

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me begin by simply commenting on the interesting juxtaposition this body finds itself in this morning.

Less than 500 yards from here, the Governmental Affairs Committee is holding a hearing—another hearing—dealing with questions relating to campaign finance in the last Presidential campaign cycle. There seems to be an extraordinary degree of enthusiasm for pursuing every facet of that particular exercise, and I understand the enthusiasm because, obviously, it reflects in a very negative way upon many in the Democratic Party. There has been an effort to direct the committee's attention to similar allegations regarding Republican activities, but the Democrats have largely been denied an opportunity to demonstrate any balance. In fact, with all of the hearings held thus far, I am quite sure there have only been 3 days out of all of those hearings held that the committee has spent analyzing, considering allegations regarding Republican activity. So while 90 percent of the attention is centered on Democrats and less than 10 percent on Republicans, the investigation goes on.

The real question is, Where will this take us? And that leads me to this comment on juxtaposition. I wouldn't be surprised if on the cloture vote this afternoon, virtually every member of the Republican Governmental Affairs Committee will vote against cloture on the bill, will vote not to come to some termination of this charade that we have called debate for the last 14 days.

It was on September 19 that the majority leader came to the floor, surprising virtually all of us and asking unanimous consent to go to the campaign finance reform legislation. Not having had an opportunity to consult with my colleagues, we had a temporary delay in agreeing to that proposal. But during that discussion, the majority leader made it very clear:

We want to do it in a time when it can be fully debated. I think it is important that we have a chance to look at different proposals and see if a consensus can be reached. . . . So, we fully intend to have notification of the date and an adequate discussion of all sides of the issue. . . .

. . . we will have a full panoply of options to make sure we have it brought up at the right time and we can have a full debate and look at all the other things we need to consider.

Comments made by the majority leader on September 19.

Mr. President, that was over 2 weeks ago. Everyone can recall what has happened since then. The bill was immediately laid down. The majority leader, as is his right, proceeded to fill the parliamentary tree. By that, I mean adding, 8 or 10 amendments to the bill to preclude Democrats from offering any amendments to the McCain-Feingold bill. He did not offer just any amendment. He introduced this Lott amendment, the bill, S. 9, kill the bill—which at least he was very up front about. He

is quoted in the Wall Street Journal on the 26th of September saying:

I set it up so they will be filibustering me.

He was quoted in the Washington Times on the same day:

I presume the Democrats are going to filibuster what we laid out. I set it up so they are going to do the filibustering, not the Republicans.

So, Mr. President, his motives were pretty clear. He laid it out very well. So there shouldn't be any doubt what this is about. This isn't a discussion about whether or not the proposal is a good idea. We have already suggested, proposed that if it is a good idea, let's extend it to all organizations, let's extend it to corporations, let's extend it to all membership organizations that involve themselves in elections. If you pay dues, you ought to have the opportunity to say how those dues are spent. That is the Republican argument. Well, if it is good for unions, it ought to be good for corporations; it ought to be good for the Chamber; it ought to be good for every other organization.

Interesting enough, the Right to Work Committee, no bastion of support for labor unions, is quoted in the Washington Post:

The Right to Work Committee says it is opposed to any union provisions being included in the campaign finance overhaul.

Even the Right to Work Committee opposes adding the Lott amendment to the campaign finance reform bill.

So we are not fooling anybody here, Mr. President. We have offered, as I noted a moment ago, to take S. 9 separately; no filibuster. Let's have a good debate about whether it makes sense. Let's have amendments, and then let's vote up or down. We have offered that. That hasn't been accepted. Why? Well, the majority leader has made it very clear why. That's too easy. He wants to set up a situation that requires a Democratic filibuster.

So this is a poison pill, Mr. President—a poison pill. Why would Democrats oppose cloture on the amendment? Because if cloture is invoked on the amendment, by the very nature of cloture, all other amendments that are nongermane to that particular amendment falls. Could we add corporations? No. Could we add any other organization? No. So everybody ought to understand what this is all about. The majority leader does not want an up-or-down vote on his amendment. He doesn't want an up-or-down vote on campaign finance reform.

