

and would like to invite my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

H.R. 961 builds upon the Ovarian Cancer Research and Information Amendments of 1997, H.R. 953 which had 85 cosponsors in the 105th Congress.

The Ovarian Cancer Research and Information Amendments of 1999 has three components. First, it authorizes \$150 million of ovarian cancer research. One half to be spent on basic cancer research and one half on clinical trials and treatment.

Of this research, the bill requires that priority be given to: developing a test for the early detection of ovarian cancer; research to identify precursor lesions and research to determine the manner in which benign conditions progress to malignant status; research to determine the relationship between ovarian cancer and endometriosis; and requires that appropriate counseling, including on the issue of genetic basis, be provided to women who participate as subjects in research.

Second, the bill provides for a comprehensive information program to provide the patients and the public information regarding screening procedures; information on the genetic basis to ovarian cancer; any known factors which increase risk of getting ovarian cancer; and any new treatments for ovarian cancer.

Finally, it requires that the National Cancer Advisory Board include one or more individuals who are at high risk for developing ovarian cancer.

Unlike the bill from the previous Congress, H.R. 961 does not contain the section authorizing a Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) for Ovarian Cancer. Although this was a major component of the previous bill, I am pleased to report that the Scientific Advisory Board at the National Cancer Institute approved a SPORE for Ovarian Cancer last year and funding for it should be released this summer.

I would like to commend the National Cancer Research Institute for their efforts on this particular subject.

I invite my colleagues to cosponsor this bill and help to give women a fighting chance against ovarian cancer.

H.R. 473—PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS FOR CROP DISEASES AND VIRUSES

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced H.R. 473, to ensure that farmers who suffer crop losses due to plant viruses and plant diseases are eligible for crop insurance and noninsured crop assistance programs and that agricultural producers who suffer such losses are eligible for emergency loans.

Pandemics of plant viruses and diseases regularly destroy the crops of entire farms and often the crops of entire geographic areas. A single plant virus or disease outbreak can send farms into bankruptcy and farmers are left without any means of recovering. Agriculture producers can qualify for emergency loans when adverse weather conditions and other natural phenomena have caused severe physical crop property damage or production losses, however, under current law, crop viruses and diseases are not considered "natural disasters" and thus are not eligible for these types of loans.

For example, in Hawaii, the State recently ordered the eradication of all banana plants on the entire island of Kauai and in a 10 square-mile area on the Big Island in an effort to eradicate the banana "bunchy top" virus. A court order required compliance of all who did not cooperate and farmers were ordered to destroy their entire farm and livelihood without any compensation. These farmers do not qualify for emergency loans or disaster assistance and many were left with no other option but to sell their farms.

The survival of our Nation's farmers is largely dependent upon the unpredictable temper of mother nature. We provide our farmers with assistance when adversely affected by severe weather but that is not enough. Emergency loans and disaster assistance must be made available to farmers for crops suffering from calamitous plant viruses and diseases.

H.R. 473 would enable farmers to qualify for crop insurance programs, noninsured assistance programs, and low-interest emergency loans, when devastated by crop losses due to plant viruses and diseases.

I invite my colleagues to cosponsor this worthy legislation and I urge immediate consideration of H.R. 473 in the House.

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that is absolutely crucial to our democracy, and that issue is the issue of reforming our campaign finance system.

America is built, I say to my colleagues, on a system of a marketplace of ideas where we enter into elections, we debate ideas, we are out front, trying to figure out where we should move as a country, what direction we should go in as a country. That marketplace of ideas is being interfered with today, because what is happening is the biggest checkbook is determining what goes on in America, rather than the people's voices.

As one person said, "The poor man's soap box does not equal the rich man's checkbook." So we need to return to those basic democratic principles, and if we reform our campaign finance system, we can do that.

This is an issue that calls for bipartisanship. We have got to see the kind of bipartisanship that we have seen on this issue in the past. The Shays-Meehan bill, which is the bill I have signed on to and many Members of my freshman class and many Members from both sides of the aisle have signed on to, last year passed the House of Representatives 252 to 179 in August of 1998. This year, we have seen even more support than last year. We have more cosponsors at this point. Mr. Speaker, we have 110 cosponsors at this point, with 27 Republicans.

When we take the new Members, we have more support than we did last year, and it is bipartisan support, it is encouraging to see friends from both sides of the aisle rising and joining on an issue that is so important to our democracy.

People say that there is no support. I have heard the comment over and over again. People say there is no support for campaign finance reform. We cannot limit in any way the system. People do not want it. Well, I say to my colleagues, the voters are disenchanting and part of the reason they are disenchanting is because they view the system as one that is being controlled by money. They view the system as one that is controlled by special interests, and they do not believe that their voices are being heard. The undue influence of money is an absolutely crucial issue.

This bill, the Shays-Meehan bill, would ban soft money. It would take soft money completely out of the system. Some people have described soft money as the cancer on our democracy, I think a very apt description.

