

Democratic caucus. That is what we did.

The Honest Leadership Act fundamentally changed the debate on ethics and lobbying reform. It is hard to draft legislation. I called upon my staff, one of my most senior persons, someone who was the chief of staff of the Commerce Committee under Senator Hollings, Kevin Kayes. He has worked hard. Saturday nights, Sunday nights, I have spoken to him. I acknowledge the hard work that he has done on this legislation. I appreciate it very much.

We put on paper what we thought was the best thing for this institution. The Honest Leadership Act, Open Government Act, fundamentally changed the debate on ethic and lobbying reform. Democrats stood united. United we said: We are not going to let this process drag on and hope that people get distracted. We are going to seize the initiative and begin to change the culture that we find in Washington. Democrats established the baseline for reform by getting caucus-wide support for a tough and comprehensively formed bill. Democrats raised the stakes on this issue and forced the Senate to deal with this in a meaningful way.

We have had a number of participants on the Democratic side of the aisle. This is not in the order of how hard they have worked, but I express my appreciation—because they have all worked hard—to Senator DODD, Senator LIEBERMAN, the ranking members of the Committee on Rules and Government Operations Committees. I appreciate the work of Senator FEINGOLD who has been involved in these issues for many years. And a new Senator, Mr. OBAMA, has done such a good job of expressing himself to the American public how we feel on this side of the aisle about the need to change what is going on in Washington. Senator LEVIN has also been a stalwart, helpful from the very beginning. He, like Senator FEINGOLD, has been involved in these issues for a long time.

It would not be fair to just list the Democrats. The work performed in the Committee on Rules was a hard job. It was the first body to take this up. It showed the experience of Senator DODD and Senator LOTT. They had a cordial relationship going into this which helped significantly in moving that bill out of the committee very quickly. Senator LIEBERMAN worked very hard with Senator COLLINS. They came up with another piece of legislation as a result of their ability to work together. I appreciate Senator LOTT very much and Senator COLLINS for their work, working with Democrats. Their work did advance the reform proposals that we introduced.

It goes without saying I am glad we are here today. It is fair to say we would not be here and certainly not with this strong piece of legislation from the Committee on Government Operations and the Rules Committee if not for the efforts of my caucus.

In fact, much of what Democrats supported in S. 2180 has been included in the bills that will come before the Senate today which will be united into one bill. What are some of the things we have done? I will not mention all of them, but I will mention some. Slow the revolving door between government jobs and lucrative private sector employment. Revoke floor privileges for former member lobbyists. A former Member has to decide, if they want to come to the Senate, they are not going to be able to do their work here if they are lobbyists. That is unfair to some who also are lobbyists who certainly never used the floor in any negative way. I think I can say that for most all.

We have to do away with what is wrong and with what appears to be wrong. This legislation will be in the Senate in less than an hour and it eliminates gifts paid for by lobbyists, not just disclosure gifts. There will be more disclosure and scrutiny of privately funded travel. This legislation will stop dead-of-night legislating by making conference reports available on the Internet. This legislation will require more frequent and more detailed lobbyists' disclosure available on the Internet. And there is increased civil rights penalties for violations.

This legislation required ethics training. It will require ethics training for congressional staff and will require disclosure for stealth lobbying campaigns by business coalitions and other organizations that slipped under the radar screen in the past. They will not any more.

Not all of what the Democrats sought is in this bill. I know that. In some cases, the provisions included are weaker than what was in our proposal. But we will offer amendments to strengthen the bill in these areas.

I am pleased that so much of what we worked for as a caucus has now gained broad bipartisan support. We have tried very hard. There are some groups, quite frankly, that there is not enough we could ever do, no matter what we do would never be enough. But it is important to recognize while there may be some outside groups who think we have not done enough, we have done a lot.

During this debate, I hope we remain honest with the American people about an important point. When we approve this legislation—I am hopeful in conference we will—we will not have put the Abramoff scandal behind us. Indeed, it is likely that future indictments and additional revelations will end any confusion on this point. The only way we put the Abramoff and other scandals behind us and restore the public faith in government is by each and every one of us, all 100 of us, and our staffs, conducting ourselves and operating this institution with the highest level of integrity.

This legislation will set parameters that will be easier to follow. The costs of corruption are high, and it is the American people who pay for it. What

has happened in Washington has eroded the ability of our Government to meet the needs of our people.

Look at this administration's response to Hurricane Katrina and the growing national unease about our security, both here and abroad. Just imagine, if Duke Cunningham and his coconspirators had not succeeded in spending tens of millions of taxpayers dollars to give their cronies bogus contracts, that money could have been used to pay for body armor, port security, or some other critical need. This is only one example.

The culture of corruption distorts our priorities and frustrates efforts to address the real needs of Americans, these Americans who are trying to cope with high natural gas prices to heat their homes, high fuel prices for the cars, concerns about their own retirement security, and a growing sense that they are having to work harder and harder to maintain even their current standard of living. Each one of us came here to serve the American people. We have been given a tremendously difficult responsibility. But it is one we all sought. Of course, it is a real privilege.

I am confident we can clean up the situation we now have in Washington so we can get on with the Nation's business. America deserves a government as good as its people. Together, America can do better.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 2369 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.