

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda

Beware campaign financing 'reform'

With strong backing from Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), who considers it a "personal priority," a major effort is being made this year to pass legislation reforming Senate campaign financing.

The Senate Rules Committee, chaired by Sen. Wendell Ford (D-Ky.), has already begun hearing testimony from over 17 senators on the many proposals introduced. The committee expects to hear from public witnesses in April, and to mark up legislation in May for Senate floor action—a relatively fast pace.

The push for reform has been fueled by media attention to the fact that campaign spending has increased roughly threefold from 1976 to 1986, necessitating a major expenditure of time and effort to raise funds for campaigns increasingly dominated by media advertising; the growth of independent campaign activity, political action committees, and negative campaign advertising; and a concern that increasingly only the extremely wealthy will be able to afford to run for public office (53 of 100 senators are millionaires).

But the proposed cures may be worse than the disease. The more sinister efforts behind campaign reform are intended to strengthen the party structure, along the lines of the parliamentary system recommended by Lloyd Cutler's Commission on the Constitutional System. This could effectively squelch political forces not under the control of the party "machines," such as the Lyndon LaRouche wing of the Democratic Party.

One of the more blatant proposals in this regard is S. 593 the Informed Electorate Act, sponsored by Sen.

Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.). The bill would require stations to grant up to 3 hours of free media time per candidate in the 60 days prior to a general election, in blocks of 15 minutes or less, for a discussion of substantive issues. Pell proposes that air time be given "to party organizations" to parcel out as they choose. A candidate not favored by the party bosses, would be out of luck.

A proposal by Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) would set a limit of \$250,000 on the personal contributions which an individual could make to his own campaign. If exceeded, the PAC and personal contribution limits imposed on his opponent would be raised.

Another idea, from Sens. Howell Heflin (D-Ala.) and Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) would propose a constitutional amendment to overcome a Supreme Court decision, *Buckley v. Valeo*, which declared spending limits unconstitutional.

Dallas FBI said to be involved in break-ins

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, chaired by Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), held hearings on Feb. 19-20 on reports of nearly 50 break-ins at churches, offices, and homes of opponents of U.S. policy in Central America. Frank Varelli, a former paid informant for the FBI, told the committee that the Dallas FBI office was involved in the break-ins in Dallas.

Congressman Edwards said that the break-ins "do not seem to be ordinary crimes; the burglars generally ignore items of value and focus on organizational files and membership lists." Edwards told Deputy FBI Di-

rector Oliver "Buck" Revell, "You know in your heart of hearts that these are no ordinary burglaries."

Revell told the committee that the FBI investigation had turned up no evidence of a conspiracy. He also strongly denied that the Bureau was involved in the break-ins in any direct or indirect way.

But Varelli testified that FBI agents had continually referred to "breaking" organizations politically at odds with Central America policy, and that agents had sanctioned break-ins in Dallas.

Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.) focused on challenging Varelli's credibility, bringing FBI field reports to light where Varelli had characterized one of these organizations as communist-controlled and involved in an effort to assassinate President Reagan at the 1984 GOP convention. Varelli admitted authorship of the letters, saying he later learned that the threat of assassination came from outside the organization he was assigned to monitor. His lawyer pointed out that Varelli was writing memos for the FBI which pushed the FBI "line." "I never once saw criminal activity" while attending meetings, Varelli said.

Rep. Robert Kastenmeier (D-Pa.) commented that Varelli's allegations, "if true, implicate the FBI in political operations of astounding proportions."

In an interview with *EIR*, Representative Kastenmeier said he thought there were now two questions to consider. First, to see if further investigation by Bureau inspectors or committee staff turns up evidence of who committed the break-ins. While it is "too early to expect results" yet, Kastenmeier said, "a very significant unanswered question" is whether the FBI

was involved. "If the allegations turn out to be substantially correct, is it true of other offices, do we have a rogue elephant here?" he asked.

Kastenmeier said the second issue is whether Congress may want to subject physical searches by government to the same warrant process that operates under the foreign intelligence surveillance act.

Foreign assistance faces tough fight

Funding for the World Bank and other "foreign assistance" programs faces a tough fight in Congress this year, with opposition coming from liberals and conservatives alike.

Rep. David Obey (D-Wisc.), chairman of the House Appropriations Foreign Operations Subcommittee, attacked the Reagan administration's request for increased foreign assistance on March 10, at a meeting of the Bretton Woods Committee. "Anybody who thinks we can cut \$62 billion out of this budget, and at the same time add money to the appropriation for IDA [the International Development Association], is a damn fool," Obey said.

Obey told Secretary of State George Shultz, who appeared before his subcommittee the next day, that he objected to the premise that foreign assistance should increase at the expense of domestic programs. The administration is asking for \$19 billion, a \$1 billion increase.

In the Senate, Senators Nickles (R-Okla.) and Symms (R-Idaho) plan to introduce legislation mandating that the United States oppose any development agency loans to foreign countries which will increase production of

goods that can be produced in the United States. "American tax dollars are being used to subsidize foreign agriculture and mineral production that is often in direct competition with our producers," Nickles said, in a letter seeking cosponsors for the bill.

AIDS vote could signal a turning point

A House vote to require mandatory AIDS tests for homeless individuals seeking medical care, took both supporters and opponents by surprise on March 5, when the proposed measure received 101 votes.

The large vote prompted its sponsor, Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.), to suggest, according to his office, that the vote "could be a turning point against the mind set that AIDS is a civil rights issue."

The measure was defeated 292 to 101, but the amount of support was far more than the idea of mandatory testing has ever received in Congress (hitherto considered to be in the range of one or two dozen votes, at most).

Dannemeyer offered his initiative as an amendment to legislation for aid to the homeless which the House had under consideration. Dannemeyer indicated that he favored a wider testing program, but this could not have been proposed as an amendment to the bill at hand.

Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) warned the House during the debate that it is necessary to conduct tests to see who is carrying the virus "and we are going to have to come up with a program to redirect their activities; either voluntarily or mandatory at some point in the future." Infected prostitutes and others who refuse to stop their behavior, Burton warned, "are going to have

to be extricated from society; they are going to have to be moved away."

Dannemeyer and Burton are hosting a luncheon for Members of Congress on March 18, where they will be briefed by medical experts on the AIDS threat.

In memorium: Sen. Edward Zorinsky

Nebraska's senior senator, Edward Zorinsky, died March 6 of a heart attack, at the age of 58.

Zorinsky, a Democrat, had often bucked the party leadership on votes on matters of crucial importance to national security. He also resisted the policies of Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker, which were destroying his constituency. Always open to differing points of view, Zorinsky showed a great deal of that independence and integrity which are in such short supply in Washington.

Once, after voting to provide AWACS to Saudi Arabia, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) offered to let Zorinsky, who is of the Jewish faith, back into their good graces if he would agree to do their dirty work against Lyndon LaRouche. Zorinsky refused.

Zorinsky had been a longstanding critic of the National Endowment for Democracy and the U.S. Information Agency, organizations recently exposed for their role in "Project Democracy," the private covert operations bureau of the "bankers' CIA." It was expected that Zorinsky would pursue investigation of this secret government as chairman of a newly created subcommittee on International Narcotics, Terrorism, and Communications.