Let us talk a little bit about the disenchantment of citizens. Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago in this Nation, 75 percent of the people, 75 percent of the people when they were asked the question said, they trusted government to do the right thing, trusted elected officials to do the right thing most of the time, and 25 percent said they did not. Now, a generation later, we have 75 percent of the people saying they do not trust elected officials to do the right thing most of the time. Not a very tough test, but that is what they say. So in a generation, we have eroded the trust, the credibility in our electoral system.

Well, this campaign finance system that we have now is what is undermining that credibility. It is what is getting to the people, saying that it is actually convincing people that they should not participate in our democracy, that they should not be a part of our democracy.

Let me say to my colleagues, this bill, this bill is not all that should be done. I support this bill. We are going to push this bill through the House. But more can be done, and that is what is so hopeful about this bill. Because one of the things we are going to see is a commission. Mr. Speaker, a 12-member commission, after this law is passed, is going to meet 180 days after the adjournment of the session and is going to report on other major reforms that should be taken in this area.

□ 1515

They are going to study issues and bring back to us major reforms, and those reforms will have to be voted up or down along the same lines as the Base Closing Commission operates.

The other fact that I think needs to be noted is that the Federal Government is far, far behind the States on

this issue. The States are making huge changes in their campaign finance system. The State of Maine had a ballot initiative in 1996, over 2 years ago, where 56 percent of the voters said we do not like the current system. Let us change it. They passed a \$3 checkoff, and 80,000 have already signed up for that checkoff. They have a financing system that cuts government in order to get the revenues to finance their campaign finance system. They have taken a big step to clean up the system.

In Arizona, taxpayers have done the same thing. They have increased lobbyist fees from \$25 to \$100 to try to do everything they can to raise the money to operate a decent system. They have created voluntary tax checkoff on their tax forms, and they have imposed a 20 percent surcharge on civil and criminal fines in order to raise money to operate the system better.

Massachusetts has also taken major reforms at the State level.

So I say to Members now is the time to return democracy to the people. In order to do that, a big step would be made by endorsing campaign finance reform legislation in the form of the Shays-Meehan bill. We have to do it early. We have to do it now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the great State of Kansas (Mr. MOORE) for his statements on this issue.

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to rise in support of the Shays-Meehan bill which is now pending before this Congress. As the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) has already pointed out, it passed the 105th Congress and died a slow death in the Senate. We need to revive and pass this legislation and do it early.

I think most people would agree that politics and public service have become something of a negative and distasteful word to a lot of people in this country, and it really should not be that way. Politics is a noble profession, as is public service. Politics, after all, is really the art of governing without guns.

I think the public reaction, the adverse reaction that we have and that we see in this country to political campaigns is a direct result of the public perception that both political parties are awash in corrupt money. People in this country believe that both parties receive so much corrupt money from interest groups, from lobbyists, from other sources, that the whole system is corrupt. We need to change that perception. We dramatically need to change that perception.

Right now, the Shays-Meehan bill, if we pass this bill, will ban soft money. It will also regulate so-called issue ads which were intended to influence the outcome of elections for or against a particular candidate.

Mr. Speaker, even an 8-year-old child watching one of these issue ads could

tell which side the interest group is supporting by the expenditure of money. We need to restore public confidence in our electoral process, and I believe the only way we can do that is to pass a strong finance campaign law such as Shays-Meehan.

I urge all of the Members of this body in the House of Representatives to vote in favor of the Shays-Meehan bill. It passed the last Congress. It should pass this Congress. We need to send a message to the United States that it also should pass that body and be enacted into law.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kansas for his excellent comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), my cousin.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Mexico for yielding to me to speak on this very important issue facing us today in the 106th Congress.

I am pleased to join my freshman colleagues in calling for this early consideration of campaign finance reform in our 106th Congress. I know that a lot of my colleagues, many of my colleagues share my concern that the high cost of elections and the flood of so-called soft money, special interest money may threaten the integrity of our electoral system.

Just 6 months ago, the majority of our House voted to pass the Shays-Meehan bill. This bill had at that time, and I believe still has, strong bipartisan support. This is for a number of reasons. Let me tell my colleagues about a few of them, Mr. Speaker.

First is that unlimited soft money contributions allow special interests to buy political access. It is important to point out that soft money, unlike hard money, is unregulated. On the hard money side, there are limits on the amounts of money one can contribute. It is also transparent. It is public money. Soft money is much harder to trace. We need to make sure that the policy decisions that we make here are not unduly influenced by these special interests.

Secondly, the high cost of elections now contributes to the public's perception that elections and, therefore, public servants can be bought and sold. I think, especially given the events of these last months, more public cynicism is not now what we need about our U.S. Congress.

Third, more and more time spent chasing money means that less time is devoted to our public duties as Representatives. We need to restore this balance. All of us, Republicans and Democrats, who ran for the Congress this last election for the first time, and we are elected as freshmen, know how much time we spent on the telephone and at fund-raising events rather than studying issues of importance around public policies, whether it is education

or Social Security or health care. We need to restore that balance so that we can spend more of our time on those important issues and less time on raising money.