So we find ourselves in an interesting situation. We could table the amendment. I believe the votes are now here for the Senate to table the Lott amendment, but it is increasingly unlikely that we will have an opportunity to table the amendment this afternoon.

I am very disappointed with the way this whole matter has been handled from the very beginning in laying down the unanimous-consent request. When the majority leader attained his position, he and I had what I thought was an understanding: There would be no

surprises. Well, you can imagine my shock at the surprise a few weeks ago, that is, on September 19, at this unanimous consent request, considering our understanding.

Yesterday, we filed a cloture motion to ensure that there will be another vote on reform, at least tomorrow. What I didn't know is that the majority leader took us out of debate on the campaign finance reform bill in order to preclude a tabling motion yesterday. That was surprise No. 2. So this debate has been filled with surprises. I am surprised, given what he said on September 19 about the full panoply of options, that we have no options at all. We have the option of voting for cloture.

If all this is confusing, it really boils down to something very simple: Do you support meaningful campaign finance reform? Do you or not? If you do, you will press the majority leader for a tabling motion on his amendment. If you do, you will vote for cloture this afternoon on the McCain-Feingold bill. So there shouldn't be any confusion at all about what this is about, about what the motivations are or about the circumstances in which we find ourselves this morning.

The bottom line is, the vast majority of Republicans are refusing to allow this Senate to act on one of the most important pieces of legislation to be brought up in this Senate in this Congress. That is the fact. And how ironic that as we investigate infractions, as we investigate allegations, the response is simply: Let's do nothing; let's filibuster the campaign finance reform bill; let's load up the tree so we can't have a debate on amendments.

We all understand it. The American people understand it too, Mr. President. Sooner or later we will have our day. It is the old lose the battle, win the war metaphor that keeps coming back. We may lose cloture today, we may not get our tabling motion today, but we are going to get some votes. If it is all we do for the rest of this Congress, we are going to get some votes.

Others have come to the floor to seek recognition. I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of the Senator from South Dakota. I rise to support his comments.

Mr. President, there is a wonderful cemetery in a little town called Medora, ND, on the edge of the Bad Lands in western North Dakota. The cemetery has very unusual tombstones in it because they did not always know the names of the people who died when they tried a century later to identify the remains in the cemetery. So they took an oral history of the old folks living around there and did the best they could.

So if you visit that little cemetery, you will see tombstones that say, on one "Baby From The Hotel." They did

not know who it was. They just knew it was a baby that died in the hotel. On the other, "Man The Bank Fell On." Still another tombstone, "Cowboy With 2 Acres." Still another, they knew the man's name was Pete and it said, "Pete, He Died In A Disagreement."

It is an interesting cemetery to visit because by these tombstones you can tell, without knowing the names, who is buried there.

I was thinking about that cemetery today because we have today a group of people who are fixing to try to kill and then bury campaign finance reform. They have been out here for days. Today is their day because today we have some votes. They want to kill it, and they want to bury it.

The problem for them is no matter what happens today, they are not able to create a tombstone that says, rest in peace for campaign finance reform, because it is not going to rest in peace. Those who believe there is not enough money in politics and we ought to have more, those who believe that we ought to kill campaign finance reform and they are the ones to do it, they want to have a little rest in peace tombstone and run to the back rooms and collect their political inheritance, the tens of millions of dollars that keep flowing into all of these coffers and hard money and soft money for this organization and that organization.

It is not going to work quite that way. If they kill campaign finance reform today, it will have been a charade. We were told that we would consider campaign finance reform on the floor of the Senate. How did it come to the floor of the Senate? It came to the floor of the Senate tied in ropes with a procedure designed to prevent anyone from offering any amendments or having any votes except those structured by the majority leader. And those structured by the majority leader are intended to accomplish the following:

According to one who spent a great deal of time on the floor here, "We're going to kill it, and kill it proudly." Campaign finance reform, that is their goal, "kill it, and kill it proudly."

"I set it up so they will be filibustering me," proudly crows another.

Conservative columnist Mr. Novak wrote a column and said it as it was,

The party's preference is \* \* \* no reform at all: Remove all limits on campaign contributions but disclose them daily on the Internet. Because that won't become law, the GOP leaders favor a Senate standoff in which no proposal gets 60 votes needed to end a filibuster.

