Federal law and get these contributions in the amounts that I told you, $1,000 or $5,000.

In case anybody is wondering, you know, you hear these reports that Members of Congress have these fundraisers, and representatives of PACs come and tender the check. I will check my own campaign reports recently but, over time, I think I only have, out of about the half million dollars or so that I, as one representative, am able to raise in campaign dollars over a 2-year period, I will bet you I do not have more than two or at most three political action committees donate the maximum $5,000 contribution. It just is not that common.

The only reason I share that with you is to indicate that when you have to raise, as a challenger, by the way, you see, I am an incumbent now; if I really wanted to feather my own nest as an incumbent, I would climb on board and vote tomorrow for McCain-Feingold or Shays-Meehan, because I will make it infinitely more difficult for someone to try and challenge me. It will be infinitely more difficult as an incumbent and it will be infinitely more difficult for any challenger to be able to successfully challenge an incumbent.

Why? Because the incumbent has the advantages of office. Let us start with name identification in the mind of the voter. That is number one. Most people have heard of me in the Fourth Congressional District of California, because I am an incumbent and have run before.

By virtue of that fact, it is much easier for me to go out and hold a fundraiser and have a number of individuals come in and contribute to me in relatively small amounts, because I am known, than it is for a challenger who is virtually unknown to go out and hold a fund-raiser.

Almost no one will show up, figuratively speaking, because nobody knows the individual. They have never even heard of his name. So why would they show up at some event? Why would they write a check to him? They do not really know him. So name ID and incumbency are tremendous advantages.

Most studies show that the challenger has to outspend the incumbent in order to win the seat. You will make it infinitely more difficult for that challenger in order to prevail if you go with the big government types of campaign reform that impose further limits and further restrictions and get the heavy hand of government even further into the process.

Sometimes when I see what happens to groups that legitimately participate and have the FEC decide to go after them or some congressional committee decide to hold a hearing, when you look at the months of negative publicity involved, when you look at the hundreds of thousands of dollars in attorney's fees that have to be spent in order for these individuals or groups to defend themselves in the exercise of their legitimate constitutional rights, I mean, I ask myself, I think why on Earth would anybody ever put themselves through this?

The effect of all of this Federal regulation is to chill free speech. It is to make people think twice before they participate in the process. That is basically its effect. I believe, frankly, its intended effect is to drive people out in a way, and it is just better off not to get involved.

I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that that is the wrong way to go in our body politic. Free speech is precious. People should be able to engage in free speech without the fear of the government coming down on them. People should be encouraged to run for office, not discouraged.

It is very discouraging to a person of average means who may have good ideas, great ideas, who seeks to run a campaign, and find that he has got to raise that half million dollars by holding numerous fund-raisers, and being on the phone and raising money all the time, whereas, his wealthy opponent simply writes himself a check. He is on the air and in the mail and can sit back and let all the professionals do it. It is just not right.

This Republic was founded upon the idea that all men are created equal. Obviously by men, they meant men and women, but obviously not equal in result, but equal in the opportunity to work and to fight for the things that we believe in.

That opportunity is constrained today by the heavy hand of government. It is going it be made worse by the big government reformers who want to come in and sell you on some snake oil formula to give away your first amendment rights in exchange for the nirvana of campaign reform.

Mr. Speaker, I for one intend to be vigorously involved in this debate and to stand up for our fundamental freedoms. This is really the right to self-governance of the American people. It is not just politicians fighting amongst themselves over how much advantage they can get. I know that it seems that way to our American people.

I hope through these debates they will realize it is really their rights that we are protecting, their rights to freedom of speech, their rights to participate in the political process, their rights to dictate to their government, rather than to have their government controlling them and dictating to them.

After all, let us not forget the words of George Washington: Government does not reason. It is not eloquence. It is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a troublesome master.

Jefferson referred to it as a necessary evil. But let us remember that it is not a positive good as President Clinton and company would have you think, and therefore the more of it, the better. If some government is good, more is better. That is completely contrary to the founders who said that it is a necessary evil, that it could be a fearful master and a troublesome servant.

These are concepts, I think, that are almost lost today upon our students in the school, and their concepts we are going to have to revive here in the halls of freedom, in the halls of the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I have appreciated the opportunity to engage in this special order, to get out some of my thoughts about what we need to do relative to the topic of campaign reform. Let me just close by, I guess, citing an ancient but well-founded concept, the hypocritic oath to physicians, which is first do no harm.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope and prayer that as we embark next week upon this important topic of the Constitution, first amendment rights and campaign reform, that we will, indeed, do no harm.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3616, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999

Mr. SOLOMON (during the special order of Mr. DOOLITTLE) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–535) on the resolution (H. Res. 435) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3616) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 1999, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 432, SENSE OF HOUSE CONCERNING PRESIDENT'S ASSERTION OF EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE, AND OF H. RES. 433, CALLING UPON PRESIDENT TO URGE FULL COOPERATION BY FORMER POLITICAL APPOINTEES AND FRIENDS AND THEIR ASSOCIATES WITH CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. SOLOMON (during the special order of Mr. DOOLITTLE) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–536) on the resolution (H. Res. 436) providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 432) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the President's assertions of executive privilege, and for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 433) calling upon the President of the United States to urge full cooperation by his former political appointees and friend and their associates with congressional investigations, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.