Fourth, the high cost of campaigns unfairly restricts the process in many cases to those who can afford to run. We need a system that is equitable for all candidates. This country has been built on the idea that all of us are equal, that it is an egalitarian system. We ought to make sure that anybody that wants to and has a passion can run for office, not just those people who have deep pockets.

Fifth, and I think maybe most importantly, a majority of Americans, in fact an enormous majority, a New York Times survey shows that 9 out of 10 Americans think that we ought to have significant campaign finance reform. We are here to listen to our constituents and represent our constituents. We ought to be doing that on campaign finance reform.

It is early in our session, but we need to act now so that we can begin to put this legislation in place for the races in the year 2000. I am here to speak in favor of beginning that process.

I am proud to be a sponsor of the bipartisan Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill. I have to tell my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I recognize the bill may need some work. It is probably not perfect. But we ought to bring it up so that it sees the light of day. We ought to begin a debate in committee. We ought to bring it to the floor of the House.

So let us start today. Let us address this problem now. Let us make sure that we bring this legislation forward and we begin to restore common sense to our campaign finance reform system.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for those comments.

The gentleman from Colorado mentioned the issue of spending time and how it takes away from the job. It seems to me, as I have been here for this short period of time, and I am sure that it impresses upon him that the number of issues that the United States Congress deals with and that the House deals with, whether it is international issues in Kosovo, whether it is education and health care, Social Security, Medicare, I mean, every day, there is so much for us to learn.

We could be much better at legislating if we had the time to spend on those issues, studying the issues, meeting with people that have concerns, trying to do everything we can to educate ourselves.

I think all of us know that, when we are out there fund-raising, we are taking time away from something that we should be spending time on. Yet we know that we have to be prepared to deal with these sham issue ads and attack ads that come from other sides.

So we are caught in a rough place. I know the gentleman from Colorado has been through a campaign where he has had something like that happen. The gentleman from Colorado may want to talk a little bit about that.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I agree. Let me give my colleagues a couple of examples. I probably spent many days on the campaign trail, 4 or 5, 6 hours on the telephone making these phone calls. I even got to the point where I purchased a headset so that I could save my neck from the constant strain of holding that telephone handset.

I know there are people out there who do that for a living, and a headset is a great tool. But it was symbolic to me that I was not out visiting with people and learning about the issues and studying the broad range of things that we are faced with while we are here in the Congress.

Let me talk a little bit about the issue ads and so-called expenditure campaigns. These groups can come in and be for you or be against you. But in either case one has no say, no control over these ads that are running.

In particular, I have been concerned about groups who think they might want to support me, but they could be running negative campaigns against my opponents when that is not the way I want to campaign. So we need to get ahold of these independent expenditure campaigns. We need to get ahold of this soft money situation.

As Jefferson talked about, when democracy is ailing, one of the best solutions, one of the best treatments is more sunshine, more transparency. We need to make sure that all of the money that is contributed to our campaigns is visible, and people can track it and trace it. We could use the Internet. We could have almost instantaneous disclosure. I would certainly support that. I think many Members of the House of Representatives would.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, the issue ads, it seems to me, are something that, I do not know in the State of Colorado, but I know in New Mexico that the issue ads are a completely different thing when one gets to the Federal level. I mean I ran 2 years, two times, two terms as State Attorney General. I never saw an issue add. I never had an independent group come in and attack me or speak up for my opponent. They did not clutter the debate that was going on, the very serious debate about the issues.

But one gets in the Federal race, and it is remarkable the change that takes place. Big national groups raising soft money, raising hard money, come into one's district, they label themselves with the most innocuous sounding labels, Responsible Citizens For Good Government, and then they get in there and slash and burn against one's opponent or for you or however it comes out.

It generally is very, very negative stuff. They are dumping things that candidates would not ever touch. They are getting into issues that candidates would be editorialized against, would be criticized bringing up the issues. They have changed the whole tenor of the campaign.

I really believe that those issue ads with these changes we make will go a long way, will go a long way towards reforming the system, because if one has to disclose who is supporting them, if one has to have it in hard dollars, it is going to make a big difference.

I do not know what the gentleman's thoughts are on that, but I am sure that he has seen the same thing in his elections in Colorado, that maybe he does not see these issue ads at the State level.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL).

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most important parts of the Shays-Meehan bill is that the sham ads, and they really are that, would be exposed for what they are.

I do not have any problem with people wanting to speak out. That is the First Amendment. That is what this country is founded upon. It is one of the key principles that makes our country so free. But we ought to be clear about where those ads are coming from. We ought to be clear about who is paying for those ads.

I think that is not an abrogation of the First Amendment. It is not restricting people's right to free speech. But it is letting all of the voters know where these resources are coming from so they can make an informed choice. I think there is nothing more crucial with Shays-Meehan than getting a handle on all of this money that comes from outside the system right now.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the great State of Washington (Mr. BAIRD), who is also the President of our freshman class.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, we are here today to discuss an issue which, if we ask pollsters, they will tell us it does not poll high. Education, fighting crime, Social Security, that is all the American people care about. Those things are absolutely critical, and we have spoken on those issues here as well.

