

Congress puts up a sign: 'For Sale'

Devin Rokyta/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Many Republicans and Democrats in Congress have been busy patting themselves on the backs this past week after supposedly compromising and passing a \$1.1 trillion spending bill.

The good news is that we avoided another petty and costly government shutdown. The bad news is that Congress has essentially put up a new For Sale sign. (Breaking news: The price just went up.)

Two late additions to the 1,603-page bill are a direct slap in the face to 99 percent of Americans and only favor the nation's ultra-wealthy, who already have much too loud a voice in our nation's capital.

The first addition dramatically increases the amount that individual donors can contribute to political committees. Once signed into law by President Barack Obama, the provision will allow an individual to give more than \$776,000 a year to political parties, eight times the current statutory limit. This little addition was tacked onto page 1,599 of the spending bill.

Money has already corrupted our political system, and now the floodgates have been opened. Good luck having your voice heard in Washington, D.C., unless you have some deep pockets. Really deep pockets.

And in a clear example of what money in D.C. can buy, the second addition comes thanks to Wall Street and our too-large-to-fail banks, which succeeded in rolling back a restriction on risky derivatives trading that was part of legislation four years ago aimed at the practices that led to the Great Recession.

Wall Street will once again be allowed to recklessly gamble and will have assurances of getting bailed out by taxpayers when the dice doesn't roll its way.

No one on either side of the aisle is taking responsibility for the provisions, and we doubt either party put up much of a fight.

Not only is it shameful that Congress would even consider passing such provisions that are clearly destructive to democracy and obviously only favor big business and the rich, but it's even more despicable that they did it by sneaking it into a spending bill necessary to avoid a government shutdown.