cynicism that election outcomes are determined by Big Money and special interests and that the voices and opinions and priorities and concerns of everyday citizens are being cast aside. That is the legacy of the influence of Big Money and special interests on our politics today.

So yesterday's election in the 13th District of Florida put a fine point on it. It demonstrated how much money can go into one special election. It was historic, $13 million being spent. More importantly, it is a lesson as to what we are looking at down the road. This idea that if you have got a big wallet you get an extra voice in our democracy, that somehow your opinion and your ideas count more because of the size of your wallet and your ability to throw millions of dollars into campaigns, well, that is not what a democracy is about; that is plutocracy. That is a government and a system that is dominated by Big Money and special interests and leaves the voices of everyday citizens behind so that they start asking themselves: Does my voice matter? Can I have an impact? Do my ideas count? If I am only able to write a check for $25 to a candidate who I think will do the right thing for me, can that $25 check compete against a $1 million check that some big donor can write to fund a Super PAC?

This is why people across the country, it is not the only reason, but it is one of the main reasons why people across the country are so disaffected with Washington and Congress and government, because they feel like their voice is being drowned out by the big-moneyed interests out there.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do something about this because if we are going to restore the confidence and trust of Americans across this country, they need to believe again that their voice matters. They need to believe that when they are trying to understand the issues in an election and follow the debate and become informed, that that information will come to them from responsible sources, not from these shadowy hidden secret donors out there that have found a way to dominate the airwaves.

So that special election yesterday I think was a warning to us all that this trend towards Big Money and special interests weighing in to what ought to be a democratic process that is owned and invested in by everyday citizens, that that trend is continuing and it is worsening.

□ 1930

At the end of that path lies deep, deep cynicism on the part of the American people. You can feel it; you can almost touch it when you go out into your district and you talk to your constituents who are angry and frustrated and want to see this place respond to their concerns and to their needs.

So what can we do about this? I said a moment ago that we have got to do something soon; we have to address this cynicism that people are feeling, or they are not going to trust us at all. They are not going to believe that we can deliver for them in the people's House.

This is the House of Representatives. It has the name the ''people's House.'' We run every 2 years. We are as close to the people as elected representatives can be. They want to see that we are listening to them.

Right now—I said this last week—in some ways, when it comes to the relevance of this body to the average American out there, we are hanging on by a thread.

We are hanging on by a thread because, increasingly, they think that we answer to Big Money and special interests, and we stop listening to the average person out there.

So we need to do something about this. We need to fix this. We need to

recognize that there is a problem, and we need to take meaningful steps to address it.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, about a month ago, joined by over 125 original cosponsors, I was proud to introduce something called the Government by the People Act, which is an effort to create a new way of funding campaigns that puts everyday citizens back at the center of the equation.

It says: no longer are we going to seed the financing and funding of campaigns to Big Money and special interests. We are going to come up with another way of doing it, a way that puts everyday citizens in a place of owning their democracy again, of feeling like they have a voice.

Already within the last month, we have seen, across this country, more than 400,000 people who have become citizen cosponsors of the Government By the People Act because they are desperate to see a change which gives them their voice back at a time when they feel—as those residents of the 13th District in Florida felt over the last few weeks—that their voice isn't the one that matters; it is the voice of Big Money and special interests and the super-PACs that seems to carry the day.

So the Government by the People Act would encourage people to participate in the funding of campaigns, small donors who would be assisted by a tax credit—a refundable tax credit of $25, to make it easier for them to participate on the funding side of campaigns.

It would bring matching dollars from a freedom from influence matching fund that would come in behind those small donations and amplify them and lift them up, so that candidates would begin to pay attention to everyday citizens for the funding of their campaigns and not be so dependent on Big Money and special interests. That is the promise of reform that is embodied in the Government by the People Act.

We even provide that candidates who are true grassroots candidates who go out there and make the case to their constituents and earn the support of their constituents in these small donations, that those candidates, when they get into the final days of a campaign in an election, if a super-PAC starts to come at them and try to wipe them off the field—off the playing field, there is some additional resources that can help them stay in the game, can keep their voice in the mix, so they can get to Election Day.

I believe that, under those circumstances, many of those candidates who turn to their own constituents, who turn to small donors, who turn to everyday citizens to fund their campaigns can be competitive and can win, even in the face of these super-PACs and the big money that is pouring into campaigns.