□ 1530

But if this body is to be able to address those critical issues, we need to give our Members time and we need to give them the freedom to speak their mind without fear of political attack.

This is my first term in Congress. I was sent here by the good people of southwest Washington to represent their views. Southwest Washington is a beautiful area. It is a rural district as well as urban-suburban. I am here to speak their voice. We should be here to

speak the voices of our people, not the voice of money. That is why campaign reform is so important.

People across this country are losing faith in the political system. Young people are saying their vote and their voice do not matter. People are saying they do not need to turn out and vote, and we are seeing voter turnouts below 50 percent, even below 30 and 25 percent in primaries.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday our freshman class submitted a letter to the Speaker's office signed by 22 of our 23 Democratic freshmen, and what we called for was early consideration of meaningful campaign finance reform. Early consideration. We cannot wait until the end of this year or until the end of this session of Congress and then say, gosh, we tried, but we ran out of time.

We must address this issue early for two reasons. Early, to give us time for meaningful, informative debate; early, so that we show we are sincere in this effort; and also early so that we have time to enact some of these laws to save the integrity of the next campaign season.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to see any more campaigns of the kind that we have seen in recent years, with vast independent expenditures, with scorched earth policies of saying anything and doing anything to be elected. We have seen too much of that. It is poisoning the political process; it is souring people in the belief that their voice and their vote matters.

During the 1997-98 election cycle, the national political parties raised \$193 million in soft money. That is right, my colleagues, \$193 million. I have to ask myself, how else might we have spent that money in this country? Could we have put it towards improving our education system? Could we have put it towards helping to reduce crime in our communities? Could we have helped senior citizens pay for their housing? Could we have improved the environment? There are innumerable uses we could put \$193 million towards, but we put it towards advertising.

We have had some laws that have attempted to deal with the problem of campaign funding, but existing loopholes have actually made the system worse, not better. Last year, 252 Members of this body voted to pass substantial reform legislation. Now, the Shays-Meehan bill may not have been perfect, but it was the best that we had before us, and I personally have signed on as a cosponsor of that bill because I think it is reasonable and it is responsible.

We have to do everything possible to maintain the public trust. Reforming campaign finance laws is not a Democratic problem, it is not a Republican problem, it is an American problem. It is a threat to our constitution if we do not achieve it, and we need to work now to do that.

I would like to speak to a couple of elements of the Shays-Meehan bill that make common sense, and I firmly believe if we ask the general public, the folks who sent us here to represent them, if these proposals make sense, they would encourage us to put them forward.

First, and my colleague mentioned it, a soft money ban. When we receive in the mail every single day during the campaign's final weeks a letter attacking one person or attacking another person, and at the bottom, as the gentleman from New Mexico said, it has some innocuous sounding name suggesting that that fine group of responsible citizens voluntarily put small contributions together to have a voice, that sounds reasonable. But that is not what happens. In fact, huge, virtually unlimited donations can come in and they can be spent on so-called issue advocacy ads.

Let me share with my colleagues what some of those issue advocacy ads do. In our campaign, one issue advocacy group spent over \$12,000 for a single 30 second advertisement. That is correct, \$12,000 for 30 seconds. The ad was later denounced as deliberately false and misleading, but they continued to run it. Now, \$12,000 for 30 seconds comes down to \$400 a second. Four hundred dollars a second to disseminate disruptive, deceptive and mean spirited information. Misinformation. That is wrong, Mr. Speaker, and we need to change it.

The Shays-Meehan bill before us this year would ban soft money and would set hard dollar contribution limits for the party so that we know where the money is coming from, and it has a meaningful ceiling.

The Shays-Meehan bill would recognize sham issue ads for what they truly are. They are campaign ads. It would say that if that group identifies a person in an advertisement, and it is within 60 days of an election, by golly, that is not information, that is political advertising, and they will fall under the restrictions that restrict political advertising.

It would say that any ad that contains unambiguous support or attacks on a position of a politician would also fall under the guidelines of campaign financing and, therefore, under the restrictions.

It would improve FEC disclosure. We should not have to spend days and weeks after an election to find out who contributed to a candidate or who spent money on issue ads during the election.

It would establish a commission to study further reforms to our campaign system.

It would also limit and restrict foreign soft money contributions.

It would restrict further franking. Franking, as a means of informing the public, is a wonderful thing, but if it

happens just a few weeks before an election, and currently I believe the limit is about 60 days, if it happens a few weeks before an election, it may well be political in nature.

The Shays-Meehan bill would limit the amount of money that wealthy candidates can contribute. When the young people who visit us here every day look down on this floor and say to themselves, I would like to be a representative someday, they should say, I would like to be a representative because I believe so strongly in this democracy; I believe in the issues I care about. That is what should bring them here. It should not be a question of how much money they have to raise or how wealthy their friends are. It should be a question of how decent their values are, how strong their commitment to this country is, how much they know about the issues, and how strongly they will fight to make this a better Nation. That is what should get them into Congress, and not just how much money they are able to raise.

