

Mr. FOGLIETTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for, first, giving me this opportunity to speak and, also as importantly, giving this House a right to revote the controversial issue of yesterday afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I come from the city of Philadelphia. I represent the First Congressional District, and in the heart of that district stands Independence Hall where the Constitution of the United States was written and adopted. The majority and minority leaders both spoke of matters dear to them. Let me say that the Constitution of the United States of America is also very dear to me.

The majority leader stated the facts as he knows them. However I was the subject, and I was here. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that I entered the Chamber. The gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] was standing toward the rear of the aisle, and, as I passed Mr. OBEY on my way to the well, Mr. OBEY yelled out to the Chairman, "One more vote, one more vote," which, according to custom over the years, has always allowed that Member to cast his or her vote. Mr. Speaker, I was denied that right.

We are talking about the amount of time that was involved. The Washington Post timed the vote and found that the vote was called 15 seconds prior to the expiration of 17 minutes. I ran to the well, wrote out my card, handed it to the Clerk. The Clerk actually had the card in his hand, and I was then denied to have my vote counted.

Mr. Speaker, that Constitution of which I spoke gives us as Americans some basic inalienable rights. One of the most important, one of the most basic of those rights, is the right of every American citizen to cast his or her vote, and, as importantly, it was the right, or is the right, of every American to have his or her Congressperson vote on their behalf in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that yesterday afternoon over 1 million Americans were denied their right to have their Representative cast votes on their behalf. One million Americans were disenfranchised by, I consider, a disgraceful display of arrogant, unconstitutional abuse of power.

Mr. Speaker, we might try to determine why this occurred. As you well know, the vote would have turned had I and the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] been allowed to vote. That is one of the reasons. The second reason I was not aware of until I left this Chamber is, as I left the Chamber, I walked out in front of the Capitol and there saw my colleagues from the majority side boarding buses to take them to the airport to take them to New York City for a fundraiser. Strangely enough, the New York Post, owned by one Rupert Murdoch, states in its column that the GOP went to great lengths to make sure that its Members got to the Big Apple on time. Was one of those great lengths to which the

GOP went the denial of Members of the right to vote and the denial of American citizens, of over 1 million American citizens, to have their Representative cast votes on their behalf?

I appreciate the fact that we are going to have a revote, and I would hope that this incident brings home the message to every Member of this House that what we do here is an important part of the American way of life. What we do in this body is a right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, and that constitutional right should remain inviolate no matter what the circumstances.

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I would hope that after this incident, every Member will have the right to cast his or her votes on behalf of his or her constituents, the American citizens.

#### VOICE OF FREEDOM STILLED ON FLOOR OF HOUSE

(Under previous order of the House, Mr. HILLIARD was given permission to address the House for 5 minutes and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the floor of this House the voice of freedom was stilled by the forces of repression. The strong arms of the Republican army flexed their mighty parliamentary weight and refused to duly elected Members of this body, myself and the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOGLIETTA], the opportunity to vote before this Congress. In doing so, the Republicans crushed the very voice of democracy.

This is not Caesar's Rome, this is not Hitler's Germany, and this is definitely not Stalin's Russia. This is where the voices of freedom should reign. This is the birthplace of democracy.

This is America. We all must protect its democratic institutions, and especially its foundation, the right to vote. Our right to vote supersedes any party vote on any issue. We must preserve the integrity of the vote, and we must in this body aggressively champion the right to vote.

A revote is good. It does not show good faith. To me, being a politician for 22 years, it tells me that you are out to achieve your objective at any cost. Yesterday you could not win because there were two votes in this Chamber that would have made the difference, and there was no third vote, even though I realize that you have created one now. Because you did not have the votes yesterday, and because you have twisted arms last night and you have the votes today, you are ready to revote. To me, that is not good faith.

You, because you are the majority party, have a greater duty to preserve and protect this institution, and I suggest to you that you have failed to do that. The procedures of this institution must be protected at all costs. It should be beyond and above any objective of any party.

This morning, the Washington Post stated that you cut off the vote by 15 seconds. I heard you state that 10 seconds had elapsed. By our count, we had more than 30 seconds. By the Washington Post, which I would think would be independent of the Republican count or the Democratic count, you cut off and denied over 1 million people the right to vote by 15 seconds.

This is not democracy. In Alabama we do not even do this. Never do we openly take the rights of anyone to vote, and I would hate to think that this body is below that level. It cannot be, it should not be.

I suggest to you, because you have the votes and because you have been using the clock to manipulate that vote, you hold it open when you do not have the votes, you close it when you do, you win, the Republican Party wins. But I also suggest to you that every time you do it, democracy loses.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The Chair will accept fifteen 1-minute requests from each side.

#### DENYING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

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

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, we have always known that the Republicans were willing to go to great lengths to pass their extremist agenda. I never thought that I would see the day when they would actually deny Members of this body the right to vote, but on the floor yesterday, a Democratic amendment was one vote, one vote, shy from victory. There were 15 seconds left. Two Democrats who had not voted were trying to vote, and they were cut off, denying 1 million people in this country representation.

Mr. Speaker, this is the most egregious and arrogant abuse of power that I have seen on our House floor. To top it all off, when Democrats tried to question the ruling, the Republicans adjourned early and jumped on buses. You know why? Where did they go? This poster points out where they went. They went to New York, by plane, got on a bus, took a plane, and raised \$1.7 million at a fund raiser.

Now, the Republicans are willing to shut down our voices, shut down our votes, and adjourn the House early, all so they can raise \$1.7 million from the special interests and the wealthy corporations. Welcome to the Gingrich revolution.

#### TRAMPLING DEMOCRACY

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