So this is real reform, Mr. Speaker. I was very pleased, as I said, that we had a number of original cosponsors who joined us when we introduced the bill about a month ago.

One of them, who has been listening as carefully as anybody out there, to what everyday citizens are saying about this and joined us as a cosponsor on the bill and can really speak to this, I believe, from the heart, is my colleague ALAN LOWENTHAL from California.

I would be happy to yield some time to him now.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you. I really want to thank the fine gentleman from Maryland, who has worked so long and tirelessly on ensuring that unlimited campaign spending does not drown out the voice of the people. I want to thank him for putting together a bill that gives the public a chance to be heard over big money interests.

A little bit, Mr. Speaker, about my own experience, when I first ran many years ago for city council and then I went on to the State and came here to Congress—when I first ran for city council, it was a very difficult time in my district.

It was a time where we actually had a period of where—when I first was elected, where we had martial law because we had rioting because of—after the Rodney King decision in southern California.

I walked my district, and I heard from everyone that their voices weren't being heard, that the city at the time was not listening to them; so I felt, as important as any piece of legislation, was to give people a chance to come together to create something to have their voices heard.

I spent that first year, when I was elected, working with my community in groups, and we decided that campaign reform limiting the size of contributions would enable our city to move forward again and would bring people together, and they wanted to be able to have a chance to participate. We did it, and we put it on the ballot, and it overwhelmingly passed.

I realized, as I went forward, first to the State legislature and now, here, to Congress, that the best way to fight against unlimited campaign spending by outside individual action committees and individuals who are capable of spending unlimited amounts of money—short of amending the Constitution to repeal Citizens United—is to do exactly what Congressman SARBANES has done, give a voice to ordinary citizens. That is what we should be doing.

Congressman SARBANES' bill, H.R. 20, the Government by the People Act, is a comprehensive reform package, designed to combat the influence of Big Money politics. As equally important, it is to raise civic engagement, and it really is to amplify the voice of ordinary Americans. That is what we should be hearing. That is what we are hearing every day in our districts.

The bill would magnify the impact of small donations from average citizens, allowing Congressional candidates who only take small donations to be competitive with candidates who are backed by outside groups, who are capable of raising and spending large amounts of money.

For example, if this bill becomes law, individuals will be given a $25 refundable ''my voice'' tax credit per year to help incentivize and spur small-dollar donations to candidates for Congressional office. People would be feeling that the government is asking them to contribute and to participate.

Candidates now who forego contributions from super-PACs and only accept donations of under $1,000 would be eligible to a 6 to 1 match by small donors—that is people who are donating under $150—from a newly established freedom from influence fund.

Do you know what this will mean to the average American who says: If I contribute a small amount, it doesn't mean anything?

All of a sudden, we are saying: you count, your contribution means something.

According to the Federal Election Commission, in 2012, individual small donors were outspent 3 to 1 by outside groups. We need to figure out how to empower average citizens whose voices are drowned out by outside money from shadowy organizations.

We have to shift this balance of power away from wealthy interests to ordinary Americans, to people who are asking that their government be responsive to them.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 20, the Government by the People Act, and I urge the Speaker of this House to bring this vital bill to the floor of the House of Representatives.

Give us the opportunity to vote for democracy, to vote for the people of this country.

Mr. SARBANES. I thank the gentleman. I might ask him one question because my sense is that, if you have a system like this in place, not only will you empower everyday citizens to feel like their voice truly does count—and that would increase participation—you would have people, I think, coming back into the political town square who have now fled the town square because they are cynical and disillusioned.

But my sense is it would also create more access for candidates who, right now, are shut out of the process because they may not be in a position to raise the big dollars that you have to raise these days to run a race.

There is a lot of good people out there who would like to try to run for Congress, perhaps, but they don't know a lot of people who have a lot of money; but if there was a system that rewarded small donations to their campaign and provided public matching funds coming in behind that, they might be able to run, and they might be able to be competitive.

I wonder if you have some thoughts about that.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I agree completely.

People decide to run frequently—or want to run—maybe even better than

decide, they don't decide—they want to run because they believe that they can be the voice for those that do not have a voice, for people in their community who feel disenfranchised, people like themselves who just want to participate and feel that they have no voice.

Then they get involved in this process, or they think about it, and they realize that that doesn't matter. It doesn't matter who you are listening to. It doesn't matter who you are accountable to. It doesn't matter that you really care about creating a sense of community and involvement and that people have a responsibility to participate themselves.