The Shays-Meehan bill would establish a clearinghouse for information from the FEC and it would strengthen penalties for violations.

Mr. Speaker, my good friend, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), was elected by our class to lead our freshman class's efforts to make campaign finance reform a top priority issue in this congressional session. He is doing an outstanding job in that. We are united as a freshman class in the commitment to campaign finance reform being addressed early in this session. I stand with my friend from New Mexico and with our freshman class in a commitment to keep bringing this issue forward until we pass meaningful legislation.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) very much.

One of the issues that the gentleman mentioned, and I hope we can carry on a little discussion about some of these issues that the gentleman has raised here, the first one is this issue of people being discouraged from going into elective politics.

I have traveled throughout my Congressional District and gone into high schools and taught high school classes and tried to talk about what it means to be a public servant and why we need good public servants. And, in fact, I have heard people say if we do not have the best and the brightest going into our governmental arena, then we relegate ourselves to second class leadership.

I think that is really the thrust of what the gentleman is saying there. The gentleman, in a very powerful way, is saying if we change the system, we may open it up to a whole new group of leaders out there that will say, look, this is a cleaner system, this is a better system, this is a system that I believe I can stand up and be a part of.

I was wondering, does the gentleman see those kinds of things in Washington, in his district, where he thinks there would be a lot more interest in terms of individuals?

Mr. BAIRD. Absolutely. I cannot tell my colleague the numbers of people, fine, decent, upstanding people, who would make outstanding representatives at all levels of government, who come to me and say, what is it like? I have to tell them that I believe being a representative to the United States Congress is the highest privilege, the highest honor one could ever aspire to, but it is a tremendous responsibility as well.

That is the positive side. What I hate to have to tell people, but I do, because it is, unfortunately, the truth, that if they want to serve today in the United States Congress, and if they are from a district that is competitive, they need to be prepared not to study the issues as well as they wish they could, not to have as much time as they wish they had to meet the people, not to spend time with their family sometimes, but that they need to be prepared, regrettably, to attach themselves to a telephone and become basically a phone solicitor.

That is a tragedy. It is nothing short of a tragedy. When Jefferson and Madison and Mason and George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, the Founding Fathers of this country, were establishing this great Nation, they did not envision, in their wildest imagination, that good people, people who they inspire every day by their example, would be tied to a telephone asking for money. They did not envision that all the wonderful people who care about the democracy would feel that dollars sometimes mean more than votes. That is wrong. It should not be that way.

I want to compliment the people who do contribute, the donors who, most of the time, are not asking for anything. I cannot tell my colleague how many folks have said that they are contributing to my campaign because they believe in me as a person. They are not asking for anything except for me to do my best for our country. We should not insult them. We should not demean them. We should praise them for being active participants. But we should also honor their contributions by setting reasonable limits like those proposed in Shays-Meehan.

I talked to a woman once who was on Social Security, a fixed income, and she said she knew how much we have to raise to run for Congress and she wished she could give it all to me. She said she would offer to give \$5, but she would be embarrassed because she knew that I may have to raise \$1 million and that I would not get there very fast if I went at it \$5 at a time.

I was happy to accept her contribution. That \$5 meant a lot of me. Proportionately, it was probably a greater

portion of her income than a lot of folks, and it should not be overwhelmed by a tide of soft money. It should not be overwhelmed by a tide of enormous contributions. It should stand as her contribution to the democratic process.

We need to ensure, through legislation like this, that everyone's voice matters in this process. The gentleman is exactly right, we have to free our candidates up, we have to reinspire a sense of hope and civility and civic pride that once led people to say, I would like to run for political office and serve this country. The gentleman is exactly right.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. One of the parts, and I think the gentleman touched on it, that I believe is a particularly valuable part of this bill, is the setting up of a blue ribbon panel to study the entire campaign finance system. Those of us here in the House that have worked on this issue realize that we probably need some people to take a big comprehensive look at the whole system, spend 18 months and come back to us with some of the issues that we are not addressing here.

The gentleman and I both know that in a campaign today 80-85 percent of our money is spent on television. Well, these are airwaves that are owned by the public. The broadcasters and media people get these licenses. In Britain they have great debates when they enter into an election. They are all publicly televised at no cost.

I think there are parts of this bill where we could make the bill stronger, but I believe the way to do it is to have this big broad commission go out and do their very best to find out how we can get back to work in this body, how we can lessen the impact of special interests, how we can do everything we can to make sure that the people's voices are heard in our democracy.

I think this commission idea, although it is not mentioned that much, I think is a good one, of getting citizens to go out and report back to us.

Mr. BAIRD. I agree. Absolutely. The Shays-Meehan bill is a start. It is a first step, an important and essential first step, and one we should take today or tomorrow. We should not wait until the end of this year.