I did not say that. A Republican columnist wrote that. That is the strategy.

Part of it is: "[Speaker] Calls For More, Not Less, Campaign Cash." It is because of a profound difference of opinion. Despite the facts, despite this red line on campaign spending that goes up and up and up, spending that is out of control in politics in this country, despite that, we have people who

believe the problem is there is not enough cash in politics. They are dead wrong. They could not be more wrong.

The American people know and the American people understand that we need to pass some sort of meaningful campaign spending reform. I happen to believe we ought to try to find a way to put limits on campaign spending.

Individual races, the Supreme Court said by a 5 to 4 decision you cannot support those. I would like the Supreme Court to have another opportunity to rethink that, but in any event there are other ways to do it to provide incentives for spending limits on each campaign. In fact, the bill before us is watered down. They took that portion of the bill out before it was brought to the floor. So what they are trying to kill is even just a skeleton of what we ought to be doing.

If we get to vote on amendments, those of us who believe there ought to be spending limits will bring that to the floor and ask for a vote on that as well. But that is not in the bill at the moment.

The strategy is a legislative strategy to bring it up, have no votes, offer a poison pill, fill the legislative tree so everyone is bound up and no one can do anything, then file cloture, have a vote on cloture, and pull the bill and claim to all of America you really allowed consideration of campaign finance reform.

That is not consideration. That is a sham. That is not about honest consideration of campaign finance reform. An honest consideration of it would be to bring the bill to the floor and let people file amendments and have a debate and have votes and determine what is the will of the Senate.

The goal of those who want to kill this today is to do nothing because they like the current system. They will feel, I assume, like hogs in a corn crib when this is all done, just rejoicing at their bounty because they will have killed campaign finance reform, and the hundreds of millions of dollars that continue to float around to all these campaigns will magnify and multiply manyfold.

We have had 6,700 pages of hearings on campaign finance reform, 3,361 floor speeches—make that 3,362 now today and 3,363 with the next Speaker—113 votes over the years, 522 witnesses. And some say, Well, gee, we need more time to consider this. We don't need more time to consider this. Campaigns are not auctions. They are elections. Money isn't speech. If money is speech in American politics, then there is something wrong with the political system.

If we cannot begin with the germ of an idea that there is too much money in politics, that this red line signifies something that is unhealthy about American politics and that soft money is the legal form of cheating from the old type of campaign finance reform, and if you cannot deal with the form of cheating that erupts from the old cam-

aign finance reform because you don't want to do anything, then somehow we have failed as an institution.

So my point today is very simple. In 1996, the Democrats, through their organization, spent \$332 million. That was up 73 percent over 4 years previous. The Republicans spent \$548 million. That was up 74 percent over 4 years previous.

The fact is, the evidence is all around us that the cost of these campaigns is mushrooming and escalating, and it is unhealthy. The question is, what do we do about it?

Today, we are going to answer the question who is for reform and who isn't, who wants to do something about this and who doesn't, who cares about this issue and who doesn't care.

I know some are going to be tempted today to follow the strategy employed by the majority leader: Construct a tent and create an illusion and have several cloture votes through which or behind which some Members can hide with their votes so you never ever get to the central question of, Do you stand for campaign finance reform or don't you?

I just say to those who have conceived of this strategy that this campaign finance reform, if you think you have killed it today, it is going to be resurrected tomorrow. This is not going to rest in peace. You are going to vote on this and vote on this and vote on this until you understand this is a serious issue and the American people insist that this Congress do something about campaign finance reform.

I am proud, as I believe the Senator from South Dakota, the minority leader, Senator DASCHLE, is proud and my colleagues are proud of standing for reform and deciding that we support the kind of changes that are necessary to bring some health to the campaign finance system in this country and to do something about the abuses, the outrageous amounts of money in campaign finance.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains under the control of the minority leader?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time remaining is approximately 24 minutes 56 seconds.

Mr. KENNEDY. For the minority leader?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 7 minutes, Mr. President.