All that matters is how much large money you can raise, and that is what the rules are.

I think that that balance between funding elections and listening to people has gotten way out of whack. That has discouraged so many people from wanting to run because they are now confronted with the reality.

It makes no difference that you are tied to a community and you give voice to people in that community. The only thing that makes a difference is how much money you can raise from large interests. I think that does a tremendous disservice to this institution and to all institutions that depend upon public support.

Mr. SARBANES. Again, I want to thank my colleague for his support of this reform effort, for joining us as an original cosponsor of the Government by the People Act.

We think there is real momentum here. We have 140 Members of this body now that have joined as cosponsors; but there is something else happening, which is exciting, and I think offers some new opportunities for this kind of legislation.

We have had these efforts in the past, and some of them have gotten attraction you would like to see; others have not.

But there is something new happening. There are organizations—national organizations across this country who are forming a coalition. This consists of many of the good government groups and reform groups that have been in this space for a long time.

□ 1945

But there are other people coming to this issue. There are other people who are joining the fight to push back on the influence of Big Money and special interests in our politics and in our government. Environmental groups like the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, civil rights organizations like the NAACP, and labor organizations are getting behind this effort because they understand that the change they want to see—protecting the environment, making sure that our civil rights laws are being enforced—too often is being thwarted by the influence of Big Money, so they have adopted this issue as a priority for their organizations. They are joining this coalition.

This is not just about the influence of Big Money on the outcome of elections. Oftentimes, that is where the focus gets placed. This is also the effect that Big Money has when it comes to governing because the reality of it is that, if you have an institution that becomes increasingly dependent on Big Money and special interests, then when it comes time to vote on important policy matters, it is just human nature that the institution will tend to lean in the direction of where that money comes from and lean away from everyday citizens.

The promise of this legislation is that, if everyday citizens and matching funds become the source of powering campaigns, then when the candidates who are elected get here to Washington, the only people they will owe are those everyday folks who helped to power their campaigns. They will have an independence that will allow them when they go to make policy to really think about the issues that are at stake. The fact of the matter is the tremendous amount of money that pours into this place from PACs and other special interests can gum up the system so that it doesn't work.

I would be interested in my colleague's observations on a couple of quotations of former Members of Congress. These are very interesting. I am going to read a quotation from former Senator Bob Dole, Republican minority leader, who said in 1982:

> When these political action committees give money, they expect something in return other than good government. It is making it much more difficult to legislate. We may reach a point where, if everybody is buying something with PAC money, we can't get anything done.

That was Republican Minority Leader Bob Dole in 1982 before the trend had gotten to the point where it is now.

I would be interested in my colleague's observations just on how money comes in and how it can actually begin to influence the way policy gets made here in Washington.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. On many different levels.

Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that, today, people say that government—the House of Representatives and the Senate—is dysfunctional. Yet, as you pointed out in that quote, Senator Dole saw a long time ago, when at least some things were getting done and more things were getting done, that we were beginning to go down the wrong path, that the influence of money was stopping us from really looking at the critical policies that affect the Nation and from debating those and listening to ordinary citizens here.

As we talked about, when ordinary citizens are cut out and when the only people who get to visit and to talk to us are those who contribute large amounts of money to our campaigns, it is they who have special access. Theirs are the bills that get brought up. They are the ones we listen to because everyone stops being beholden to the policies that brought them here—what they want to do to form good government—and they are beholden to what will get them reelected and to the large amounts of money that come in.

So I agree. It is interesting that Senator Dole said that. That is now over 30 years ago when we did not heed the warning of listening to citizens of creating a system that not only would decrease the role of large, outside interests but would, as you have done, increase the role of ordinary citizens to actually be listened to and be able to bring their thoughts to bear because we would become accountable to them. I think that is where we are today as that accountability is not there.

Mr. SARBANES. I appreciate it, and I will follow up on what you just said.

There is another quote that I would love to read from Senator Warren Rudman, a Republican from New Hampshire, who was a force here on Capitol Hill when he served.

He said:

> Money affects whom Senators and House Members see, whom they spend their time with, what input they get; and make no mistake about it, the money affects outcomes as well.

This is exactly what you just said. You can understand why everyday Americans are getting so fed up.

