

Sometime between December 12th and last evening, someone in the Speaker's office or the Senate Majority Leader's office dropped the word "increase"—thus allowing the drug companies and doctors who profiteer from huge mark-ups on drugs to continue to rip-off patients and taxpayers. The bill before us now only blocks the cuts in reimbursement that had been recommended by the Department of Justice.

What a travesty. Senator MCCAIN is right: it is way way past time for campaign finance reform.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
DEIDRA HAIR

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 15, 2000

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a distinguished friend, Judge Deidra Hair, who will step down from her service on the Hamilton County Common Pleas Court on December 31, 2000.

In 1995, the Hamilton County Common Pleas Court was founded as Ohio's first drug court. Judge Hair, who helped to establish the drug court, has tirelessly handled about 1,500 cases each year. Her court has become a model across Ohio, and since 1995, ten additional courts in Ohio have been crafted in its likeness.

The goal of the drug court is to rehabilitate substance abusers and keep them out of court and out of prison. Those arrested on drug abuse charges or those who commit a non-violent felony under the influence of drugs may have their case heard by the drug court. Using strict criteria, the court may accept applicants who do not have a violent criminal background and who have committed a low-level felony that does not require prison time. If accepted, they must plead guilty and enter drug rehabilitation. The goal is to break the cycle of addiction, so the court selects those who are most likely to be helped.

I have been privileged to observe the drug court and to attend an inspiring graduation ceremony for participants who have successfully completed this program. Through that, I've seen firsthand the good work that drug rehabilitation can do.

Judge Hair has literally helped to turn hundreds of lives around in the Cincinnati community, and she will be dearly missed when she steps down from the Hamilton County Common Pleas Court. All of us in the Cincinnati area wish her the very best in her future endeavors.

U.S. SUPREME COURT PREVENTED
JUDICIAL INTERVENTION IN THE
ELECTION

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 15, 2000

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court was consistent with

common sense and the need to bring finality to a process which, in my judgment, should never have started. By that, I mean the judicial involvement in the election decision.

Before the onset of technology, in the distant past when paper ballots were used in elections, the standards for a valid vote were clear and universally observed. To vote, you placed an "X" in the box by the candidate's name. If you used a check mark or other mark or placed your "X" outside of the box, your vote for that office was invalid and, in the absence of fraud, was not counted.

Voting machines were meant to speed the process of voting and counting the votes cast. But they also have standards. If you do not punch the card in the manner specified, indicating your intended vote, the machine will not count it. If you can't understand the instructions or make a mistake as you vote, you can ask for help or a new ballot. The machine is impartial. It counts all properly cast votes. It does not count those not properly cast, nor should it. Unless there is a challenge to the workings of the machine in counting the vote, or other irregularity or fraud alleged, the count of the voting machine should be the certified or final count in the election.

The judicial challenges in Florida by the Gore campaign were based principally upon the cards that the machine did not count. The Gore contention was not that the machines did not count correctly, but that votes not properly cast by the voter should be counted by hand—somehow by having county election officials divine the voters' intentions. It is fascinating that the standards to do this were never established in two decisions by the Florida Supreme Court. Telling county election officials simply to use their best judgment was clearly unconstitutional, as the U.S. Supreme Court just ruled, since it violates the equal protection clause. It is also plainly an open invitation to manipulation of the results and fraud.

Fortunately, this episode will result in introducing new technologies for voting designed to foreclose any attempt to go outside the machine result in future elections. Once again, perhaps, technology will save us from ourselves. But let's leave this difficult process with several clear understandings. First, votes have to meet some minimum standard and voters have to take the responsibility for their own actions. More than two hundred years ago our new country placed its future on the judgment of individual people, not dictators or kings. But with rights come responsibilities. One is to meet minimum standard of preparation and execution to cast a valid vote.

Second, we should have learned that the judiciary, in the absence of alleged fraud, should not intervene in the political process. For most of our history this has been an unstated part of the separation of powers. The first decision of the Florida Supreme Court should have upheld the Secretary of State's certification. Unfortunately, their desire to intervene in the absence of alleged fraud necessitated not one but two trips to the U.S. Supreme Court. It is instructive that the court in Washington did not itself intervene but prevented the Florida court from doing so.

Finally, it is a testament to the founders of this great Republic that all of us are sufficiently imbued with the rule of law that we sat

patiently through this long process and believed that it would be resolved as fairly as is humanly possible within that rule. We did not take to the streets, take the law into our own hands, or threaten to overthrow our system. It is not perfect, and we are not perfect, but we know it is the best system that humankind has ever devised.

IN HONOR OF THE RETIREMENT
OF BARBARA B. ASWAD

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 15, 2000

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor one of our country's great scholar-educators, Dr. Barbara B. Aswad of Wayne State University. Dr. Aswad is retiring from Wayne State after 30 years as a professor of Middle Eastern Cultural Anthropology. Her research has focused on peasant culture, women and family studies, and urban anthropology.

Professor Aswad has conducted field studies in Arab villages and Turkish towns in the Middle East as well as in Arab-American communities here in the United States. She is a Fulbright Scholar and has published three books and 32 scholarly articles and chapters in books on Middle Eastern social organization. In 1991 she was elected President of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, the professional association for professors of Middle Eastern disciplines. Dr. Aswad was also a recipient of the prestigious Alumni Faculty Service Award for her service to Wayne State.

In addition to her many contributions to academic research and lengthy service in professional organizations, Dr. Aswad must be recognized for her dedication to her students, her department, and the Arab-American Community. She is widely respected by her peers not only as a fine educator, but as a wonderful person as well.

While Wayne State University may be losing a faculty member, ACCESS and other organizations that Dr. Aswad is so dedicated to will still have a strong voice in our community. Please join me in wishing Dr. Barbara Aswad all the best in her retirement from Wayne State University.

AFRICA AND THE NEXT
ADMINISTRATION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 15, 2000

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with you an outstanding speech by Ambassador Richard T. McCormack titled: The Challenges and Opportunities in Africa. In this speech, Ambassador McCormack's analysis and insight into the the problems and predicaments facing Africa are astute. I am hopeful that Ambassador McCormack's voice on Africa will be heard by both the next Congress and the next Administration.