Mr. President, Americans from all walks of life know that we need tough new laws that limit the role of money in election campaigns in American political life. They are fed up with a campaign process driven by the soaring costs of television commercials. They are fed up with incumbents and challengers who spend more time raising money from special interests instead of serving the public interest.

Americans want true campaign finance reform, and today is a test of whether the Republican leadership in the Senate is listening. Will we get a chance to enact campaign finance reform, or will the Republican leadership in the Senate continue to block reform or even withdraw the bill entirely?

Instead of reform and accountability in Government, Republicans want to silence the voices of America's working families. Instead of adopting real limits on campaign spending, Republicans want to sweep the American worker under the rug.

In the world according to the Republicans, there would be more and more money for their campaigns and less and less for those who speak up for better jobs, better health care for our children, and a better retirement for our seniors.

So far in this debate, instead of limiting the amount of money in politics, Republicans prescribe an overdose of money for elections in which their friends in big corporations and their lobbyists and special interests can write more checks and bigger checks to the Republican Party.

Republicans in the Senate have decided that they would rather kill the patient with a poison pill than cure the disease. They say that unless the bill silences the voice of labor unions and American workers in the political process, they will kill campaign finance reform. They want to increase the power of large corporations and squash even the limited power that American workers have today. Republicans want to handcuff labor unions in the battle for a living wage and fair retirement benefits, for safety and health conditions in the workplace.

In short, Republicans want to impose a gag rule on American workers but let their friends in big corporations, the National Rifle Association, and other well-heeled special interests buy a controlling interest in the Government.

The Lott amendment is a killer amendment, because it unfairly punishes working Americans and their unions for participating in the 1996 elections. The Lott amendment bars unions from collecting dues from any workers—including those who voluntarily join a union—unless those workers sign a permission slip for their union dues to be spent for political purposes.

When the amendment seeks to block labor union contributions for political purposes, the restriction is not limited to campaign ads or lobbying. Instead, it includes union newsletters, non-partisan voter registration drives, and get-out-the-vote efforts. The scope is vast, and the goal is obvious—to deny working Americans those basic rights of our democracy.

We have heard much in recent days about the importance of the first amendment. Many on the other side of the aisle wrap themselves in the banner of free speech when they oppose the McCain-Feingold bill. They claim that

the first amendment requires that more money be pumped into the political process.

That is Alice-in-Wonderland, looking-glass logic, and everyone knows it.

I couldn't disagree more, and so does the majority of the American people. Americans want campaign finance reform, and they want it now.

Strangely, those who claim that the first amendment demands more money in politics are silent about the Lott amendment's effect on free speech. Working Americans and their unions have first amendment rights to freedom of speech and association. Political activity is critical for workers to protect the legislative gains they have made in the past 70 years. Workers can and should speak out to strengthen safety and health laws, and protect American jobs against exploitative foreign competition.

And what better way to address these and other basic concerns than by banding together in their unions? The labor movement is the most effective voice for working Americans in the political process, and we all know it.

But the Lott amendment silences this voice. It imposes onerous prior consent requirements on unions, and forces unions to set up burdensome bureaucracies to meet its terms. The amendment's supporters know this would cripple unions' ability to participate in politics. Yet those supporters say nothing about the denial of workers' freedom to speak or associate. Many Republicans apparently care nothing for the first amendment when it comes to American workers.

How hypocritical can you get?

Well, I believe that the first amendment applies to employees as well as executives. Unions have at least as much right to speak as corporations. Nothing in the first amendment says "except if you are a union member."

Unfortunately, it seems that many of my colleagues on the other side disagree.

They want to continue the torrent of campaign ads and political contributions from the big tobacco companies and other large corporations, the National Rifle Association and other special interests. The Lott amendment does nothing to affect the free flow of money from those groups, whether their members agree or not. Where is the concern for corporate shareholders who do not want their money going toward political causes? What about dues-paying members of the National Rifle Association who may not agree with all the political stands their organization takes? I don't hear Republicans expressing concerns about them.

Instead, under the Lott amendment it is only workers who are silenced while big corporation and other special interests are unaffected.

The current campaign finance laws, inadequate as they are, at least apply evenhandedly to political spending by both business and labor. The Lott amendment violates fundamental prin-

ciples of parity by imposing new restrictions on workers and labor unions.