I went and hired a film crew. I decided I was going to go interview some people in my district at one of the local fairs. I just wanted to get their views on this issue. So I went out. I spent 2 hours and stood in the central artery of this festival.

I said: I am Congressman SARBANES. I want to just ask you two questions. The first question is: What do you think of Congress?

They said: Do you really want to know?

I said: I wouldn't be here otherwise.

They told me what they thought about Congress, and you know what they think about Congress. All you have to do is look at the latest survey, which shows that our approval rating is hovering around 10 or 12 percent. You can't run a country if the institutions that are supposed to be the instruments of democracy are held in such low esteem.

The second question I asked them was: What do you think about the influence of Big Money on our politics?

What was amazing—these were Republicans, Democrats, Independents—is that it was as though they had gotten together ahead of time and had scripted their answers, because they were all the same: the fix is in; the Big Money crowd runs things in Washington; my voice can't be heard; my voice doesn't matter. This is the way people feel when you actually ask them to talk about this issue, so we have to do something about this.

The good news is that we have a bill that we have worked on really well. We have gotten a lot of people from not just here in the Chamber, who are people who are sensitive to this, but from

people out there in the country who care about this issue. We have crafted something that, I think, passes the test of addressing in a meaningful way the cynicism and anger that people feel, this desire to get their government back, to get their voice back. They should know that there are people here who are determined to make this kind of change with the help and support and momentum and advocacy that can come from people—everyday citizens—around the country.

I am very pleased that we are joined as well this evening with another person who was an original cosponsor of the Government by the People Act. He is relatively new to Congress but not new to a commitment and a passion around this issue. One of the first conversations we had was about: How do you reach out to everyday citizens and make them feel that they are really part of the process? that their voices really can be heard?

It is a real pleasure to yield to my colleague from Texas, BETO O'ROURKE.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am very honored to be here with my colleagues from California and from Maryland. I am especially honored that my colleague from Maryland would invite me to say a few words today. He has been, truly, one of the real bright spots for me in my first session in Congress.

To give you a little context and a little background on why that is the case, like my colleague from California, I had the privilege of serving on the city council in El Paso for two terms. I represented there a constituency of between 60,000 and 70,000 people, so about a tenth of the constituency that we represent here in Congress.

To win those elections to be able to serve on the city council, like my good friend from California, I went door-to-door to meet my constituents—to meet those who were likely to vote in this election—to make my case for why I might be the best alderman or council member to represent their interests on the city council. Then, by Election Day, after having spent maybe $40,000 or $50,000 total—a tenth of what you would have to spend in a very conservatively managed congressional race—we ended up having the good fortune to win and serve in the city council.

Not only was that the best way to get elected, but it was for me, as a new member of the city council in El Paso, Texas, the best way for me to understand what my constituents' interests were, the questions that they wanted to have answered and what their expectations were of me as their representative on the city council.

So, when I made the decision to run for Congress, I chose to run for a seat that was currently held by an incumbent Member of Congress. I ran for that seat in the primary, which was going to be the decisive election in that election cycle. Precisely because we didn't have access to the kind of big money that we are talking about today—the political action committee money, the big donor money across this country and even the big money in El Paso, Texas—as the mother of invention with the necessity of finding those voters and in being able to connect with them, we went door-to-door again, this time in a constituency of 700,000 people. It was a very broad and a very long canvassing effort that lasted over 9 months and had me knocking personally on more than 16,000 doors.

While my good friend from Maryland has actually modeled the Government by the People Act concept in his own district, I think, more out of virtue and more out of an effort to prove that this works and to understand what the opportunities and limits are of a different campaign funding paradigm—and I can't thank him enough for doing that because he has tested it and has proven it—we did something similar but out of necessity. Again, as with the city council races, we were fortunate enough that the case we made to the voters prevailed. We were fortunate enough to be elected to sit here in this Congress with these great colleagues I serve with now.

I will tell you that a very rude awakening was delivered when after I had won this seat through the primary election, which was the dispositive election of the two in our election cycle, the number one issue that anyone wanted to talk with me about was not what policies were I likely to support, what committees did I want to serve on, what did I want to get done in my first term in Congress. Most of the conversations, unfortunately, revolved around money. Where was I going to raise my money from? Who was I going to give the money that I raised to? Who was I going to hire as the campaign person in Washington, D.C.? I didn't know that the creature existed until that point because we had had the good fortune of being, in some ways, buffered from money in that first race.

