□ 1131

Messrs. HOLT, GEORGE MILLER of California, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 22, I was detained in committee. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 22, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Stated against:

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 22 on H.R. 54, the button did not record my "no" vote as the gavel fell.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may inquire.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, on the bill we're going to be considering shortly, the Presidential checkoff bill, there's a requirement under the rules that the amendments be printed in the RECORD. Is that RECORD available?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the printed RECORD is not yet available.

Mr. WEINER. Further inquiry, does the Speaker have any guidance for the House on when that RECORD might be available so we can read what we're going to be considering in a matter of minutes?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair does not currently have that information. Under the terms of House Resolution 54, any issue would become ripe when the amendment process begins.

Mr. WEINER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 359.

ELIMINATING TAXPAYER FINANCING OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 54 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 359.

□ 1134

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 359) to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of presidential election campaigns and party conventions, with Mr. LATOURETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) each will control 15 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM).

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, last night, the President in this very Chamber issued us an invitation. In that invitation, there were several opportunities, but two of them I would like to highlight. One is, he said this: He said he is willing to eliminate whatever we can honestly afford to do without. I take the President at face value that he's interested in doing that.

The thing that the President issued was an invitation where he said this: He said, in fact, the best thing we could do on taxes for all Americans is to simplify the Tax Code.

Well, the law of governing Presidential election campaign funds in the Presidential Primary Matching Payment Account is located in the Internal Revenue Code, which really inherently makes no sense.

And I think during the course of this debate, Mr. Chairman, we're going to lay out the argument as to why the President's first point can be greeted and agreed to, that first goal that this is simply something that we can do without.

Let me make a couple of quick points. I think it's important to recognize the irony of the Statement of Administration Policy that was published on January 25, and I'm reading in the third paragraph, he says—the administration, in criticism of this effort, says, ''Its effect would be to expand the power of corporations and special interests in the Nation's elections to force many candidates into an endless cycle of fundraising at the expense of engagement with voters on the issues.''

How can that be, Mr. Chairman? President Obama, when he was a candidate in 2000 for the United States Presidency, declined to participate in this fund, both in his primary and in his general election. And if President Obama has been able to rise above that, I think other Americans can rise above that.

Also, I would just like to bring your attention to that same argument, and that is, a ''Dear colleague'' that was sent criticizing this bill said basically the same thing: By creating a viable alternative to private fundraising, the public financing system was designed to level the electoral playing field and ensure that candidates remain accountable to voters, not special interests.

So does that mean, implicitly, Mr. Chairman, that candidates who didn't participate in the program are somehow not accountable to voters? I think President Obama would say he's really accountable to voters.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1140

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this measure, which, along with the Supreme Court's radical decision in Citizens United, takes our Nation's campaign finance system in precisely the wrong direction: less transparency and less information for the voters.

Americans from across the political spectrum—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—want less special interest money in politics, not more. They want clean, transparent, and competitive elections; and campaigns where candidates—those of us in this room and Presidential candidates—rise and fall based on the quality of their ideas, the strength of their arguments, and their ability to attract support from the voters that they seek to represent.

What they don't want are campaigns decided by how much secret money flows into an election from secret outside groups. And they will no longer tolerate, I believe, those politicians turning around and saying to those citizens: You have no right to know who is paying for what in our political campaigns; you have no right to know who is paying for those TV advertisements you're watching.

Let's remember what we are talking about here. The current Presidential financing system that this bill would eliminate arose from public outrage in the post-Watergate period. Rather than Presidential candidates trafficking in secret slush funds, our Nation decided that our democracy would be better served by a system of public disclosure, contribution limits, and emphasis on smaller-dollar contributions matched by the Presidential financing fund.

The system is voluntary, one line on our Tax Code, not complicated; and while not perfect, for most of its 36 years in existence, it has served this Nation well. Candidates from across the political spectrum, from Ronald Reagan to Jesse Jackson, have voluntarily participated in the Presidential financing system.

As my colleague on the other side of the aisle mentioned there is no doubt

that the current law needs to be modernized; it needs to be fixed. We saw that in the last Presidential election. But rather than throw out something that has served the country and the electorate well for 36 years, let's fix it. And the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) and I and others have introduced legislation to do exactly that.

So rather than shielding an avalanche of unlimited special interest money from public view, we should shine a light on it. We should do it by modernizing the Presidential system, and we should also pass the DISCLOSE Act, which we could have brought up and voted on except for the previous question was just defeated.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of the day, our Nation's democracy doesn't belong to Presidents or Members of Congress; it belongs to the voters who send us here, and we have a solemn responsibility to safeguard it on their behalf and protect it for future generations from the lessons in corruption in history. Let's mend it. Let's fix it. Let's not throw it out.

The CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 3. Concurrent resolution honoring the service and sacrifice of Staff Sergeant Salvatore Giunta, a native of Hiawatha, Iowa, and the first living recipient of the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

ELIMINATING TAXPAYER FINANCING OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 359, which terminates the taxpayer financing of Presidential election campaigns and party conventions.

At the outset, I just want to mention in response to something that was said by the other side, this has absolutely nothing to do with the Citizens United case decided by the Supreme Court. That changed not one iota of campaign finance law. Corporations still cannot make contributions to campaigns or candidates. It does not change that.

Citizens United had to do with the question of whether or not one loses his or her First Amendment protections of free speech, particularly with respect to expressions of political nature, merely because they associate with another person. The Supreme Court told us that you do not in fact lose your First Amendment rights because you happen to say it jointly with someone else. As a matter of fact, they pointed out that some people with the least amount of influence in a society actually expand their influence in the political debate by joining with others. And then the question that the Supreme Court answered was, if that association happens to be corporate in nature, happens to be a union, happens to be a for-profit, happens to be a not-for-profit, whether that changes the dynamic as contemplated by the First Amendment protections, and they told us it did not. So let's get rid of that canard here on the floor right away. This has absolutely nothing to do with that. This has absolutely nothing to do with corporate contributions to campaigns or foreign contributions to campaigns, both of which remain illegal, with criminal sanctions, under the law.

So let's get that out of the way to begin with so we don't have a lot of debate here that has nothing to do with the bill before us.

Mr. Chairman, we find ourselves at a unique juncture in the longstanding debate over this issue; but, frankly, in reality, it is a juncture no longer. Taxpayer financing of Presidential elections and party conventions of the two major parties is simply no longer defensible.

The first tax liability contributions from American taxpayers to be diverted toward the funding of Presidential elections began 35 years ago in 1976. This new practice was, as we were told by the other side, supposed to raise the public's trust in their government as well as increase both the number of candidates and, thus, electoral competition and the financial footing between parties. I believe, Mr. Chairman, it has failed on all accounts.

It did allow us to have Lyndon LaRouche be a participant in the Presidential elections. I am not sure when we have had someone who had been subjected to a criminal conviction and actually conducted part of his campaign while still incarcerated, but that was brought to us by way of this fine law.

Since 1976, approximately $1.5 billion has been spent on this system. As we speak, there is a balance of $195 million sitting in the Presidential Election Campaign Fund at the U.S. Treasury Department. And yet this system of electoral subsidization has not changed the public's perception of our Presidential elections or our politics. According to one survey after another, Americans continue to harbor deep distrust of their elected officials. So does anyone think that our Presidential elections over the past 35 years have shown a virtuous progression toward more accuracy and more honesty?

Mr. Chairman, prominent Presidential candidates, candidates who even supposedly believe in this system, have opted out of this taxpayer financing scheme in recent years. In 2004 and 2008, several candidates declined public financing for their primary campaigns.

And as was mentioned by the gentleman from Illinois, during the most recent Presidential election, for the first time, a nominee of one of our two major political parties withdrew from the public financing during the general election and instead went on to raise record amounts of money for his campaign. And I recall when I thought we heard a pledge to participate in this program because of the virtuous nature of the program. Somehow that was lost along the campaign trail.

One of the things I would like to point out is this: There is this idea that somehow we are going to be able to suppress money that goes into politics. The fact of the matter is it is like a balloon, a water balloon. If you squeeze it on one side, it comes out on the other side. The question is: How do we get it within the system?

We should be talking about the idea of this silly demarcation between our parties and our candidates where we limit in extreme fashion the amount of money that can be transferred or coordinated, as if somehow that corrupts the candidate to have him or her identified with the very party they represent. We ought to be working towards those kinds of changes that will allow a greater responsibility on the party and the candidates to express their positions and to hold to their positions, be responsible for their positions. But no, we talk about these ways of how we are going to somehow reduce the impact of money in campaigns. It hasn't worked under this system. It hasn't worked.

□ 1150

In addition to Presidential primaries and general elections, if there is anything the American taxpayer should not be subsidizing, I would say—as much as I enjoy them—it is the week-long Presidential conventions. On our side of the aisle, in our party, I think we've had some indications of what I consider to be wasteful spending in preparation for our upcoming convention; and to say to the taxpayer that, in light of that, we ought to continue to subsidize the production of our Presidential conventions by the two major parties, it is very difficult to articulate and even to understand.

They are, as I say, grand fun, wonderful occasions—week-long party gatherings that are, unfortunately, in this day and age, largely symbolic. One can't even argue something important is being decided because, unfortunately, they ceased to have real significance sometime ago, and that was part of our effort to try and cleanse the system.

Rather than having people selected by these delegates that come to these conventions, we should move more and more to the primary operation and, of course, then earlier and earlier in the season so that somehow it becomes a 2-year event. I guess we're already in