This isn't reform; it is revenge. It is a blatant attempt to punish working Americans for their role in the 1996 elections and an equally blatant attempt to increase the role of big business in the next election.

These workers were pointing out the importance of fairness to working Americans to increase the minimum wage, working families that were pointing out the wrong priorities that were being pressed by the Republican leadership in cutting back essential education programs. They were pointing out the recommendations by the Republican majority to cut back on the Medicare Program and to use those cuts for tax breaks for wealthy individuals, and the programs that were recommended and passed in the House and Senate to open up pension funds for corporate raiders—all of these items were put out on the American agenda, and in instance after instance the American people rejected the Republicans' proposal and reelected a Democratic President.

We must move beyond this partisan assault on American workers and enact real campaign financing reform. We should heed the call of former Presidents Carter and Ford as they wrote on Sunday:

We must demonstrate that a government of the people, by the people and for the people is not a thing of the past. We must redouble our efforts to assure voters that public policy is determined by the checks on their ballots rather than the checks from powerful interests.

If President Ford and President Carter can agree, if Vice President Mondale and former Senator Kassebaum can agree, then surely this Senate can reach agreement, too.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the Lott amendment and support the meaningful reforms of the McCain-Feingold legislation. I yield the floor.

Mr. REED addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. REED. I yield myself 5 minutes from the time controlled by the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of meaningful campaign finance reform. In particular, in support of the McCain-Feingold bill. I want to commend those two Senators for their excellent work and their unflinching efforts to bring this measure to a vote. I also want to rise in opposition to the proposed Lott amendment. It is an amendment that is clearly a poison pill designed not to do anything other than derail meaningful campaign finance reform. This is the conclusion of all observers who have looked at this carefully—Common Cause, the League of Women Voters, editorial pages in the New York Times and Washington Post. Political scientist Norman Ornstein said, "A vote

for the Lott amendment is a direct move to kill reform." Rather than killing reform, we should be embracing it today, in terms of the Feingold-McCain legislative initiative.

In 1884, the Supreme Court gave us the task of protecting the electoral system. In the words of the opinion in *Ex Parte Yarborough*, they said Congress has "the authority to protect the elective process against two great natural and historical enemies of all republics, open violence and insidious corruption."

What we are witnessing today in our electoral process encompasses this form of insidious corruption—not specific misdemeanors, or infractions, but a system in which the American people are losing faith and confidence, that they are seeing their system transform from one in which free elections are based on the merits of the candidates to one which they perceive is based upon simply the sheer volume of cash that flows into the system. This corrupting influence is weakening our ability to govern and the confidence of the people in our motives and indeed in our actions.

Ninety-two percent of Americans think that too much money is spent on campaigns; 89 percent want fundamental change in the campaign finance system; 85 percent believe special interests have more influence than the voters; 69 percent believe that public officials are indifferent to their views, their concerns, their needs; 51 percent believe that quite a few Government officials are corrupt.

If that is not evidence of insidious corruption, then I don't know what is. Perhaps other evidence might be the fact that people are no longer participating in the most meaningful way a citizen can participate, by voting. We have seen voter participation plummet. In 1996, voter turnout was below 50 percent, which is the lowest since the early 1920's. Fewer people volunteer to participate as volunteers on campaigns, as canvassers, as public-spirited citizens who want to be involved in the Government. The most frequently cited reason for people not actively engaging as candidates is the fact that they can't raise the enormous amounts of money that they perceive is essential to becoming part of the American political process.

All of this argues, I think, eloquently and decisively for fundamental campaign finance reform. But what is happening today in this amendment is an attempt to throttle the views of working men and women throughout this country. And at the same time, protect and enshrine the right of the few to give very, very much to political campaigns.

That, I think, is another example of how the system has gone haywire and askew. Six hundred thousand people contributed over \$200 in Federal campaigns in 1996. That represents .31 percent of eligible voters. Of those individuals that gave over \$1,000, 237,000 Amer-

icans, .12 percent of eligible donors. Those individuals who gave the maximum amount under Federal law to Federal candidates, \$25,000, in the entire United States, 126—an infinitesimal fraction. That is what this argument is about today in many respects. It is to allow those individuals to give directly and indirectly unlimited sums to the political process and to further erode confidence in our Government. At the same time, the Lott amendment would circumscribe the ability of working men and women to make small, routine contribution through political action committees.

