THE PAR1Y'S OVER FOR BIG BUSINESS

by Phyllis Schlafly February 16, 1995

Before Big Business and Big Banks finish patting themselves on the back for the clever way they outmaneuvered the American people and got the Clinton/Dole/Gingrich troika to bail out their failed peso investments, they should read *Fortune* magazine's February article called 'The Party's Over for Big Business." The $47 billion Mexican bailout package that bypassed Congress may be Big Business's last hurrah.

Big Business has always worked politics like a bipartisan power game. Its image has been Republican, but in fact it has always played for high stakes in both parties. President Clinton's eagerness to save the Big Banks' Mexican investments confirms that he is and has always been beholden to powerful financial interests.

Big Business's partnership with Clinton is alive and well, but Clinton may be a sinking ship and Big Business has shot itself in the foot in its relationship with the Republican Party. In the 1994 Congressional elections, Big Business followed its usual pattern of giving at least two-thirds of its Political Action Committee (PAC) money to powerful incumbents (a.k.a. liberal Democrats with seniority on important committees).

Big Business's smart political consultants and Inside the Beltway lobbyists didn't see the November 8th earthquake coming and thought it was smart to play ball with the "ins" instead of the "outs." As a result, most of the 73 freshmen Congressmen won their seats without Big Business's help.

In 1993 and '94, the voice of establishmentarian Big Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, was cuddling with the Clinton Administration in trying to pass Clinton's social ized health bill. It was no accident that the Clinton bill included a rich windfall for Big Business; its provisions would have transferred the medical bills of Big Business's early retirees onto the backs of U.S. taxpayers.

This cozy partnership of Big (Clinton) Government and Big Business did not go unno ticed; it contributed to the defeat of Clinton's socialized medicine. This bad strategy came hard on the heels of Big Business's mistake in sitting out the fight against Clinton's 1993 tax increase, thereby abandoning the unanimous bloc of House and Senate Republicans.

So now *Fortune* magazine is whining that the corporate community has lost its links with the GOP, that a lot of newer Republicans in Congress "simply don't like big business." Party Chairman Haley Barbour says, "Ours is the party of small business, not big business, of Main Street, not Wall Street."

Fortune also complains that many of the freshmen Congressmen actually own small businesses and won with the support of the Christian conservative movement. And, horror of horrors, most of them are anti-abortion and anti-gun-control.

The *Fortune* article looks as if it were planned as a puff piece to promote the presiden tial candidacy of Dick Cheney. Polls showed he was the choice of 58 percent of executives because he successfully managed the Gulf War that Big Business supported (even though those executives admitted to pollsters that they knew little or nothing about his policy stands). But Cheney pulled out of the race just as the article was going to pres , leaving Big Business standing at the church without a bride.

The bottom line is that the next President will be chosen by grassroots voters in the primaries, not by CEOs in the board room. The power center of the Republican Party has shifted away from insider dealmaking and toward ideological commitment on cultural issues.

Of course, economic issues are important, but they will be defined by grassroots voters, not by Big Business. That's why the centerpiece of the GOP's new tax program is a $500-per-child tax credit.

Conservatives are awaiting some sign of repentance from Big Business for its behavior in backing nationalized health care, the Bush and Clinton tax increases, and the Mexican bailout. Corporate giving of $3.42 to liberal organizations (such as Planned Parenthood and the National Organization for Women) to every $1 given to conservative organizations indicates the depth of the cultural divide between Big Business and the grassroots.

The political facts of life today are that the cultural issues are more powerful. The average working man and woman cares far more about such issues as crime and gun control, illiteracy and hostility to traditional values in the schools, job and university dis crimination against white males, abortion, in-your-face gay rights, and illegal immigration than about pocketbook issues.

Middle America also cares a great deal about the attacks on our country's sovereignty, which is imperiled by the World Trade Organization, UN treaties, and putting U.S. troops under foreign command.

Candidates for President in 1996 are already starting to make their announcements. They are living in the politics of the past if they think they can run exclusively, or even primarily, on tax-and-spend issues. To paraphrase Willie Sutton, they will have to commit on the cultural issues because that's where the votes are.