So much centered around money as I came to Congress. You don't run for Congress to raise money. You don't run for Congress to spend money. You don't run for Congress to meet lobbyists and to meet those who run political action committees; although, there are plenty of nice people in those categories. You run for Congress because you want to get something done, because you believe in ideas that are bigger than yourself—things that are going to help the communities that you serve, issues that are going to help define your country that you want your communities to have a voice in. Those are the reasons I ran for Congress. Unfortunately and sadly, those were not the things that most people up here wanted to talk about.

I was able to talk with Lawrence Lessig, a professor at Harvard, who is somebody, if you haven't seen his lectures, you can find on YouTube—or if you have the chance to see one in person, you really should. He is someone who has put a lot of thought into and who has written about this subject and who has delivered some very compelling lectures about the influence of money in politics.

So, as I was met with this challenge of how to respond to the demands for money in politics and in my new career as a Member of Congress, I started to do some searches on the Internet, and I found one of Lawrence Lessig's lectures. He brought up a really important point, which was, when we have an election for Congress, there are really two elections.

□ 2000

There is the election that we all think about when we think about an election for Congress, and that is the election that takes place at the ballot box, but there is also an election before that for the money. How do you convince the people who have control and access of the money that typically goes into a congressional race that you are a good bet, that you fit within their interests, and that you are going to be accessible to them should you win that second election at the ballot box? That first election, in most cases, is really the decisive one.

So one of the things I like so much about the Government by the People Act is it opens up that first money election to not just the special interests, not just those who have legislation pending before Congress, who have an ax to grind, literally, here on the floor, but to those people that we represent in all of the different precincts in El Paso County and all the different neighborhoods, the streets, the homes. Those people, through a refundable tax credit, are able to have their voice heard and help decide who the field will be in a congressional race. I think that is awfully important and desperately missing right now to encourage truly competitive congressional elections.

When you look at the reelection rate for a Member of Congress from 1950 to today, when you look at the rate, I think it is somewhere around 93 percent. That really shouldn't be the case. We want this body to reflect the diversity, the difference of opinion of race and gender, and all the great things that make up who this country is.

By and large, it is very difficult to do today, because once you are in Congress, you have access to that money. You win that first election for the money, almost deciding that second election at the ballot box, and it makes it very difficult to have competitive elections against incumbent Members of Congress.

I am sure that we are in the minority of our colleagues here who want to encourage more competition for our jobs. I really think that is the right thing to do.

If we want to renew our democracy, have a Congress truly reflective of this country, I think we want to make sure that every single person has a voice in the elections that decide the makeup of this body.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am just very honored to be an original cosponsor on this bill, honored to join in this effort, and honored to join all the great grassroots organizations across this country that are raising the level of awareness about the need to change our campaign finance and our election system in this country.

I am very hopeful that we will be able to prevail upon our colleagues, especially those on the other side of the aisle, to see that it is in everyone's interest to have a body that truly reflects the American people.

Mr. SARBANES. I thank my colleague.

Before we wrap up, I want to ask him and my colleague from California as well to comment on the kind of response they are getting as they talk to their constituents about this kind of reform.

We are all very familiar with the cynicism and frustration. We encounter that on a daily basis. Sometimes it is so deep that it can be hard to get the attention of people to say to them, We hear you. We understand the frustration. We are trying to do something about it.

I have begun to find that as I talk to people about the Government by the People Act, about this idea of a My Voice tax credit that would help them make a small contribution to support a good candidate that they want to see be competitive and successful, when I talk to them about the Freedom From Influence Matching Fund, think about that.

Right now this institution is largely shackled by dependence and influence of Big Money. The Freedom From Influence Matching Fund comes in behind those small donations and makes it possible for a candidate to run their campaign by turning to everyday citizens.

So as I talk to people about that and our ability to begin pushing back on super PACs, I am encountering some hope out there. People are skeptical. They have a right to be. I would rather have them be skeptical than cynical. I would rather have them have some hope and be ready to get out there and fight for this reform because I think we can make a difference.

I would be curious to hear from my colleagues because I am starting to feel that. I am seeing a positive, cautious response that this can really make a difference as we move forward in elections and governing.