The sum of all this is that we need fundamental reform. The Feingold-McCain bill presents such reform. It would ban soft money to national political parties as well as the use of soft money by State parties to impact Federal elections. It would eliminate the abuse of issue ads. The last election cycle saw an explosion of issue ads, ads in which candidates were beaten about the head and shoulders regularly, not by their opponent, but by groups that rose up suddenly and put ads on television and departed just as quickly.

(Mr. SMITH of Oregon assumed the chair.)

Mr. REED. The Feingold-McCain bill would also strengthen disclosure in election law. It would provide for strict codification of the Beck decision, not circumscribe and prevent labor from participating in elections, but codify the Supreme Court decision, allowing the notification of the use of funds for political purposes by unions and also reduction for those individual members who object to such uses. Also, it will put limits on party assistance of wealthy candidates and the ban of foreign money into American campaigns. This is fundamental, necessary reform of our campaign system. I argue in fact that as worthy as these reforms are, we would have to go further. But today at least let us take the step forward for this sensible, moderate balanced reform, which the American people are demanding.

There are States in this country that have taken the step, have gone much further and passed expenditure caps on campaigns, that are experimenting with other ways in which they want the issues to be decided by candidates based upon their positions, not by campaign committees based on their balances in their checking accounts. We should take the step forward today. We should in fact resist the Lott amendment, which would derail meaningful campaign finance reform. We should rather urge that we, as the Senate of this great country, proudly step forth and endorse meaningful campaign finance reform. Many years ago, in 1914, the New England poet Robert Frost wrote: "Good fences make good neighbors."

Well, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to campaign finance reform, all our fences are down. They have been demolished by a flood

of cash running into elections. Unless we build good, strong fences, we can't be good neighbors or good candidates or indeed good citizens. We need to reform our campaign finance system, we need to begin today by defeating the Lott amendment and moving forward to pass the McCain-Feingold legislation.

I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank my colleague for his strong words. He has been a very strong reformer in the Senate.

Mr. President, let me try to not repeat the arguments that have already been made on the floor and instead draw from conversation that my wife Sheila and I have had with people in cafes in Minnesota. We had the opportunity, in August, to spend about a week just dropping in cafes in the morning around breakfasttime and lunchtime and just talking with people and listening to what people had to say. I say to my colleagues that one disturbing conclusion from these discussions with people is that I think many people in our country, certainly many Minnesotans, are now pretty well convinced that way too much of politics, way too much of Government is dominated by wealthy people and special interests, that too few people have way too much wealth, power, and say and that too many people—that is to say the majority of people—are locked out.

Mr. President, in the cafes in Minnesota, quite often people would say to us: When it comes to our concerns, Paul and Sheila, about affordable child care, jobs and decent wages, and affordable health care, about the power of insurance companies, the way in which we are denied coverage, about the concentration of power in banking, about the concentration of power in agriculture, about affordable education, when it comes to our concerns, we don't think our concerns are of much concern in the Halls of the Congress.

I think the main reason that people have reached this conclusion is that they are so disillusioned about all the ways in which they see big money dominating politics. Indeed, I think that is the ethical issue of our time.

Mr. President, so that nobody has any illusions here, I don't think that people view this as corruption as in the wrongdoing of individual officeholders, but they view it as systemic. They really believe that there is an imbalance of power where the wealthy few and powerful interests pretty much dominate the political process. Mr. President, you know what? I think they are right. I don't think it is just a perception. I think they are absolutely right.

If you believe in representative democracy, then you believe in the idea that each person counts as one and no

more than one. We don't have that any longer. We have auction block democracy, Government going to the highest bidder. People are disillusioned. That is the meaning of the last election, where over 50 percent of the people in the country didn't even vote. The party of the disaffected is the largest party in our country. Therefore, I don't understand, for the life of me, why my colleagues on the majority side introduced an amendment—the majority leader introduces an amendment which basically destroys this campaign reform effort.

