from substantive debate on important issues in terms of our economy and the people we represent. When are we going to get to work and quit the partisan antics that seem to touch every item on the House agenda.

WILL OUR MILITARY FORCES BE UNABLE TO MEET NATIONAL SECURITY NEEDS BECAUSE OF ILL-CONCEIVED BUDGET CUTTING?

(Mr. RILEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know, this year will represent the 14th consecutive year of real decline in Federal defense spending. In less than a decade we have gone from 18 Army divisions down to 10. We have gone from a 600-ship Navy down to 300. Our soldiers' optempo continues to increase, our equipment continues to age, and yet the defense budget seems to get smaller and smaller with each passing year.

Yet to my dismay, I read in the March 25 Congress Daily that some of my colleagues are disappointed that the supplemental appropriations bill was not offset with DOD funds.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleagues that we have a constitutional obligation to provide for the common defense of this Nation. It will be far more costly in dollars, and potentially in American lives, if our military forces are unable to meet the Nation's national security needs because of ill-conceived budget cutting.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM—THANKS FOR NOTHING

(Mr. SNYDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Republican leadership's planned defeat last night of campaign finance reform, I wanted to give my colleagues an update on the current state of the law.

If someone is a small business person in Arkansas grossing $100,000 a year, it is still legal for them to give $1 billion to the political party of their choice. If this is a family of four making $30,000 a year, it is still legal for them to donate $1 billion to the political party of their choice. If they retire on Social Security and on fixed income, it is still legal for them to give $1 billion to the political party of their choice. And if this is a young couple in their 20s still trying to pay off student loans, it is still legal for them to give $1 billion to the political party of their choice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for nothing.

HONESTY IN OUR LEADERS DOES MATTER

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, we are losing the concept of honesty and trust in our society. Over the last few months here in Washington the concept is fading and being replaced by denial, distraction, delay and destruction of those seeking the truth. We all know in our hearts that honesty is always the best policy, but when leadership in a free society lowers the standard, it affects us all.

Mr. Speaker, leadership does matter. We all saw that when the President spoke on MTV, saying he would inhale if he had to do it all over again, and then drug use actually increased.

If we lower the standard of honesty and trust, it means we no longer honor our commitments to our checking accounts, resulting in bounced checks. It means that we no longer honor our commitments to credit card accounts, meaning more bankruptcy. It means we no longer honor our commitments to marriage, meaning divorces will rise.

Is there not enough hot checks today? Do we not have enough bankruptcy? Is there not too many divorces today? Let us demand honesty and trust from ourselves, our neighbors and our elected officials.

BANNING SOFT MONEY

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, the freshman campaign finance bill takes the bold and important step of banning soft money. In the last election Democrats and Republicans combined to raise more than $260 million in soft money. That was a 206 percent increase from 1992. If we extrapolate, when we get to the year 2000 we will be spending $1 billion in soft money.

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We divide the House into two groups: Those who think there is not enough money in the pot to spend doing elections, and those who think there are far too many dollars to be spent. And the problem is not what is illegal, so much as what is legal that we accept. Let us bring credibility back to the Congress. Let us have real campaign finance reform, and let us not think that the public is going to accept the sham that went on last night.

HELP FOR WORKING FAMILIES

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, for 40 years, as Americans watched the Tax Code grow to 5.5 million words, special interests were gaining power at the expense of working families, families who formed the backbone of America, who work hard, play by the rules, and pay more than their fair share of the taxes.

James Madison warned about the evils of special interests, which he called ''factions'' because special interests could make demands, demands at the expense of the public good, at the expense of common interests, at the expense of sound policy.

James Madison was right, and history, for the past 40 years, has shown that special interests have grown in power while ordinary middle-class families watch their tax bills grow year after year.

Last year, for the first time in 16 years, we gave American families a tax break. Let us eliminate the marriage penalty; let us help working families. Let us let the Tax Code work for Americans and not for the special interests.

RESTORE THE PUBLIC'S TRUST

(Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, as public servants, we are commissioned to be guardians of the public trust, but each year the public's trust steadily declines. And why? Because too often Presidents, the new ones, and the new Congresses, go on with practices that are established by the old Congresses that violate that trust.

Take, for example, the Social Security Trust Fund. Every year we borrow from that trust fund, and we do not have the money to pay it back. We give that to the next generation.

This year, the President's proposal not only says we should borrow this year, but for the next 3 years, for a so-called balanced budget. He takes $101 billion out of people's retirements and spends it on his programs and says, isn't that great? And now he is traveling the world giving out foreign aid to other countries that he has taken out of people's retirement funds.

It is time to restore the trust in America to trust funds and stop this stealing.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TENNESSEE LADY VOLS

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Tennessee Lady Vols on once again becoming the national champions of women's collegiate basketball. This is an unprecedented third national championship in a row for Coach Pat Head Summitt and her staff and players.

Led by a young woman who has already been described as the greatest women's basketball player ever, Chamique Holdsclaw, the Lady Vols went 39 and 0 on the way to the national championship.