But there are other things we can do, and the gentleman raises an interesting point. Throughout my campaign, for example, I said that we needed to have informative voter pamphlets. In our State of Washington a candidate for the United States Congress is allowed 250 words in the State voter pamphlets. Two hundred and fifty words, with critical issues like national defense, health care, Social Security, our children's education, stopping crime.

With those issues on the table, we get 250 words to condense a lifetime of community service and teaching and

training and experience. Two hundred and fifty words. We need informative voter pamphlets. We need to work with the media. And I think that is part of what the gentleman is addressing.

In our district we have some very, very responsible broadcast stations, stations that do grant candidates time; that do air debates. We need to encourage those stations, and we need to encourage the viewers to not just dive for the remote and say, oh my goodness, it is a political debate, I have to watch something else.

□ 1545

Because if they do that, candidates have no choice but to change them with advertising, and a 30-second advertisement will not tell them as much as a 1-hour debate. So we have got to encourage the stations that do provide coverage. We need to work, I believe, in our public schools, and it is something I am going to work through and throughout my life in Congress. And here is what I would like to see us do.

I would like to see us consider every senior in this class getting an American Government course which talks about their personal responsibility to the country, which talks about how the transition from high school is not just the end of drudgery, as some view it, but it is their transition to the most sacred responsibility a person in a democracy has, that of citizen.

If we combine those informative voters pamphlets, meaningful broadcast information, better public civics education in our public schools, we could, in addition to things like Shays-Meehan, reinvigorate a vibrant and vital political debate, a debate on which a democracy depends. And so we need exactly, as you said, to strengthen that commission, to let it do its job and provide comprehensive recommendations for further improvements in this process.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. BAIRD, you mention the point of the responsible broadcasters that are out there, and I really believe that many of us have seen in our congressional districts many responsible broadcasters. And I think over the 8 to 9 years that I have been in public service, I have seen broadcasters step forward with free time and say right near an election, "we are going to give you 5 minutes completely unrestricted and you can say whatever you want." Now, that is a very I think commendable effort on their part.

And there is another proposal they have come up with, this idea of banking credits for television time and involving the political process and the electoral process in that. So I would like to hear their ideas as to how is the best way to do this. When I spent 5 weeks in England during one of their elections, all of it was on television. The entire public was engaged. And it

was not on in 30-second ads. It was on real debates, where men and women were discussing the direction of the country, they were discussing what are their values and what direction do they want to move in. And it was a very stimulating debate. And as somebody that was not even allowed to vote, they would walk into one of their establishments and they would be right in the middle of a big political debate to where Britain should go.

So we need to try to get to the point where we bring our elections back to really this idea of a marketplace of ideas, a true discussion, involving the public, bringing them in. And we are not doing that right now. The 30-second commercials I think are turning people off. They are saying this is not a part, this is not a part of me; this is some other debate taking place over there.

Mr. BAIRD. I sometimes think we need to pose to the American people a basic choice, and the choice would be this. Do they want people who are going to represent them to spend their time on the telephone raising huge amounts of money so they can run 30-second advertisements or do they want them to come visit them in town meetings? Do they want them to be studying the issues, to be listening to them, to be meeting with their colleagues to try to propose constructive progressive legislation?

I personally believe that there is no question people want us to do the latter. But until we have campaign finance reform and until the American public feels that they have a voice and a responsibility in the political process, we will not have the kind of dialogue that my colleague has described. That is why I think Shays-Meehan is so important and it is why we need to dedicate ourselves to that.

Let me, if I might, address one other issue that I feel real strongly about. In a sense, people might say we are foolish to be even talking about campaign finance reform. We are incumbent now for goodness sake. The incumbent potentially would have all the advantages of a system where large dollar contributions come flying in because of our position here.

In some ways, we are saying we are willing to set down our advantage, what might be a financial advantage, for the good of the country, we are willing to say we are prepared to compete on a level playing field, we are prepared to clean up the process. So that, for the good of everybody, we have got to stop saying in this body, how will this legislation impact our opportunity to win the next election and we have got to start asking, how will this legislation work for the good of the country.

That is what it is about with campaign finance reform. It should not be

a partisan issue. And if there are special-interest groups pressuring Members of one party or the other and saying, "you must not support campaign finance reform or we will come after you," which I know to be a fact, there are special-interest groups doing that, those special-interest groups that do that are the problem, and Members who feel pressured need to speak out about that.

It is not right for people to threaten Members by saying, "we will attack you with financial resources if you try to change the campaign finance system." That is symptomatic of the problem, and we need to speak out vigorously about that and the public needs to speak out and I think they need to ask themselves where their Member was on the issue of campaign reform. That is why we are here today.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) in terms of leveling the playing field. I very much believe that the imbalance that is there with the fundraising, with the ability of an incumbent to buy incredible numbers of 30-second ads, it perverts the whole system. And we need to try for a system where when there are two candidates or three candidates, or however many there are in a particular primary or general election, that they do have equal time and that they have the ability to get their ideas across.