I would be curious to hear, Alan, what is happening in your district as you talk about it.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. In listening to this discussion and to your presentation about the bill to basically give government back to the people, listening to Congressman O'ROURKE talking about what it is like to go door to door and talk to people, and then you are asking what are people saying, I think what I am hearing as I go out is that we have lost, in many ways—what has happened because of money in politics—the ability to talk to people. It is not necessary anymore.

The thing is, when you talk to people, this is what they say: I want to have a voice. I want to participate. I want to be part of this great democracy.

Less and less does that make any difference. You can win office without talking to people. You don't have to talk to people anymore. You just have to raise large amounts of money and let that money spread a message. What we are saying is, that is not only bad for the institution, that is horrible for the democracy that we live in.

It is time to give back this democracy to our communities. It is time to recreate a sense of community. It is time to do what Congressman O'ROURKE has said, which is to create competitiveness, to create a sense that people can listen and they can participate. They can if they are not part of the purchasing of this House, and that is what it has been now—the purchasing of this House.

Rather than having the selection of people being due to your being able to convince people that you are listening to them and what you are proposing is in their best interest, it is really what is in the best interest of those that are contributing. That is what it is all about. This takes us another step closer.

When I talk to people, first, they are very grateful that I am even talking to them now. They are thankful that I am coming out to talk to them about this. Not enough people are talking because we don't have the time to talk to people because too much time is spent raising money.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I have to agree with much of what my friend from California just said.

El Paso, Texas, just had its primary elections this past week. In El Paso, the turnout was 11 percent. So really one of the smallest minorities of citizens who are able to vote, who have that right, have the freedom do exercise it, actually chose to do that.

That small minority, 11 percent of voting age in El Paso, made the decisions for who is going to represent us in county government, in Congress, and on down the line.

So that cynicism that you heard at the outdoor market in Maryland we see reflected in the polls and the turnout in El Paso. I think it is because of the same reasons that you cited. I think people feel that it is a closed system, they don't have access to it, why bother participating. The rules are going to be the same, regardless.

By nature, we are social people. I don't know that we would be in these positions if we weren't. I like town hall meetings. We hold a general interest town hall every month. We hold special town halls. We have held town halls on the public bus system where we get to talk to our constituents. They have no place to go. They can't get out the doors because the bus is moving. We get to tell them what we are doing up here, and I am accountable to them. I have to answer the questions that they raise with me.

As my friend from California said, it is wonderful. It shouldn't be this way, but they are impressed I am even there and listening. That should be. That should be the bar below which we never drop. We should always be there to listen and engage and solicit opinion and feedback and direction from our constituents.

Government By the People will encourage that. Right now, if you have to raise a lot of money for a congressional race, which probably accounts for many, if not most, of the Members that we serve with, your time simply from a time value perspective is best spent with those large donors who can write the biggest checks.

With Government By the People, you now have the incentive to spend time with your constituents, compel them with your argument and with what you have been able to do in office and what you are committing to do in office that you are the best bet to represent them for their future and for their children's future. With that you earn not only their vote in the ballot box, but that first vote that Professor Lessig talks about—that financial commitment to you as a viable candidate.

I think my constituents want me making that pitch to them, both as voters and potential donors, much more than they want me to make that pitch here to corporate interests who are headquartered in D.C., who may never have been to El Paso, Texas, and have no real understanding or sensitivity to the concerns and needs that we have here.

The last thing that I will say that really contributes to that sense of a closed system, again quoting from my favorite source on this, Professor Lessig, who says:

The pernicious effect of these large-dollar donations is not really on your core issues.

Issues 1 through 10 are your core convictions. That is what you ran on. That is what people expect from. You are never going to sway from them. No amount of money is going buy you off, but issues 11 to 1,000—and we vote on thousands of issues every year—become much more persuadable for Members, I think, when you have large amounts of money involved. If you don't know much about issue number 259 because it doesn't really affect your district, you are not a subject matter expert in it, you have never really thought about it before, and someone is offering to give you $5,000, you are probably going to listen to their side of the story and you may not listen to other one.

So I don't know if that is corruption. It certainly comes quite close to it. It is certainly not the way that I want nor my constituents want this body to run itself and govern our country.

Again, Mr. SARBANES, I am so grateful that you introduced this. I am so

grateful that we have so many cosponsors. I look forward to working with you to hopefully pass this and make this law in this country.

Mr. SARBANES. I want to thank my colleagues for joining me here this evening to talk about this critical issue of the influence Big Money and special interests on our politics and the way we govern here.

