

been on improving public schools, including raising educational standards and addressing infrastructure needs. My concern is that the Republican leadership, after trying to make the deepest education cuts in history last year, are now emphasizing vouchers to pay for private schools as the way to reform our education system.

In my opinion, vouchers will not help public schools; just the opposite. They will drain away resources that can be used to improve public school standards and rebuild crumbling or overcrowded schools.

Americans overwhelmingly support the Democratic commitment to public schools. They want to make public schools safer, improve the quality of teachers, and get parents more involved in education. Let us not walk away from the public schools, but let us try to improve them. That is the Democratic Party position.

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COMPETITION WILL MAKE FOR  
BETTER SCHOOLS

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, what would be the effect on the public schools if a school choice program resulted in the most motivated kids and the most involved parents leaving the public school in their neighborhood? I ask this question because the question I get most often from those who oppose school choice is: What about the kids that are left behind?

Well, Mr. Speaker, my response is increased competition among public schools will, without a shadow of a doubt, have the same effect on schools that increased competition has on the computer industry, the automobile industry, the restaurant business, the supermarket, the construction industry, the financial industry, and on and on and on.

Increased competition means that bad schools will shut down, as they should, as more students flee those schools that have failed them. Increased competition means that mediocre schools will feel pressure to improve, real pressure, for fear that their students will go elsewhere.

And let me suggest that increased competition, here is a novel idea, increased competition will result in real accountability for the first time. Competition in education will make better private schools and it will make better public schools.

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SCHEDULE CAMPAIGN FINANCE  
REFORM LEGISLATION NOW

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call upon the leadership in the ma-

majority party in this House to schedule what is the most pressing, most important issue that we should be dealing with in the 105th Congress this fall, and that is campaign finance reform. But, we are running out of time.

Mr. Speaker, I am a proud member of a bipartisan freshman task force on campaign finance reform. We are six Republicans, six Democrats, freshmen, working together to try to draft what would be a good bipartisan piece of legislation.

And we did, Mr. Speaker. It is not the comprehensive reform that I would like to see; it is incremental; it gets the biggest of the big money out of the political system, the soft money ban.

Mr. Speaker, all we are asking is just to get it scheduled for a floor debate and for an ultimate vote, but we are running out of time. Next year is another election season. Lord knows we are not going to pass campaign finance reform then. The year after that we are looking at the year 2000 and the Presidential race, and it is going to be tough to do it.

Mr. Speaker, it is now or never this fall, and "no" is not an acceptable answer. My constituents in western Wisconsin did not send me to this place to accept no as an answer. Even we freshmen realize that the system is broke and that the very survival of this democracy is at stake. Schedule campaign finance reform now.

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MAYBE THEY JUST FORGOT

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, as America's schoolchildren head back to school, I am reminded of an old Steve Martin routine on "Saturday Night Live." I am talking about the skit in which Steve Martin tries to explain away his breaking the law by saying, "I forgot armed robbery was a crime."

Mr. Speaker, teachers are used to all the lame excuses they get from their students about why they did not do their homework, or why they did not study for a test. But, Mr. Speaker, the excuses coming out of the White House about all their fund-raising irregularities would make even Steve Martin laugh.

Maybe the White House needs to be reminded that accepting contributions from foreign nationals, directly or indirectly, for political campaigns is a crime. Maybe the White House needs to be reminded that laundering campaign contributions in order to hide the source of the funds is a crime; that selling Commerce Department trade missions in exchange for political contributions is a crime; that using government lawyers for private counsel is a crime.

But who knows, Mr. Speaker? Maybe they just forgot.

WHEN WILL THE HOUSE VOTE ON  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM?

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

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to ask the Republican leadership: When are we going to legislate? If something is broke, let us fix it.

Mr. Speaker, every Congress before this one was able to vote here and act on campaign finance reform. The House Democrats passed a comprehensive campaign finance reform in the last three Congresses; in the 101st, 102d, and 103d. Even last session, when the Republicans were in control, we had a vote here on the floor.

When, Mr. Speaker, do we get to have that vote this year? Now, let us not talk about minor campaign reform. Comprehensive campaign reform, that is what every other Congress has been able to debate and vote on. When do we get to do that?

Mr. Speaker, let us not just hear; let us act. Let us not investigate; let us legislate.

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THE BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN  
INTEGRITY ACT

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

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the issue of campaign finance reform. As we debate this issue in the House, we should remember a couple of key points. First of all, there are supporters and detractors on both sides of the aisle.

My Democrat friends have been critical. This is wrong. An old maxim in equity is, "He who seeks equity must come in to equity with clean hands." Neither side should claim clean hands on this issue. When the Democrats had both the House and the administration, they did not pass campaign finance reform law.

Second, we should enforce the law, but that should not be an excuse for a failure to legislate.

Third, a soft money ban must be the centerpiece of any reform legislation. It is the greatest abuse; we must address that.

Fourth, the solution must be bipartisan in nature, because otherwise it is doomed to failure and gridlock.

The bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act, which is a bipartisan bill which we have worked together on, accomplishes this plus much more. I urge my colleagues to support it.

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AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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