

has many loopholes and unintended consequences. Yet, their solution is to have no system at all; in short, to get rid of individual loopholes by having a regime that is one giant void. That hardly seems like a positive alternative.

Opponents also raise the specter of a system overrun by Federal bureaucrats, their favored bugaboo, but this is really another way of saying that they do not want any limits on the flow of money into the political system.

Mr. Chairman, George Bernard Shaw once said, "A society's morals are like its teeth; the more decayed they are, the more it hurts to touch them." It is no accident that it hurts so much to discuss our political morality. It is time to correct it at its roots. I urge my colleagues to vote down this amendment and to support the Shays-Meehan substitute.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My amendment, once again, lowers and standardizes the required signatures to get Federal candidates on the ballot. There is a great deal of inequity among the States, and it works against the minor candidates and prevents many from even participating in the process.

For this reason, many individuals have lost interest in politics. They are disinterested, and every year it seems that the turnout goes down. This year is no exception. Forty-two percent of the American people do not align themselves with a political party. Twenty-nine percent, approximately, align themselves with Republicans and Democrats. Yet, the rules and the laws are written by the major party for the sole purpose of making it very expensive and very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to get on the ballot.

If we had more competition and more openness, we would get more people out to vote. It would not clutter the ballot, it would not have overcrowding, but it would allow discourse, and it would be beneficial to the process.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, my problem with this amendment is that it would prohibit States from erecting excessive ballot access barriers to candidates for Federal office. It would set ballot petition signature limits for the President, the Vice President, United States Senate, and House candidates. In addition, it would set ballot petition time limitations.

Protections are important, but individual States should be allowed to control their campaign laws. Assuring there are no undue barriers to prevent individuals from running for Federal office is imperative to keeping our political process fair, but I am concerned with the Federal Government imposing limitations on the States for how they govern ballot access.

This deals with an important set of issues, and should be dealt with not

solely with this amendment, but rather, should be fully debated in the House after the Shays-Meehan substitute has passed.

One of the things that the Shays-Meehan bill does is to provide for an opportunity for debate and discussion through the Commission. This is an issue that I think there should be hearings on, I think we should have a dialogue about. But I just do not think that an amendment to the Shays-Meehan bill is the appropriate place to deal with this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman suggests we should leave this to the States. I quoted and cited the constitutional authority for this. It is explicit. We have the authority to do this. There are many, many unfair laws.

Dealing with the President, for instance, the minor candidates, on average, to get on the ballot, are required to get 701,000 signatures. A major candidate gets less than 50,000. To get on an average Senate seat ballot, 196,000 signatures are required for the Senate, 15,000 for the major candidates. In the House, on the average for the minor candidate, it is more than 13,000, where it is 2,000 for a major candidate.

There is something distinctly unfair about this. This is un-American. We have the authority to do it. This is the precise time to do it. We are dealing with campaign reform, and they are forcing these minor candidates to spend unbelievable amounts of money. They are being excluded. They are 42 percent of the people in this country. They are the majority, when we divide the electorate up. They deserve representation, too.

The CHAIRMAN. All time has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) to the amendment in the nature of a substitute No. 13 offered by Mr. SHAYS:

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant House Resolution 442, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) will be postponed.

It is now in order to consider the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. PAUL TO AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE NO. 13 OFFERED BY MR. SHAYS

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The text of the amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. PAUL to the amendment in the nature of a substitute No. 13 offered by Mr. SHAYS:

Add at the end the following new title:

TITLE —DEBATE REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

SEC. —01. REQUIREMENT THAT CANDIDATES WHO RECEIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCING FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUND AGREE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN MULTICANDIDATE FORUMS THAT EXCLUDE CANDIDATES WITH BROAD-BASED PUBLIC SUPPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the requirements under subtitle H of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. In order to be eligible to receive payments from the Presidential Election Campaign Fund, a candidate shall agree in writing not to appear in any multicandidate forum with respect to the election involved unless the following individuals are invited to participate in the multicandidate forum:

(1) Each other eligible candidate under such subtitle.

(2) Each individual who is qualified in at least 40 States for the ballot for the office involved.

(b) ENFORCEMENT.—If the Federal Election Commission determines that a candidate—

(1) has received payments from the Presidential Election Campaign Fund; and

(2) has violated the agreement referred to in subsection (a); the candidate shall pay to the Treasury an amount equal to the amount of the payments so made.

(c) DEFINITION.—As used in this title, the term "multicandidate forum," means a meeting—

(1) consisting of a moderated reciprocal discussion of issues among candidates for the same office; and

(2) to which any other person has access in person or through an electronic medium.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Friday, July 17, 1998, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment is very simple. The major candidates receive a lot, a million dollars, to run their campaigns. Then they have national debates, and then they can purposely exclude other candidates. I am not talking about 10 or 20 or 30 very minor candidates, I am talking about candidates who spend weeks, months, years, hundreds of thousands of dollars, just to get on the ballot. Some will not even take the money, but some qualify to be on 40 and 50 ballots, and they are purposely excluded.

This amendment does not dictate to those who hold debates, but it would require that those major party candidates who take the taxpayers' money, they take it with the agreement that anybody else who qualifies for taxpayers' funding, campaign funds, or gets on 40 ballots, would be allowed in the debate.

I cannot think of anything that could boost the interest in the debates more. Fewer and fewer people are watching debates. There was the lowest turnout, the lowest listening audience to the debates in the last-go around. It was the