

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

**HON. RON KIND**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 4, 1998*

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, will 1998 be the year the U.S. House of Representatives finally considers and passes meaningful campaign finance reform? Debate on this issue is long overdue. I urge you to take the first step and open this issue for discussion on the floor.

Much of the controversy over campaign financing has to do with perception—how things might appear to the voting public. Are certain interests buying access to elected officials through campaign contributions? Are elected officials using the power of office to solicit campaign contributions, thereby perpetuating themselves in office? To some, it appears that way. I ask you, Mr. Speaker—What is the voting public's perception of your refusal to allow this issue up for debate? President Clinton has called for it. The Senate has agreed to debate it. Still, the House remains silent. The voting public—my constituents included—want to know why.

Mr. Speaker the people refuse to accept "no" for an answer.

CONGRATULATING THE RIVERSIDE  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**HON. KEN CALVERT**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 4, 1998*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Riverside Community College District, located in Riverside, California, for their innovative education initiative, Passport to College, which makes college education a reality for the students of six school districts in Riverside County. The Passport to College program is being honored at a White House ceremony today as one of ten exemplary educational programs in the United States. The president is using this ceremony as an opportunity to demonstrate to the nation educational programs that are worthy of duplication.

In 1996, Riverside Community College District began the program working with fifth graders in the Riverside, Alvord, Corona-Norco, Jurupa, Moreno Valley and Val Verde unified school districts. If the fifth graders follow the program guidelines and graduate from high school, Riverside Community College District has pledged free tuition and fee assistance. This amounts to 12,000 eligible students participating in the program. In addition, working with local universities, the Passport to College Program has secured the commitment of La Sierra University, California Baptist College, and the University of California, Riverside to provide \$2,500 a year in scholarships for graduates of the program who transfer to their schools. The University of Redlands has pledged \$5,000 per year in scholarship assistance.

Today's youth are our leaders of tomorrow, and Passport to College is a model program that demonstrates what can be achieved when a community comes together. Riverside Community College District recognized a need to help children understand at a young age that

college is available for everyone. All that is required is some hard work and commitment. When we hear about the poor state of education in our country, or the problems with the youth of today, think about the success of this program and the lofty goals it is working hard to accomplish. The program achieves two very important objectives by involving parents in their children's education from a very early age, and making students begin to think about the importance of college early in their academic careers.

Dr. Salvatore Rotella, President of the Riverside Community College District, Amy Cardulo, Director of the Passport-to-College program, and all of those participating are to be commended for their dedication and hard work to ensure the success of future generations. The success of this program is due to the hard work and tenacity of both administrators and students. On behalf of the residents of the 43rd Congressional District, I would like to congratulate them on the Passport-to-College program and wish them continued success in the future. They are a credit to their community, their state, and their nation.

MULTI-AGENCY AUTO THEFT TASK  
FORCE**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 4, 1998*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to my colleagues' attention the attached article from the October, 1997 edition of APB and place it into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The article illustrates the importance of anti-theft VIN labels when used in identifying "re-numbered" stolen cars.

MULTI-AGENCY TASK FORCE FIGHTS AUTO  
THEFT AND WINS 3M/IAATI/AWARD

A Florida multi-agency auto theft task force was selected to receive the 1997 3M/International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) Vehicle Theft Investigation Award for an investigation that led to several federal and state indictments and the recovery of vehicles valued at nearly one million dollars.

Detective John Pierce received the award on behalf of the Dade County Multi-Agency Auto Theft Task Force at the Annual IAATI Conference August 4-8 in Brisbane, Australia, for an investigation coordinated by Sergeant Dave Rehrig. All task force members, represented by U.S. Customs, FBI, Florida Highway Patrol, Dade County State Attorney's Office, Metro-Dade Police, Miami Police, Miami Beach Police, Hialeah Gardens Police, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau, demonstrated excellent teamwork to successfully close down an organized auto theft ring.

The case was initiated when task force detectives learned of an apartment complex where several high value sport utility vehicles were being recovered on a regular basis. Surveillance of these vehicles led to the discovery of a large, loosely organized, but very professional group of individuals responsible for vehicle smuggling to South American countries. The group also had been "re-numbering" vehicles for domestic sale.

During the investigation, Detective Pierce discovered that an employee at the Port of Miami was selling lists of vehicle identification numbers (VINs) from exported vehicles that had been showing up on stolen re-num-

bered vehicles. This discovery, in turn, led to the recovery of several vehicles. "Almost all the cars had counterfeit labels on them," Sgt. Rehrig said. After obtaining a warrant, tools of the counterfeit VIN label operation were uncovered, which included over 150 counterfeit anti-theft labels.

The counterfeiting technique used by the subjects produced, at first blush, visually perfect labels. Investigators were able to determine they were counterfeit, however, by examining for a covert security feature and by the way the labels peeled off, leaving a paper residue pattern. "VIN labels on re-numbered cars peel right off but they don't leave a footprint like the 3M anti-theft labels," explained Sgt. Rehrig. The counterfeit labels also were discovered because they were produced on a flat paper that did not have the "window" in the middle, which is characteristic of authentic 3M anti-theft labels.

Even though the vehicles were missing their public and confidential VINs, Detective Pierce was able to prove the vehicles were stolen and make arrests by finding at least one component part with an intact anti-theft label. Several vehicles were identified using the original 3M anti-theft label which the subjects had missed when they were sanitizing the stolen vehicles.

For example, one recovered Toyota Landcruiser had been re-numbered and the thieves replaced the 3M anti-theft labels with counterfeits. The frame rail was restamped, and even the window glass (etched with the VIN) was changed. Despite these extraordinary measures, the subjects missed removing a single anti-theft label. "There is no question the anti-theft labels were a crucial part of the investigation," Sgt. Rehrig said.

"Vehicle identification labels are often the key to cracking vehicle theft cases," said Kevin Curry, Verification Systems, 3M Safety and Security Systems Division. "The winner of this year's award is a concrete, real-world example of the value and role that anti-theft labels play in the investigation and recovery of stolen vehicles."

According to preliminary reports conducted by the National Institute of Justice and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, anti-theft labels have been a significant contributor to the continued decline of auto theft in the United States since the early 1990's. The study reports that component parts anti-theft labels assist most big city and state auto theft investigators to arrest car and parts thieves and to prosecute them.

Sgt. Rehrig agrees. "The auto theft rate in Dade County dropped 17.5 percent in 1996," Rehrig said. "Furthermore, detectives have noticed a decline in the theft of Toyota Landcruisers countrywide."

Detective Pierce and the task force continue to follow-up leads from this case. To date, the case has yielded seven federal indictments, including the charging of the individual believed to be responsible for most of the overall operation of the theft organization. Four subjects have been arrested on state charges, and 38 vehicles, valued at some \$906,000, have been recovered.

The 3M/IAATI award is given annually to recognize superior efforts of an auto theft investigator or team where vehicle identification number (VIN) labels played a crucial role in the investigation. "We are very pleased and proud to be selected for this award," Rehrig said.