

dynamic Information Age industry, are reasons why this legislation has been offered.

What does it do? It eases our export control laws and says that if foreign competition is offering a particular type of software, or if it is available off-the-shelf, our American industry should be allowed to compete and offer the same software overseas.

It prohibits the Federal Government from setting up what is called a mandatory key recovery system. What is that? That is where the government requires you to put the key to your computer, your encrypted computer software, the contents of your computer, in a location where government can get ahold of it without your knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that I would urge my colleagues to strongly support. This legislation has bipartisan support. Support the SAFE Act, H.R. 695.

SUPPORT THE SAFE ACT, H.R. 695

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I am also here to discuss my proud cosponsorship of the SAFE Act. As the preceding speaker, my colleague from Virginia has noted, it is time, finally, for the United States to take the forward-thinking policy to avoid and abandon the flawed policies of key recovery, and to allow Americans to have complete protection from hackers and others who would steal and invade their privacy, and, in some cases, their well-being.

Mr. Speaker, the current administration is searching for answers to the current encryption dilemma. As with their preceding administrations, they are listening, as they should, to the concerns of law enforcement and their needs to keep us safe from predators and terrorists. That is absolutely appropriate, but it is not appropriate to fail to take action when the policy that we have today is so seriously flawed.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that as we continue this dialogue, the American people will become more vigorous in standing up for their rights to privacy in the digital age and on the Internet. There are many things that Republicans and Democrats disagree about. Today, we will have most likely very vigorous, perhaps even acrimonious disagreements, about the way campaign finance reform has been brought to this floor, the limitations on debate, and really the very unfortunate attention that has been given to campaign finance reform, legitimate campaign finance reform, by the majority.

Putting that to one side, we should, nevertheless, work together where we do agree, and there is broad support among both Democrats and Republicans for a sound encryption policy

that makes sure that all of us have access to the strongest encryption available in the world at large.

I commend my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. GOODLATTE, for his leadership in this effort, and look forward to resounding support from the entire House, and later the Senate.

DEBATING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, April Fool's Day has come to the House 2 days early, and, unfortunately, the joke is on all of us who took the Speaker at his word when he promised last December to allow a fair debate and vote on campaign finance reform.

Today, we are going to consider four so-called reform bills under the suspension calendar. Now, the suspension calendar is usually reserved for non-controversial legislation. Campaign finance reform is a tough issue and a controversial issue.

Here it is now, it is 12:30 in the afternoon. We are supposed to have a debate on this at 2 o'clock. We do not even have the language of all of the various proposals that on Friday afternoon the Republican leadership said we were going to vote on. We do not even have all of the language that we are going to be asked to vote on later on this afternoon.

The truth is, during the 104th Congress, Mr. Speaker, the Republicans passed a House rule that required the Speaker to notify the minority before scheduling suspensions. Yet these bills were put on the calendar without any consultation with the minority or the bipartisan group of legislators interested in passing real campaign finance reform legislation.

Needless to say, absent from the list of those bills to be voted on today is the bipartisan McCain-Feingold-Shays-Meehan bill, which could pass on a simple majority vote. It is clear to me that the Speaker and the Republican leadership have been promoting an outrageous lie that the House will seriously consider reform. It is a disgrace.

After all of the time and money that we have dedicated to discussing and investigating the problems with our current system, here we are, we cannot get a fair vote on bipartisan reform.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, April Fool's Day has come to the House early, and, unfortunately, the joke is on the American people. And one need not look very far to find out what independent sources are saying about today's mockery.

For example, if you look at today's New York Times and look at the lead editorial, it states, Today in place of real debate on campaign finance reform,

the House is set to stage a mock debate on phony campaign finance reform. It is outrageous enough that the Republican House leaders' version of reform is the Thomas bill, which fails to end the corrupt soft money system, would triple contribution limits, and is laced with poison pill provisions.

Mr. Speaker, many in this House, on both sides of the aisle, have been working literally for years to try to form a consensus to pass real meaningful campaign finance reform. The American people have watched the news on all the major networks and have watched the debate and the hearings that have been held about the abuses of the soft money system and the influx of literally millions and millions of dollars into our campaign finance system.

Yet, when this debate is held today, it will be held under a suspension of the rules. There will not be an offer to have a vote up or down on bipartisan campaign finance reform, even though a majority of the Members of the United States Senate passed real campaign finance reform by a majority vote of 53, only to have that majority vote burst asunder by a filibuster that requires 60 votes in the other body.

Now, we have an opportunity to get that bill back to the United States Senate and have the United States Senate decide to pass real campaign finance reform by simply only allowing a majority vote. But we are going to be unable to do that this afternoon. We are going to be unable to do that because the leadership on Friday afternoon decided that we are going to have a debate under suspensions, that requires a two-thirds vote to pass anything. That is why usually when suspensions are up, noncontroversial items are brought up.

You look at the New York Times this morning. The New York Times says, "Now by bringing the phony Thomas bill up under suspension of the rules, the Republican leadership has rigged the process for this rigged bill, prohibiting House Members from offering any amendments or any alternative legislation and denying them a way to vote against the process."

□ 1245

The American people deserve a real debate on campaign finance reform," especially, according to the New York Times, after the campaign fundraising scandals and abuses in the last elections.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the New York Times said that the Shays-Meehan bipartisan bill, which is a companion measure to the McCain-Feingold bill that received a majority vote in the Senate, deserves a fair vote.

Mr. Speaker, let us take this suspension back, and let us come back with a real vote on campaign finance reform and allow the vote on bipartisan reform.