Professor Lessig has gotten a good shout out—and he deserves it—because he has really studied the effect of money on this institution.

There is a path to reform, and that is what the Government by the People Act is. I will close by sort of capturing this as a matter of voter empowerment.

In this country we view as sacrosanct the right to vote. We do everything we can—or we should do everything we can—and we even have legislation in front of us to make sure that we are preserving people's access to the ballot box, to the voting booth because the franchise is the most important thing in a democracy. It is the foundation of what American democracy is all about—protecting that franchise and making sure that people have that franchise.

If people go into the voting booth and they pull the lever and they exercise their franchise, and the day the person they send to Washington arrives and has to start representing Big Money and special interests, then what happens to the franchise? What happens to the voice of the person who went in there and pulled that lever?

So the journey of empowerment, getting to the ballot box is just part of it. You have to protect that franchise so that when the candidate gets there, they can keep representing the interests of the people that voted to send them to Washington.

That is what the Government by the People Act is all about, because if you power your campaign with funds from small donors and a Freedom From Influence Matching Fund, when it comes time to cast your vote, the only people you are answering to are those citizens that you represent. That is the promise of the Government by the People Act—to create a government that is truly of, by, and for the people.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

REVISIONS TO THE AGGREGATES AND ALLOCATIONS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET RESOLUTION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2014.

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 404 of H. Con. Res. 25, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014, I hereby submit for printing revisions to the aggregates and allocations set forth pursuant to such Concurrent Resolution, as deemed in force by section 113 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, Public Law 113–67. The revision reflects the budgetary impact of H.R. 4015, the SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act of 2014. A corresponding table is attached.

This revision represents an adjustment for purposes of enforcing sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. For the purposes of the Congressional Budget Act, these revised aggregates and allocations are to be considered as aggregates and allocations included in the budget resolution, pursuant to section 101 of H. Con. Res. 25 and H. Rept. 113–17, as adjusted.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN,
Chairman.

BUDGET AGGREGATES

(On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars)

	Fiscal Year	
	2014	2014–2023
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,924,837	[1]
Outlays	2,937,044	[1]
Revenues	2,311,026	31,095,742
SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment and Modernization Act of 2014 (H.R. 4015):		
Budget Authority	900	[1]
Outlays	900	[1]
Revenues	600	−12,700
Revised Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,925,737	[1]
Outlays	2,937,944	[1]
Revenues	2,311,626	31,083,042

[1] Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2015 through 2023 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress

DIRECT SPENDING LEGISLATION—AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE 302(a) ALLOCATIONS FOR RESOLUTION CHANGES

(Fiscal years, in millions of dollars)

House Committee on Energy & Commerce	2014		2014–2023 total	
	Budget Authority	Outlays	Budget Authority	Outlays
Current Allocation	358,134	358,717	4,927,478	4,926,519
SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment and Modernization Act of 2014 (H.R. 4015)	900	900	−46,200	−46,200
Revised Allocation	359,034	359,617	4,881,278	4,880,319

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION REFERRED

A joint resolution of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S.J. Res. 32. Joint resolution providing for the reappointment of John W. McCarter as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on House Administration.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 13, 2014, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4960. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Modoc and Siskiyou Counties, California, and in All Counties in Oregon, Except Malheur County; Termination of Marketing Order No. 947 [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-13-0036; FV13-947-1 FR] received February 26, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4961. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Tomatoes Grown in Florida; Increased Assessment Rate [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-13-0076; FV13-966-1 FR] received February 26, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4962. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Colorado; Decreased Assessment Rate for Area No. 2 [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-13-0072; FV13-948-2 FIR] received February 26, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4963. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Washington and Imported Potatoes; Modification of the Handling Regulations, Reporting Requirements, and Import Regulations for Red Types of Potatoes [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-13-0068; FV13-946-3 IR] received February 26, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4964. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting annual report on the current and future military strategy of Iran; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4965. A letter from the Administrator, Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, transmitting a report on The Availability and Price of Petroleum and Petroleum Products Produced in Countries Other Than Iran; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4966. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting memorandum of justification; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4967. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4968. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4969. A letter from the Comptroller General, Government Accountability Office, transmitting the U.S. Government's Fiscal years 2013 and 2012 Consolidated Financial Statements; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4970. A letter from the Chairman, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting