

More recently, the FCA was instrumental in helping the Farm Credit System and its borrowers survive the severe disruption of agriculture that occurred during the 1980s. Like the 1930s, the 1980s were not a good time for agriculture. I think we all remember when land values spiraled downward and the devastating impact on the many farmers and financial institutions that financed the legitimate credit needs of those farmers.

The FCA was there again, but in a different role, this time as the independent regulator of the Farm Credit System. In this new role the FCA ensured that farmers who had been devastated by economic circumstances were afforded the opportunity to restructure their loans, thereby enabling them to remain in farming.

The FCA also ensured that cooperative financial institutions took proper management action to financially strengthen their operations so they could remain as a viable source of credit to their farmer borrowers. Though the FCA role had changed over time, the outcome of fulfilling their role remained the same, and the needs of individual farmers were met.

Moving to the present, the FCA has become one of the more stellar performers to emerge from implementing the Administration's program to reinvent government. The FCA has reduced its expenses by nearly 15 percent since 1995, and has slashed its work force by nearly 30 percent since 1993. The agency is almost 25 percent below Office of Management and Budget's established personnel target for the FCA under the Administration's program to reinvent government.

The agency is at the forefront of developing increasingly efficient and innovative programs that not only ensure that the safety and soundness requirements are adhered to by the Farm Credit System, but also result in minimal disruption to the vital business activities of the institution it regulates.

The Farm Credit System today is financially sound, and stands on the threshold of making innovative progress at better meeting the credit and financial needs of farmers and ranchers and their cooperatives. The FCA has played a key role in the system's success, and is there to ensure that these institutions exercise safe and sound banking practices that comply with the law and regulations, as new endeavors take form. Over time, farmers, ranchers, cooperatives, and the public have all benefited from the professional activities of the FCA.

Mr. Speaker, the FCA record reflects a deep commitment to agriculture. It is a record of exceptional performance from 1993 to the present. I am proud to recognize it here today.

REFORMS NEEDED IN THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, nearly 2 years ago Congress approved landmark legislation giving farmers the freedom to farm. Supply management and command control agricultural policy had failed our farmers. The safety net that was intended was acting more like a ceiling, so farmers, locked arm in arm with consumers and taxpayers, changed the course of agriculture policy in this country.

Today, instead of talking about expanding the acreage reduction program and conceding critical world market share, farmers are now asking Washington for fast track. Today farmers are talking about the need to keep a lid on their out-of-pocket expenses, especially those imposed by Uncle Sam by way of taxes and regulations.

In short, our farmers do not want to depend on the government to merely survive. Rather, our farmers want the tools and the global markets necessary to actually succeed. Improved research and the development of more effective risk management tools, such as crop revenue coverage, are good examples.

Unfortunately, the progress I have just described does not characterize Federal dairy policy, where regional divisions have prevented any kind of meaningful reform. Instead, price-fixing, whether by regional compact, cartels, bogus price floors, or an irrational order system, is still fashionable.

I think it is ironic that this Congress, which never misses a chance to champion market-oriented reform, growth, and opportunity, still clings to a dairy policy that has fallen out of fashion, even in Moscow. When I see so many folks championing the status quo, I wonder if I have missed something.

Since 1985, my home State of Minnesota has lost more than half of our dairy farmers, over 11,000. That is a rate of three per day. Nationally the U.S. has lost over 152,000 dairy producers under the very system which today so many are attempting to save.

I hope when all the dust settles, we will put aside our regional bickering, abandon the failed policies of supply management and command control economics, and embark on a new path. We should not be striving for a policy that simply slows down the hemorrhaging, but we should work for a policy that puts our dairy farmers on the road to recovery.

We can start by creating a more market-oriented order system, rejecting harmful regional compacts and price floors, implementing a dairy options pilot program that can eventually become national in scope, authorizing forward pricing to shift risk away from the producers, and by developing a kind of market-oriented insurance program which farmers, taxpayers, and consumers can all support.

On this note, I seriously doubt that anyone in Congress would ever deny our grain farmers the right to forward

contract to protect against price volatility. Yet, we do exactly that to our dairy farmers. It is bad policy, and we have the power to stop it.

Tax and regulatory relief, better research and risk management tools, and expanded global markets for U.S. agricultural products offer our Nation's dairy farmers real opportunity, but price floors and supply management only offer a frustrating ceiling thinly disguised as a safety net. The difference is as stark as saving and investing for your retirement, or relying on Social Security to bring about the good life.

Mr. Speaker, when the Kremlin collapsed, a newspaper editorial commented that "Markets are more powerful than armies." Because history has demonstrated this time and again, I am convinced that fluid milk will be sold according to the dictates of supply and demand. If Members do not believe me, just look at the editorials in the Washington Post, the New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal. It is only a matter of time.

The question before us today is, will we in the agricultural community accomplish reform on our own terms and at our own pace, or will change be forced down our throats after we have surrendered yet more farmers and more potential markets? The choice, Mr. Speaker, is ours to make.

CAMPAIGN FINANCING AND THE NEED FOR REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, over the last 15 months many, many Members of the House of Representatives and Members of the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, have worked to try and see whether or not we could reform the campaign finance system in this country.

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) worked very hard on the Republican side, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) on the Democratic side, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) on the Democratic side, and many, many others, to see whether or not we could present a system of campaign finance to the American public that would start to restore their faith in how we elect people in this country; that the race just does not go to the person with the most money, that the race just does not go to the person with the most special interest money, that the decisions are not made here based on campaign contributions and who gave money to whom. If you give \$10,000, you get more say than somebody who gave \$1,000, and more than somebody who gave you \$5; and try to see if we could return this system, that has become awash in money, that has distorted the basic decision-making process in the House of Representatives and in the United

States Senate and in the administration.

Our basic democratic institutions are threatened by the vast amount of money that is now finding its way into campaigns. It comes in straight-up contributions to individual Members, it comes from Political Action Committees, it comes from soft money, it comes from independent expenditures.

We are having a primary in California. The primary is in June. This is only the end of March. Three candidates have already reported almost \$25 million being spent for the Governor's race. One candidate has reported \$18 million being spent.

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Pretty soon, this will be a hobby for rich people, or this will be a place where only those who have the money of the special interests will come to work, and the people will take second best.

Mr. Speaker, we all know, those of us who serve here, those of us who go through campaigns, we all know that the influence of money is getting more and more pervasive in every decision made in the Congress of the United States; that it is distorting the decision-making process; that it is corroding the underpinnings of the democratic institutions. And we cannot allow it to continue.

But what did we find out today? After many, many disruptions last year in the House of Representatives to try to get the Republican leadership to give us a vote, to give us a fair and open debate on competing plans, to debate this subject in front of the American public, what did we find today? That Speaker GINGRICH has decided that we will get 20 minutes on each side of an issue to decide campaign finance reform.

Mr. Speaker, we just spent 5½ hours here debating a bill of no urgency, a bill that was eventually defeated. We could have debated it all day today. We could have debated it in the weeks where the Congress has only worked 1 and 2 and 3 days a week. We get paid for 5 days a week, we get paid for 7 days a week, but most of this year we have been working 2 and 3 days a week. We could have debated campaign finance on any one of those days. But they waited right until we get to the Easter break, and then they said we will give 20 minutes.

Why did they give us 20 minutes and why did they hand-pick the bill that we would vote on? Because they know that that bill does not have enough support to pass. They know there is in this House a bipartisan bill that will reform this system, that will pass, and they will not let us vote on that. Twenty minutes or no 20 minutes. They are cooking the books, they are rigging the game, they are tilting the field, all against reform.

Even those huge majorities in this country want the current system of finance, of campaign finances reformed

and changed and made more democratic. But the Republican leadership does not even want to let us debate the bill. They do not want to let us amend the bill. They do not want to let us change the bill. They want to put a bill out here that they know will not pass, and force us to kill it, and then they can blame Democrats or Republicans or liberals and conservatives and say, "They killed campaign finance reform."

No, Mr. Speaker; NEWT GINGRICH, the Speaker of the House who sets the agenda, who sets the calendar, he killed campaign finance reform because he was afraid of the debate. He pledges allegiance to the flag every day. He talks about democracy. And he is afraid of the debate in front of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, how cynical can one become when they cannot trust the American people and cannot trust their representatives, so they have to schedule the debate so they can get an outcome that a majority of the House does not want? It is a terrible, terrible day for democracy and it is a terrible day for our democratic institutions, and it is a terrible day for the American voter because the race will continue to go to the people that accept more special interest money and the most money and not the best candidate in the race.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PITTS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM GIVEN SHORT SHRIFT IN HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, as I listened to this afternoon's disgraceful announcement given to us, I gather, with some glee by the Majority leader, that the American people would be denied any free and fair debate on the issue of campaign finance reform, I could not help but reflect on how this Congress began back in January of 1997.

Mr. Speaker, we assembled here on this floor to begin the people's business. We have come now through the full year of 1997 and well into 1998. It was on that very first day in January of 1997 that we cast a vote on the issue of campaign finance reform and were denied an opportunity to move forward on it in this Congress. And repeatedly, over the course of 1997 and 1998, there have been those of us, both Democrats and Republicans, who have come to this floor asking not to have it exactly our way, the way we would write a

campaign finance bill, but to have a free and fair debate of this issue that goes to the core of the problems that surround this institution, the Congress and the Government of the United States and the way that it operates.

Over that time period, we first were told by some that we could accomplish the issue of campaign finance reform in time for our Nation's birthday, on July 4 of last year. That time came and went. I think some looked to that date, because a couple of years earlier Speaker GINGRICH went up to New Hampshire and shook hands and smiled with President Clinton and said that they would move forward on real campaign finance reform. That was in 1995. He delayed for a year and then engaged in the kind of sham maneuver we have seen this afternoon in order to kill campaign finance reform in 1996.

So we came to the fall of last year, after many speeches and many demands for action on campaign finance reform and, lo and behold, the majority leader, the same gentleman from Texas who stood before us today to kill campaign finance reform, he announced that we would have action on campaign finance reform last fall before the Congress recessed. Of course, as we all know, that time went by and no action occurred. No debate on any proposal was permitted.

But we heard, with some degree of incredulity I suppose, as we listened to the discussion on the last day of that session, the Republican leadership assembled upstairs in front of the press and they announced a great task force. They had all of these proposals they were going to put together and they were going to put a Republican fix on the campaign finance reform system and they were going to be ready to debate that when we gathered here in 1998.

Well, now we are in 1998, and we reached the day yesterday when they were going to present their great proposal, and they have since found now that they have presented it, that it is being rejected by the majority of Republicans. And so they have decided to pull down that proposal and to deny us full and fair debate of that, because if we began debating that fully and fairly, we might be able to offer a motion to recommit it to the committee and get some genuine reform of the campaign finance system.

So, Mr. Speaker, on a day when many Members of this Congress will be traveling to New Mexico to honor our distinguished colleague, the late Steve Schiff, at his funeral, on that day they have scheduled the debate in which any of the Members who will be traveling to the funeral will be unable to participate. And should they get back here in time to vote on Monday night, if only a majority of this body votes to approve campaign finance reform, it will be defeated because Speaker GINGRICH and Majority Leader ARMEY and, to hear the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) say it, all of the Republican