

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. REYNOLDS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed bills of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 148. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to provide assistance in the conservation of neotropical migratory birds.

S. 380. An act to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minutes on each side.

REPEAL THE INCOME TAX

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is that time of year again: Tax season. Let us be honest, our current tax system is economically destructive, impossibly complex, overly intrusive, unprincipled, dishonest, unfair and inefficient. This madness must stop. That is why I will reintroduce the tax freedom bill today that will repeal the 16th Amendment to the Constitution and deny the Congress the ability to lay and collect taxes on income, except when the Congress declares war.

We must replace the current tax system based on a vision of America that places the individual, not the government, at the center of society. My bill to replace the 16th Amendment brings us one step closer to replacing the current system and restoring freedom to the American taxpayer. It is way past time to enact a tax system that embraces freedom for all Americans.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues in the Blue Dog Caucus, especially the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and the

gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), for their leadership in helping to bring campaign finance reform to the forefront of the agenda in this session.

I also want to thank the freshman Democrats who have been so helpful with this effort, and I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), who have been the leaders of making this legislation come together.

This is a bipartisan issue which demands bipartisan action. Both Democrats and Republicans support the Shays-Meehan reform bill to help restore sanity to our system of political campaigns. It is a first step but we need to start somewhere, and that place is here and that place is now and that time is now.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership of the House for the past 2 years has been dedicated to stifling these bipartisan efforts to clean up political campaigns. First it was death by amendment. Now it is death by delay. Well, it is now or never. In baseball, wait until next year is the perpetual excuse for coming in last. Wait until August is another excuse for why the House will not pass campaign finance reform again this year.

If we want to clean up the political campaign system, now is the time and here is the chance. I urge every Member, both Democrat and Republican, to sign this discharge petition. It is a fair petition. It is a fair rule. Let us get campaign reform done now, not later.

NO CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF LIBERALS TO WAGE WAR

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I have no confidence in the ability of liberals to wage war. That is the truth that most of us believe and cannot deny. From the nonsensical way that Johnson and McNamara fought the Vietnam War, to Carter's humiliation in Iran, to our latest misadventure in Kosovo, the truth is there for all to see.

The liberal mentality simply is not equipped to deal with the harsh realities of war. They do not understand the first thing about using military force, about protecting America's national interest or about what is required to defeat a determined enemy. Vietnam, Iran hostages and now Bill Clinton's war in Kosovo. The liberals voted against using military force in the Persian Gulf when U.S. interests were clearly at stake, but where U.S. interests are not at stake, such as Haiti or Kosovo, then they are for military force.

This is liberalism in the full glory of its contradictions and wrongheadedness. I only can pray that the soldiers,

sailors and aviators who must put their lives on the line do not suffer for the naivete and the incompetence of the armchair liberals in this administration.

DEMOCRATS WANT MEANINGFUL CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, today Democrats are lining up for reform. We have had enough. We have had enough Republican leadership excuses. We have had enough delay. We want meaningful campaign finance reform.

We are here lined up to sign a discharge petition to discharge all of the proposals, by both Republicans and Democrats, for a full and fair debate on the floor of this House.

□ 1030

Last year the Republicans delayed as long as they could until this discharge petition was approved. They finally had to bring the bill to the floor, and then they tried to filibuster it to death with amendments.

When that filibuster failed, every single member of the Republican leadership, including the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) voted no against bipartisan reform sponsored by Republicans and Democrats, and backed by most every good government organization in this country.

With that background, it is very troubling to hear now the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) announce in the first month of his speakership that he would put this vital issue on the back burner. We need an end to obstructionism and some real bipartisan reform.

LET US HAVE TRUE BIPARTISANSHIP AND TRUE REFORM

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise that my colleagues on the left want to posture in the name of reform. After all, they, and to tell the truth, all the American people, have been embarrassed by an administration that took campaign donations from the People's Republic of China. That is despicable. So we would ask in a bipartisan fashion that they join with us to get to the bottom of Chinese influence on our government and on our political system, and that is the real step to reform.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would ask my friends on the left to give the working men and women of America who happen to belong to unions the right to devote their union dues directly to collective bargaining, instead of going

into the campaign coffers of liberal interest groups. That is another real step for reform.

Let us have true bipartisanship and true reform, quit the preening and posturing, and stand up for America.

TIME FOR MEANINGFUL AND TIMELY DEBATE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, during the last Congress the Republican leadership attempted to block the passage of meaningful campaign finance reform. But the freshman class of 1996, Democrats and Republicans, worked together on a bipartisan basis with the Shays-Meehan bill to force the issue. We ultimately succeeded in bringing an open debate on this issue to the Floor of the House.

