Meehan bill without amendments, it will be the gun manufacturers through their contributions, who will determine whether we ever address the question of gun violence in our society.

And certainly, as we have seen in this abominable, huge trillion-dollar tax cut proposed by the Republican leadership, unless we get effective campaign finance reform, it will be the special interests here in Washington, who continue to write loopholes for themselves in our Tax Code, designing it as a more and more complex code where the ordinary, hard-working American family has to pick up most of the cost of Government and the special interests manage to avoid paying their fair share.

The debate in this Congress today on this bill will determine on whether or not we really require complete disclosure by the so-called independent campaigns when they are really campaigning with unregulated, undisclosed money for a handful of special interest candidates.

Secondly, it will eliminate the soft money contributions, the unreported, unregulated, unlimited contributions that these same special interests, the pharmaceutical companies, the insurance companies, the tobacco lobbyists dump into these campaigns to tie up the Congress and to control its agenda.

I believe that what we need to do is not just some slight housekeeping amendments, as have been proposed, to thwart the Shays-Meehan bill, but we need a clean sweep of the system.

If the Shays-Meehan bipartisan campaign finance reform has any defect, the defect is that it does too little, not that it does too much. But it does represent an important first step on a bipartisan basis to overcome the deficiencies in our current system, which permit a stranglehold through special interest contributions on the operations of this Congress.

Doris Haddocks, a woman from New England, who has referred to herself as ''Granny D,'' is 89 years old. She began a walk out in California. I believe she has about reached the Mississippi River, walking by herself across America, as an 89-year-old great grandmother, to speak out and draw attention to the need for reforming our campaign finance system and getting so much of this special interest money out of our system.

I would say to my colleagues that she has a better chance, a much better chance, of completing her walk step by step across the wide expanse of America, ''from sea to shining sea;'' she has a much better chance to accomplish that objective than this Congress does to ever escape special interest domination unless we reform our campaign finance system.

We need true, genuine reform. Without that reform, this Congress and its entire agenda will continue to be set largely on the basis of who gave how much to whom.

I believe that campaign finance reform, certainly the modest steps we propose today in the Shays-Meehan bipartisan campaign finance reform, will not correct every wrong in this Congress. But without real, meaningful, comprehensive reform, the American people will continue to be wronged by the special interests that dominate this Congress.

Let us approve bipartisan reform today.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning hour debates, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 23 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

O give us peace, O give us hope,
O give us light above.
O God, from whom all blessings flow,
We thank You for your love.
Bring us faith and give us hope,
And keep us always true;
That whatever path we walk,
We walk that path with You. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

IMPORTANCE OF MINING INDUSTRY TO AMERICA AND ITS FUTURE

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, there are some Members of this body that would like to eliminate the American mining industry. However, many of them do not realize how important this industry is to America and to its future.

Without the mining industry, we would not have the system of transportation that enables America to get to work and be productive. In fact, we would not have a refrigerator that preserves and keeps our food cold and would not have a bed to sleep in or even a house to live in, not to mention that the combined direct and indirect economic impact of the Nation's metal mining industry amounts to more than $112 billion per year.

The metal industry paid $523 million directly to State and local governments, $620 million in taxes and fees to the Federal Government, $7 billion to other businesses for supplies and almost $3.5 billion in wages and benefits. By the time this $11.6 billion circulates throughout the economy, the metal mining industry directly had a $112 billion impact on the Nation's economy.

Mining is not just about our quality of life, however, or the hard working families. It is also about the contributions it makes to medical advancements, our schools, neighborhoods, State and local and Federal Governments.

Mining is a partner with government, with communities all across America.

PASSING SHAYS-MEEHAN STRIKES A BLOW FOR DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

(Mr. UDALL of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, today we have the opportunity to put democracy back in the hands of the people. Increasingly, the power of the special interests and big money have had their sway in the Congress. Now is the time to let the people's voices be heard. By passing the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill, we will be striking a blow for Democratic principles. Shays-Meehan will restore confidence in our democratic system. It will inject new integrity into the process and it will assure

us a more responsive and vibrant democracy.

Last year, a large bipartisan majority passed Shays-Meehan. We must have the courage to do the same this year. I urge my colleagues, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, to vote for passage of meaningful campaign finance reform.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION ON EAST TIMOR

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, this Member rises to advise his colleagues that he intends to introduce a resolution this afternoon regarding the institution in East Timor. Among its provisions, this resolution notes the abject failure of the government of Indonesia to fulfill its responsibility to guarantee the safety and security of the people of East Timor and calls on the government of Indonesia to terminate the current violence in East Timor.