Coach Pat Head Summitt has now won an unbelievable six national championships and is considered one of the top basketball coaches of all time, male or female.

The dedication, the determination, the discipline of these young women is truly amazing. This is my hometown team, representing one of my alma maters, so I am especially proud of this outstanding group, but they have made all of Tennessee very proud, indeed.

Coach Pat Head Summitt, her assistants, Mickie DeMoss, Holly Warlick, Al Brown, and the Tennessee Lady Vols are great representatives for the sport of basketball and for this Nation.

ETHICAL STANDARDS IN POLITICAL FUND-RAISING

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

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Democrats' call for national standards in education reflects their high regard for high ethical standards when it comes to raising money for their political campaigns?

I have no doubt that the other side, so proud of what they did during the 1996 elections, have learned a few lessons from the most ethical administration in history. Selling the Lincoln bedroom to the highest bidder; White House coffees with the most impressive rogues gallery of drug smugglers, arms dealers and con artists ever assembled.

I wonder if the national standards they have in mind will help with the little ''I do not recall problem'' that seems to afflict the majority from the White House who are asked to come to Capitol Hill to testify about campaign finance law breaking.

I wonder if the national standards they have in mind will do anything about shaking down impoverished Indian tribes for money, using the power of the IRS to target America's most vulnerable citizens, or invading the privacy of ordinary citizens by illegally obtaining their FBI files.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker. I wonder.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, there was some debate yesterday on the floor about whether or not the majority party, the Republicans, were serious, coming to the floor with a bad campaign finance reform proposal, and setting up a procedure that meant they needed two-thirds of the House, not one-half-of-the-House-plus-one to win.

Well, I think there were two-thirds votes for something. There was two-thirds of the House at least that voted against the Republican proposal, and, frankly, it just shows how insincere this effort has been.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take back the political system in a way that will give the American people confidence. We have to put limits on spending. We have to decrease the amount of money to campaigns, not increase the amount of money to campaigns, and we have to have an honest debate on this floor with not just the ideas that have been created inside the Republican caucus, which were even rejected by a large number of the Republicans, but the ideas that are out here in the American public.

I have a proposal to limit spending to a $100 contribution from any person in the country; not thousands, not $25,000, not $75,000. Other people have other ideas. I believe in public financing. Many people agree with that; some disagree with that.

We ought to have an honest debate about these issues, and not let it die with the sham that occurred last night.

MAKING TAXES UNDERSTANDABLE

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, this year, millions of Americans will buy new cars. We will go on to car lots and select cars of our choice, and be told how much they cost.

But think about it for a minute, how complicated it must be to price a car; tires, computer systems, the radios and speaker systems and bumpers. And then there are the labor costs involved in it, and the liability for the insurance, and the utilities for the factory.

It is indeed a very, very complicated process to bring a car to your lot nearest to you in your hometown and say that car costs $31,286. It is a miracle of the capitalist system.

Now think in terms of what it is to pay your taxes. Have you paid your taxes yet? Probably not. Why not? Because it is too complicated. You know it is going to take hours and hours. You will have to sacrifice two or three evenings of your busy schedule, all to figure out what you owe Uncle Sam.

Why can the IRS not take a lesson from the motor companies and the private sector and just have clarity and simplicity, so that when you and I go to pay our taxes on April 15th, even though we might not like the amount, at least we understand what it is?

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, last week several of my colleagues and myself stood in the well of this House, and we talked to the American public about the Republican leadership's lunacy and their crazy idea to impose a 30 percent sales tax on the American public. Lunacy. A 30 percent increase in the sales tax, a national sales tax.

In the course of that debate, I spoke out and I said that Republicans want to say that Democrats are not for tax cuts, and that we should not let them get away with saying that Democrats are not for tax cuts, because, quite frankly, Democrats have been standing on their feet talking about targeted tax cuts for working middle-class families in this country, and not the richest people in this country, which is where the Republican leadership and my colleague from Texas (Mr. DELAY) are coming from.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. DELAY got up to speak this morning, and I say to him, watch the debate on the floor before you distort the words of a colleague. The CONGRESSIONAL RECORD is being corrected on how they misinterpreted the comments that I made.

We have the tape. You are going to have to eat your words.

DEFEAT OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to comment on yesterday's debacle. Some rose and said that this was legitimate campaign finance reform. The American public wants campaign finance reform. They do not want money to be the arbiter of the politics of America. They want money contributed honestly and reported effectively.

The chairman of the Committee on House Oversight, who offered these bills to the Congress, had one principal large bill. That bill, he said, would pass. We said it was a sham. The New York Times said it was a sham. The Washington Post said it was a sham. We were criticized on our side of the aisle for being partisan and saying it was a sham.

But, Mr. Speaker, when the vote was called, two-thirds of the majority party voted against their leadership's bill, including their leadership.

It was, indeed, a sham.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3579, EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 402 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 402

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the