

There's

Another  
Political Scandal  
In Town,  
But This One  
Belongs to the  
Democrats

On this evening, March 21, there will be a fund raising dinner sponsored by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. If you've been hankering to meet the special interests, here's your chance. They'll all be there. Small-time special interests will send a single representative and pay \$500 for the privilege. Bigtime special interests will take a table for ten at \$5,000.

At such affairs there's always the problem of what to talk about. We have some modest suggestions.

It seems to us the perfect opportunity for the House Democratic Leadership—Speaker Carl Albert, Majority Leader Tip O'Neill and Majority Whip John McFall—to consider some questions that have really puzzled a lot of us.

1. The *only* significant opportunity this Congress will have to prevent future Watergates is campaign finance reform. Why has the House Democratic Leadership permitted Chairman Wayne Hays to stall for fifteen months in presenting *any* campaign finance reform legislation?

2. A recent Senate Rules Committee report said "The only way in which Congress can eliminate reliance on large private contributions and still ensure adequate representation to the electorate of opposing viewpoints of competing candidates is through comprehensive public financing." The Senate has debated the subject twice—with a third time imminent. Why has the House Democratic Leadership prevented public financing of elections from *ever* being debated by the full House?

3. David Broder wrote recently in *The Atlantic* "(The) three month delay in the effective date of the 1971 reform bill, which enabled Maurice Stans to use his vacuum cleaner so effectively on the wallets of wealthy Nixon supporters, was arranged by Representative Wayne Hays of Ohio . . . who wanted his colleagues to have the opportunity to hit their own contributors once more, in secret, before the new reform became effective." In 1972 the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee distributed over \$1 million to House candidates. In 1973 Wayne Hays became Chairman of this Committee. Is it not a scandal that Wayne Hays, *the man responsible in 1974 for Democratic congressional campaign fund raising and money dispensing is also the man responsible for writing legislation to reform campaign finance practices?* And

is it any surprise that his appetite for meaningful reform is near zero? How can the House Democratic Leadership sanction such a scandal?

4. A clear majority of Senators have voted in support of public financing legislation and other major campaign finance reforms. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, and Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott have played key roles in advancing this legislation.

In the House of Representatives, John Anderson (R-Ill.) and Morris Udall (D-Ariz.) have sponsored the Clean Elections Act. More than 175 House members have co-sponsored this bill or similar public finance

proposals. In other words, many good people on the Hill are fully alert to the need. Where is the House Democratic leadership?

5. After fifteen months of stalling, Wayne Hays finally says he's about to come forth with a bill. He says it has no provision for public financing of Congressional races. In fact, it is an Incumbents Protection Act — cleverly designed to increase the advantages of those already in office. It also avoids the sound Senate provisions for independent enforcement, leaving House enforcement in the hands of a politically entangled Justice Department and the Clerk of the House (whose boss happens to be the Chairman of the House Administration Committee—Wayne Hays). Whose voice speaks for the Democratic party in the House on the issue of campaign reform?

6. On November 29, 1973, Wayne Hays said on the House floor, "I made a commitment to the leadership that we would do our very best to have a bill out sometime in February, a bill that the House can then consider paragraph by paragraph, as it does consider legislation and work its will." No bill has yet been reported. Now Hays says that when his bill is reported he intends to put it on the suspension calendar or to get a closed rule so that members of the House, the rank and file, could not amend it on the floor. How can the House Democratic Leadership allow itself to be implicated in such shabby maneuvering?

### **The Time Has Come**

The time has come to control campaign finance abuses through publicly financed elections. Congress should enact legislation including these four key points:

- 1) A mixed system involving public funds and small private contributions for Congressional and Presidential elections;

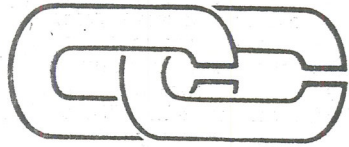
- 2) An independent enforcement agency;
- 3) Strict ceilings on contributions;
- 4) Reasonable limits on campaign spending.

The Democrats, flushed with election victories in Grand Rapids and Cincinnati, are in danger of making a fatal error—the error of misjudging the mood of the voters.

The voters are not in a friendly frame of mind. 1974 will be a hard year for incumbents of both parties. And it will be particularly tough on incumbents who refuse to stand up and be counted on Watergate. The question on voters' minds will not be "Which Watergate conspirator committed what misdeed?" but "What steps did Congress take to prevent future Watergates?"

The Democrats control Congress. The Republicans have Watergate to answer for. But if nothing is done to prevent future Watergates, the Democrats will have *that* to answer for.

Every Democratic incumbent will have to explain that on the campaign trail.



**Common Cause**

2030 M STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036  
202/833-1200