The 30-second spot, although it may be a good medium to convey an idea, is so restricting in terms of allowing an individual to really articulate their vision for the country, where they want to take the country. And so in structuring this, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) put together a bill that I think is going to level the playing field, create a commission where they can come back and tell us other ways that we can try to make sure the challengers have a true opportunity to get their ideas out. And I think that is what we are all about here in terms of our freshman class, and members of our freshman class that have signed on, is saying, we have been through it, we know how it works, we need to reform it and we need to reform it right now.

Mr. BAIRD. People have said that the legislative process is like making sausage, it might taste good at the end but we do not want to see how it is made. I think people are all too familiar and believe that the process is made unfortunately through contributions.

What we are trying to do here is say, and I want to emphasize this, the bill that we are putting forward that the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) have put forward and in our class and my colleague and myself have endorsed does not say

we have to stop all money. Because, quite frankly, we do need financial resources. Campaigns to reach 500,000 people with their message do cost money. But it says the way we raise the money needs to be reformed. It says the playing field needs to be level. It says enormous special-interest contributions and thinly disguised attack ads need to be eliminated. It says they need to have access to information about who is contributing so they can see the groups they agree with or disagree with support this candidate, they can see if the group says, "we are citizens for a wonderful, happy economy and gracious environment," or some such thing, who the heck are those people? Because oftentimes the names they choose are different than the agenda they would have us believe through their titles.

That is why we need the reform. We have got to have transparency. We have got to have a level playing field. We have got to have reasonable limits. And we have got to set our candidates free from the drudgery of having to spend their lives on the telephone. We get to talk to a lot of nice folks when we do that and there is merit to that. And I have met some wonderful people through the process of politics so far, but I will tell my colleagues that I would most of all like to meet with them and just listen to their issues and never have to have them or myself worried about the proverbial pitch for money, because that is a blight on our system. And the more we can do to reduce that, the more we can do to level the playing field for the small and individual donors, to limit soft money, to ban soft money used in political advertising, the better off we will be.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. BAIRD, the idea that people do not care about this, the idea that somehow the electorate is not concerned about the issue of how our campaigns are financed is one that when people throw that idea out I just instinctively believe that they have not been around, they have not heard what people have said. Because when I ask people, "what would you do to change the system?" they say, "no gifts at all, no corporate giving, very small amounts of money." They do not even like how high the amount is now. "Get the money completely out of politics." Those are the kinds of comments I hear. And that is clearly where they are coming from, and they want us to reform.

Mr. Speaker, we have here the gentlewoman from the great State of Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY). She would like to join our debate I believe, and I yield to her.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, representing the State of Illinois was the great Senator Paul Simon just for two terms. He decided not to run again, and one of the reasons he decided not to run again was that he knew that he

was going to have to raise an obscene amount of money in order to be a viable candidate for the United States Senate.

Paul Simon has been a paragon of integrity, a person who has represented the highest in public service, and decided not to run. And he would tell a story during the campaign about how, after a long day on the trail, he would come back to his hotel room and there would be a stack of messages, all those pink slips that we all get telling us who to call back, and he would look through that list and among them would be maybe four from people or PACs that have contributed a lot of money. And he said, you know, I just want to ask you, who do you think after a long day it was that I felt a priority to call back? Now, he was making an admission about how campaigns and how running for office really works. He said, yeah, I called those big givers back because, without the millions of dollars that it took to run for the United States Senate, all of those things that I believe in and that my constituents stand for, I would not be able to be there in the Senate. And it was partly that that drove him from office. I think what Paul Simon was saying is that money to the extent that it is a factor in politics imperils our democracy.

Now, we have a number of opportunities this session to address this issue. I know that the Shays-Meehan bill will be up again, a bill that deals with the question of soft money, a way to get around campaign financing rules, and I support that. But there are other options too that I think eventually we are going to have to get to, the clean elections, clean money proposals, which essentially say that we are going to just take that special-interest money, those big bucks, out of politics.

Now, we looked in the State of Illinois at how much it would cost each Illinois family per year to pay for all of the Federal elections within our State. And do my colleagues know what we found? It would cost about \$5 per family per year to fund the elections at the level that they are being funded now, which is very high. We are talking millions of dollars per election. Well, it seems to me that 5 bucks a family per year to buy back our Government is a bargain.

Why don't people vote? Why don't they participate? Because they have a sense that there is not a place at the table unless they put their money down and they have bought that place at the table. And all too often that is true and certainly in terms of access to elected officials. And that was that story that Paul Simon was sadly telling and all too often I think in the outcome of public policy decisions.

□ 1600

Do people care about it? Do they care about how much they pay in their utility bills? Do they care who is polluting their air? Do they care whether or not their schools are of a good quality? All of these issues are influenced by big-money players in the political arena. Those are issues that they care about. Fundamentally I think we are never going to get to deciding on the basis of what is right, what is wrong, what is best for people unless we take the element of big money out of our election campaigns.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. I thank the gentlewoman very much for those excellent comments.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that either one of my colleagues may want to engage me in, is an important issue. There were people in the past that have shone the light. The gentlewoman mentioned Paul Simon from her great State. I know two individuals, one, Senator Proxmire from Wisconsin who took the attitude that he was not going to take any money, and he sent money back, actually. What he would do is every time he would go out to Wisconsin, he would get out at the professional football games, stand in line and shake 40,000 hands. He figured that was the way to get reelected. Back in those days, he did a good job of it and people loved him. And Representative Pat Williams, I think, was asked when he left Congress what he was going to miss, and he said that the one thing he had never gotten into was making telephone calls for fund-raising. He said, "Somebody else can do that."