Now, Mr. President, I want to thank Senators MCCAIN and FEINGOLD for their very strong leadership. I think this is the most important issue before us. I think it is the core question; it is the core issue. Every year since I have been here in the Senate, I fought it out on these reform issues because I really think this goes to the very heart of whether or not we really have a democracy or whether we just have a pseudodemocracy. What we have before us really is not the McCain-Feingold original formula, but the extra-mild version, which I don't think has enough zing in it, but at least it represents a step forward. With the McCain-Feingold effort here, we have a ban on soft money contributions to the parties. This is the sort of unaccountable money, if you will. We have in addition, some real standards on this issue advocacy—and this has been gone over, which is a terribly important part of this legislation—and by the way, if you ban soft money to the parties and don't do anything about the issue ads, really pseudofake ads, the money will just shift there, and in addition, you have some standards dealing with tighter standards dealing with independent expenditures. So it is a step forward. That is why we should pass it.

My hope is that it will whet the appetite of people in the country for more because the truth of the matter is, in the spirit of compromise, the one provision that was actually dropped—that is why we have McCain-Feingold extra-mild now, it had to do with us, with reducing the amount of money spent in campaigns in Senate races. I mean, I thought that was the most important part that we would somehow reduce the amount of money spent in exchange for discounts when it comes to access to TV time or direct mailing, you name it.

Now, Mr. President, I mean, I think the criteria ought to be, let's stop this obscene money chase, let's stop the obscene amount of money all of us have to spend and the time we have to spend raising money. Let's lessen the special interest access and influence. There is way too much of that. The vast majority of people really are locked out of this process, and let's try and have a level playing field, where challengers have a shot at winning. By that criteria, the McCain-Feingold bill doesn't go far enough. But if this piece of legislation is passed—and that is why it is

such an important bill, even this stripped-down version is so important—people in the country, I think, will say, look, the Congress has finally taken some action. This is a step forward.

People aren't fools. People aren't going to see this legislation as the be all and end all. They are not going to see it as Heaven on Earth, as ending all special interest access; they are not going to see it as ending the huge amounts of money spent in politics. But people will see it as a step forward. I say to my colleagues that what we have here when it comes to the majority leader's amendment—quite frankly, I am surprised that some of my colleagues in the majority party have essentially followed the lead of this amendment. I hope they won't. If we have a vote that is going to be very revealing.

If in fact people vote for this Lott amendment and continue to insist that it became part of a reform bill knowing that it is, as everyone has said, the "poison pill" amendment, then we may very well have no reform bill passed at all.

So this becomes a vote which tells people in the country where all of us stand and on what side each party stands on when it comes to this fundamental question of reform.

If we come here this afternoon and what we have happen is that we have the Lott amendment out there—I don't know why we can't have a separate vote on the Lott amendment. I thought we would. I think we can vote it down. If that doesn't happen, then there is no cloture, and then we go to the McCain-Feingold bill and we can't get cloture, that is blocked by Senators in the majority party, then what happens is we again reach an impasse, and people in the country become disillusioned.

As a Democrat, I will just say to the Members of the majority party that, frankly, I think people will be very angry. I think they will not appreciate this amendment. I think they will not appreciate the effort on the part of the majority leader to kill campaign finance reform. But I would say, not as a Democrat but as a Minnesotan, as an American citizen, ultimately we all lose. If we do not take advantage of this moment in time where we can pass a reform bill, albeit it still doesn't do enough, then we will be making a huge mistake, and this will just add to the disillusion of the people in the country.

The good news is that we can pass a reform bill. I hope we do. I hope we do not squander this opportunity. The good news is that all around the country there is a lot of energy for reform.

I introduced a bill with Senator KERRY which is a clean-election, clean-money option which essentially gets all of the private money out of politics. It is really strong. People in Maine have supported it. People in Vermont have now supported it. There are going to be initiatives around the country on this. There is a lot of energy in States

all across the country. So I think people in the country are going to continue to put the pressure on.