The resolution also expresses the support of the House for a United Nations Security Council-endorsed multinational force for East Timor which, under duress, President Habibie has agreed to permit.

Australia is willing to lead this force and should be commended and supported. We need to get that force into East Timor now. The United Nations surely knew that some degree of violence would follow the announcement of the election results. It is a tragedy they were so unprepared for the rampage of the militia forces.

Given the human tragedy that has been unfolding in East Timor and the pressing need for the House to speak out for action against the violence and mayhem there, it is the intention of this Member to move this East Timor resolution through the Committee on International Relations and bring it to the House floor as expeditiously as possible.

Therefore, any colleagues who would like to be original cosponsors of this resolution should contact the subcommittee at 67825 this afternoon.

TRIBUTE TO CHICAGO JOURNALIST PHIL WALTERS

(Mr. RUSH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise to pay tribute to the life of a respected journalist, a superb writer and a true Chicagoan. Phil Walters covered the streets of Chicago with his own unique style and in his own brilliant way. He shared Chicago's life and times with millions of television viewers for more than 30 years.

My relationship with Phil began some 30-odd years ago when as a reporter for NBC's Channel 5 he covered me in my work as a civil rights activist. Even then, as a young journalist, Phil's insightful reporting and the passion he brought to telling Chicago stories proved to be award winning. The man and his work will be long remembered and long cherished by Chicagoans for years to come.

Phil Walters passed on Sunday, September 12, 1999, and is survived by his wife Paula Weiss and his son Tyce. Our condolences are with his family and with his friends.

ELIMINATE THE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY NOW

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker. I have often asked from the well of the House a basic question. That is, is it right, is it fair, that married working couples with two incomes pay higher taxes just because they are married? I have often asked, is it fair, is it right, that 21 million married working couples pay $1,400 more on average in higher taxes just because they are married?

Meet Michelle and Shad Hallihan, two Joliett school teachers, young people just starting a family, just had a baby. They suffer the marriage tax penalty just like 21 million other married working couples.

It is an issue of fairness, an issue of difference between right and wrong. The end of July, this House and the Senate voted to eliminate the marriage tax penalty for a majority of those who suffer it, benefiting over 21 million married working couples.

The President has an important choice. Is he going to help families like Michelle and Shad Hallihan, 42 million Americans who suffer the marriage tax penalty, or is he going to practice partisan politics?

I hope the President will join with us in a bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty by signing into law the Financial Freedom Act. Let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

ANTI-AMERICAN TRADE AND TAX POLICIES

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, remember the Singer sewing machines? Most married couples in America had one. Today the Singer Company filed bankruptcy in New York.

The Singer Company is now headquartered in Hong Kong. They make their sewing machines in Japan, Brazil, and Taiwan. It is called the New World Order, Mr. Speaker.

Here is how it works: American factories move overseas. They send their products back and sell them in America. If it does not work out, they go bankrupt and screw the American creditors. What a system.

I yield back all the anti-American trade and tax policies that this Congress continues to support and pass.

KEEP AND MAINTAIN ERISA, THE EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT OF 1974

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleagues of the many benefits of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, better known as ERISA. After all, voluntary ERISA-based employer self-insured plans cover nearly 80 percent of the workers in this country.

ERISA retains the State's authority over the business of insurance. It also ensures that plans would be subject to the same benefit laws across the States. ERISA provides flexibility by allowing employers and employees to agree to choose a benefit package which best suits their needs. This approach keeps costs down because it allows them to do so without the government regulation that drives the costs up.

Make no mistake about it, the chief beneficiaries of preempting ERISA would be the trial lawyers. Consumers and employers will be left to pick up the bill for increased and often frivolous litigation.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress must ensure the patient's right to care, not the lawyer's right to bill.

NOW IS THE TIME TO CLEAN UP THE SPECIAL INTEREST MONEY MESS THAT DOMINATES OUR CAMPAIGNS

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, today this House has an important opportunity to clean up the special interest money mess that dominates our campaigns. Approval of the bipartisan Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform legislation can go a long way in correcting some of the wrongs that dominate this Congress.

To get real change, however, we must approve this bill without any change. The amendments that are being offered, the substitutes, some of them appear to be direct, straightforward efforts to kill this legislation. Others of them are in seemingly innocuous form but the sole purpose of every amendment, every substitute, is to block reform.

Last year, the Republican leadership, every single Member of the Republican leadership of this House, voted against reform. And they managed to delay consideration of this bill, delay it long enough that they finally succeeded in killing it.