

## SIGN DISCHARGE PETITION TO DEBATE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, 9 out of 10 Americans, 9 out of 10 Americans support campaign finance reform. Today, I rise in support of meaningful campaign finance reform which our political system needs and our constituents demand.

I salute the Blue Dogs for once again filing a discharge petition to try to overcome the resistance of the Republican leadership and force a reform bill onto the House floor.

The simple fact is the cost of running for Federal office today is so great that candidates are forced to devote way too much of their time fund-raising rather than dealing with issues of importance to their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, last year 196 Members signed a discharge petition that led to bringing the Shays-Meehan bipartisan campaign finance bill to the House floor. Without that petition process, the House Republican leadership would never have let that debate occur.

Today, I urge all Members, from both sides, to join me in signing this petition so that a real debate can finally take place on this floor.

## CONFERENCE REPORT ON HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 68, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 137 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

## H. RES. 137

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider a conference report to accompany the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 68) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2000 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for each of the fiscal years 2001 through 2009. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read. The conference report shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 137 is a conventional rule providing for consideration of the conference report for H. Con. Res. 68, the budget resolution for fiscal year 2000.

H. Res. 137 waives all points of order against the conference report to accompany H. Con. Res. 68 and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report is considered as read. The rule further provides for 1 hour of general debate on the conference report, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. Speaker, the deadline for passing the budget is this week, and I am pleased the House will pass the budget resolution on time. In fact, when the budget resolution is adopted by the House and Senate by Thursday, it will be only the second time in 25 years that the U.S. Congress has met the statutory deadline. As we promised, this Congress has quietly been a workhorse, going about its legislative work in a businesslike manner that we planned at the beginning of the new year.

I am not only pleased we have completed this budget resolution in a timely manner, but I am delighted this budget reaffirms our support for less government and more freedom for the American people. Like the first debate on the budget, I expect today's debate will also center upon the differences between the parties and the role of the Federal Government, and I welcome that debate.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report is very similar to the budget passed by the House in March. Our budget saves Social Security by ensuring that 100 percent of the money from payroll taxes destined for the Social Security Trust Fund remains in the trust fund. That is \$1.8 trillion over the next decade for retirement security. Our budget strengthens Social Security and ensures that big spenders can no longer raid the fund to pay for their big government spending programs.

Mr. Speaker, after saving Social Security and Medicare, the real question is what do we do with the remainder of the surplus. The Congress says give it back. When previous Congresses could not figure out how to run the government, they turned to the American people for more taxes. Now that we have a surplus, the big spenders do not want to give the people a refund. They want to spend it on new, wasteful, bureaucratic programs.

A few months ago, we received a preview of this debate when the President stated, "We could give it all back to you and hope you spend it right." But the President then preceded to explain that he really should not give back the surplus because Federal Government bureaucrats could make wiser choices with the American people's paychecks than they could.

That is the ideological choice we will deal with today. Our budget is designed to provide more freedom and power to the American people. The President's budget was designed to keep the taxpayers' money controlled in this town.

We simply believe that individuals make much better choices about their lives than bureaucrats do. The President's budget suggests that the government can make wiser choices with the paychecks of the American workers. Today in America, Federal tax revenues comprise a record percentage of gross domestic product. The President responded to the growing tax burden by saying, "Fifteen years from now, if the Congress wants to give more tax relief, let them do it."

I have talked to many of my constituents and most of them were not enthusiastic about waiting until the year 2014 to get a tax refund. Therefore, this budget reaffirms our belief that the people know best how to spend their own money and, therefore, we provide the American people with serious tax relief now.

It should be noted that despite the President's rhetoric, his budget would have cut Medicare \$11.9 billion over 5 years. The Republican budget rejects the President's Medicare cuts. Even the President's own Comptroller General, David Walker, has criticized the Clinton Medicare proposal for essentially doing nothing to alter the imbalance between the program's receipts and benefits payments.

The President's cut in Medicare and his fiscal shell games would have endangered the quality of our seniors' health care. Conversely, our budget locks away all of the Social Security Trust Fund surpluses for the Nation's elderly to save, strengthen and preserve Social Security and Medicare.

This budget continues our determined effort to provide more security, more freedom and less government to the American people. The House budget is a common sense plan to provide security for the American people by preserving every penny of the Social Security surplus, return overtaxed paychecks to those who earned it, pay down the national debt, rebuild the national defense, and improve our public schools.

Mr. Speaker, for too long this Nation put too much trust in government rules and decision-making. Ronald Reagan argued that we should trust the people because, "Whenever they are allowed to create and build, whenever they are given a personal stake in deciding economic policies and benefiting from their success, then societies become more dynamic, prosperous, progressive, and free." This budget resolution is written in such a way to provide that freedom to the American families and communities by returning power, money and control back to them.