Clearly we are in a different time because of the mistrust and because of all of the issue ads and everything else that is out there, but we need to try and move back, I think, to the point where there is more of that. Their real purpose in doing that was saying, "I want to focus on my job. I don't want to take one minute away from my job."

Mr. BAIRD. Let me share with my colleagues an example actually from our recent experience. We had a very expensive campaign, I will admit it, because we were getting attacked heavily, one of the number-one targets in the whole country. But we also had a grassroots campaign. That is what we need to have more of. We had 1,100 volunteers in the field on the day of the election, 1,100 people going around the district working telephones, saying why they cared so much about that election. I know my good friend from Illinois had a similar organization. That is politics at its best. Politics at its best is people working in the field for people they believe. Politics at its worst is when people pay telephone solicitors to call with smear campaigns. Politics at its worst are last-minute \$100,000, \$200,000 and \$300,000 TV attack ads.

What I am hoping we can do is inspire the young people who come watch us each day and watch us on TV and who are in our schools today to be a part of politics at its best. This bill will help reduce the impact of politics at its worst and maybe inspire people to do more.

I know my good friend from Illinois has had similar work with people in the field.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. During the election campaign, I spent about 25 hours a week on the telephone, as they say, dialing for dollars, asking people if they would contribute to my campaign. Those are 25 hours a week that I could have been learning more about issues, attending meetings with community representatives, out shaking hands, going to grocery stores, meeting with constituents, learning about the real issues that affect people in my district and not calling name after name of people who might be able to contribute to the campaigns. But worse than that, it seems to me, what they want in a Member of Congress, when we reach for our voting card to put it in a slot and vote on an issue, I think what the voters want us to be thinking about is them, what is good for them, not making a calculation in our minds, "If I vote yes, which of my major contributors is going to be upset?" Or "how am I going to explain this to somebody who has given me a lot of money?"

I know from being in the State legislature that unfortunately these kinds of calculations are made. I think anyone who says otherwise is simply not telling the truth about how it works in terms of money. And so I think that it is not only the candidate's time but also the candidate's vote that is at stake here.

Mr. BAIRD. If I could echo that a little bit. One of the things that is frustrating about some of these discussions of reform, people have come and said that the politicians are corrupt. People need to understand that I do not know a single person who says, "Gosh, I'm so excited because there's 5 hours of call time on my schedule today."

We need to understand that money does not come to the candidates. It goes to your campaign fund, which then typically goes almost directly to a TV or radio station or direct mail house. The people who are running for office, the people I have met in this great body, are decent people. They are here because they care about the system. They do the fund-raising side not because they like that, not because they line their own pockets but because they are willing to endure the humiliation and the drudgery and the frustration in order to get here and have a voice for the people of their State. We need to be very careful when we talk about this to not tear down this House and not tear down our colleagues because they are good, decent

people. The system of funding may be corroded but the people involved are not corrupt people. I want to make sure what we do is we free them from that drudgery and we free them from that stigma and that stain that other people might attach to it.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I would certainly echo that. I would also say that the gentleman raises a good point about the cost of media and the idea that radio time, that TV time which eats up so many of the dollars that are raised in campaigns, if we could get more contributions from the public airwaves toward campaigns, if we could have some free air time on radio and television, that it would certainly help ease the need for campaign donations.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. The issue of the individuals, the Members of Congress, that are here and how they relate to this system, I do not think there is any doubt that we have people that are here that are well-intentioned, they care about their constituencies, they care very much about their congressional districts, and they are caught in a bad system. They are caught in a bad system. That is why I am so proud of our freshman class for stepping up to the plate. The freshman class that preceded us did the same thing.

Members from both sides of the aisle last August, in 1998, 252 Members, voted for this bill that all of us want to see passed today. I think that sends a very strong message that we want change, we want people to be heard, we want truly to open up the system and get back to ideas rather than money.

If there are no additional comments from either the gentleman from Washington or the gentlewoman from Illinois, let me at this point just close by saying that I am very, very proud of our freshman class for stepping up to the plate on this issue. I am very proud of the gentleman from Washington for his leadership on this issue as the president of our freshman class, and the gentlewoman from Illinois. I know that she has also become a leader on this issue and I compliment her on that and say that I think with all of us working together and reaching across the aisle, I really and truly think we are going to get this done, we are going to get it done early and get it over to the other body. I think we are going to see progress on this issue this year. I thank both my colleagues for their participation.

#### PROMOTING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, one of the benefits of a livable community is that it provides a setting that