We thought we had demonstrated the importance to the American people of taking up campaign finance reform, but once again the Republican leadership does not fully appreciate the magnitude of this issue.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Shays-Meehan bill. We must ban soft money and find a way to regulate sham issue ads. Soft money contributions are exploding. The amount of money contributed to both political parties has grown at an enormous and unacceptable rate. In 1992 soft money accounted for \$86 million. By 1996 it had increased to \$260 million. In 1998, a nonpresidential election year, it increased to \$193 million, twice the increase the previous year.

We need to address this cancer. We need to sign the discharge petition, and have meaningful and timely debate on campaign finance reform.

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET AND THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, which dog is the tail wagging today? This chart shows one of the key differences between the President's budget and the Republican budget. The Republican budget pays down the debt by \$1.8 trillion over 10 years. The President's budget pays down the debt by much less.

Let us take a look at that again: \$1.8 trillion in debt reduction under the Republican plan, higher debt levels under the President's plan. Our budget does a much better job of paying off the debt. The President's budget leaves us in debt for longer periods of time. The Republican budget also provides middle

class tax relief from future surpluses, and our budget puts away 100 percent of the retirement surplus for social security and Medicare. We put that money in a safe deposit box so that Washington spenders will put an end to their 40-year practice of raiding social security to pay for new government programs. It is a great budget and a budget to be proud of.

THE IMF PROPOSAL TO GIVE RUSSIA MORE MONEY

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, a new report says Uncle Sam gives billions of dollars to Russia every year, and the money disappears into an offshore bank account. Guess what, much of the money is now reported stolen. If that is not enough to bust your balsam, check this out. The International Monetary Fund announced today they want to give Russia more money.

Mr. Speaker, I submit, the IMF has brains in their assets. I yield back all our wasted taxpayer dollars that are going to Russian fat cats partying with our dollars and not even supporting us in Kosovo. Members should think about that.

HCFA HOME HEALTH CARE ASSESSMENT UNDERMINES PRIVACY OF AMERICANS

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, now the big government bureaucrats in the Clinton administration have decided they do care about the privacy rights of the American people after all. Just 14 days before 9,000 home health care providers are to begin submitting the personal medical information of millions of Americans to the Federal Government, we learn in the Washington Post that the Health Care Financing Administration has decided to review the program's privacy implications, something which should have been considered long before this misguided regulation ever saw the light of day.

Is this newfound concern for privacy going to prevent the administration from prying into the lives of innocent Americans and creating a Federal database of their medical information? Sadly, the answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, is no. The administration is simply delaying the ultimate submission of the data to the Federal Government.

The home health care providers are still expected to conduct the 19-page assessment of each page, including private questions concerning the patient's sense of failure or socially inappro-

priate behavior. Let us put an end to this outrageous conduct.

CONGRESS MUST ACT NOW TO PASS CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM AND BAN SOFT MONEY

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, Congress must act now to pass campaign finance reform and ban soft money. We must act now in a nonelection year, before the strategic calculations of the election year money chase contaminate the debate on campaign finance reform. We must act now before unregulated, unaccountable soft money contributions drown out the people's voices in the 2000 election.

If we thought the presidential election year of 1996 was awash in soft money, 2000 promises to be a deluge. We must act now to give the Senate sufficient time to act. Campaign finance reform is too important to be held hostage to the anti-reform faction's policy of delay, delay, delay.

I urge Members to sign the discharge petition so we can pass the Shays-Meehan reform bill. If we combine last year's votes on the Shays-Meehan and Hutchinson-Allen bills, 352 Members voted to ban soft money. That is 81 percent of the House.

I urge my colleagues to sign the discharge petition, pass Shays-Meehan, and ban soft money.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APRIL 15 TAX DEADLINE

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, it is that time of the year again, April 14th, the night before April 15th, the tax deadline. It is a bittersweet day for a politician. On the one hand, we are forced to confront the painful truth about how much the Federal Government takes from its productive citizens in the way of taxes. On the other hand, it is a tragic reality. It serves as an useful reminder to Republicans for what they stand for as a party.

To Republicans, taxes are a freedom issue. We believe that people should be entitled to the fruits of their labor. Slavery was a great evil because slaves were not entitled to the fruits of their labor. That was wrong.

The question for Republicans is one ultimately of choice: Who decides how to spend the money that Americans earn, those Americans or the government? We believe that people should have more power and more control over their lives, and the government should have less. That is the significance of April 15 to me.