But we ought not to miss this opportunity to do something good. We ought not to miss this opportunity to at least begin to make some changes in the way in which all of this money is spent on politics. We ought not to miss this opportunity to pass the McCain-Feingold bill and give people in the country a clear message that we hear them. We ought not to miss this opportunity for reform. We ought not to miss this opportunity to reassure people in the country that we are committed to a political process that is more open, with more integrity—and not just the heavy hitters, the big givers, the invested and the well-connected running the show. We better not miss this opportunity.

I say to my colleagues in the majority party that I hope some of you will have the courage to vote against this Lott amendment, if we have that chance, or have the courage to join us and pass the McCain-Feingold bill, which would be a historically significant step in the right direction in leading our country toward more democracy, toward more participation and more involvement as opposed to this awful system we have right now which absolutely needs to be changed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my support for the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. This debate is one of the most important that the Senate will conduct in this session of Congress, and I desperately hope it will result in passage of meaningful campaign finance reform.

There is an extraordinary need for reform of our election laws. Despite the apparent problems—problems that have gotten worse with every election—Congress has not passed reform. Our failure to act has contributed to a loss of confidence, not only in our electoral system, but in our democracy.

The American public has lost faith in government and its institutions. Americans feel they don't control government because they believe they don't control elections.

If you ask people who runs Washington, most will say "special interests." People watch State officials, Members of Congress, and Presidential candidates chase money, and believe that's the only way to get your voice heard in Washington. They see televised campaign finance hearings, allegations of trading contributions for access, and they think, "how could my voice be heard over all that cash."

Certainly, Congress is not alone to blame for the current system. Voters themselves share some responsibility. People routinely decry the use of negative political ads, yet continually respond to the content of those ads. The media, especially television stations and networks, have failed to adequately inform the public of important policy questions. Instead of covering

significant issues, broadcasters often fall back on covering the "horserace" aspect of the campaign, or "sideshow" disagreements among candidates.

But the ultimate responsibility rests in this Chamber, with Congress. For more than 30 years the growing crisis has been ignored. Year after year, speeches are given, bills are introduced, but no action is taken.

We now have a rare opportunity, with public attention focused on this debate and this bill, to pass real campaign finance reform.

Senators MCCAIN and FEINGOLD have developed a genuine compromise plan. It is not exactly as I would have drafted—or any of us, if we had that chance. It is, however, the best, last chance we have to repair the broken campaign finance system.

The modified version of the bill addresses one of the fundamental problems in the system—soft money contributions. By banning these huge sums from Federal campaigns, we correct many of the problems which have been exposed this year in hearings before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

The bill also tries to deal with the growing and disturbing impact of independent expenditures. I believe the sponsors of the bill have achieved a delicate balance in this area—curtailing the use of this practice, while still conforming to constitutional boundaries.

Mr. President, we have never had a time in our Nation's history when such a pervasive problem went unanswered by the Congress. America has met challenges such as this before, and adopted policies which strengthened our democracy. We have that opportunity with the bill before us.

The McCain-Feingold bill will help restore the American public's faith in this institution and in all the institutions of Government.

As some of my colleagues know, Senator BROWNBACK and I have introduced legislation to establish an independent commission to reform our campaign finance laws. This commission would be similar to the Base Closure Commission, which proposed a series of recommendations to Congress for an up-or-down vote of approval.

But I do not believe that we should take such an approach at this time. It would be much better if Congress acted on its own, without the help of an outside body, to reform our election laws. It would demonstrate to the American public that Congress is serious about changing the way our democracy functions.

Mr. President, before I conclude, I just want to take a moment and commend my colleague from Wisconsin, Senator FEINGOLD. Without his tireless efforts to advance this bill, it surely would have died long ago. By bringing this cause to the floor, Senator FEINGOLD truly follows in the tradition of the great progressive movement in Wisconsin. I'm proud to serve with

him, and I urge my colleagues to support our efforts to pass this vital legislation.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this is the 5th year I have been a Member of the U.S. Senate. And this is the 5th year I can recall debating campaign finance reform. I have voted for campaign reform legislation several times now, and each time it has been killed off by filibuster.

This year, I have served as a member of the Leadership Task Force on Campaign Reform. We knew from the beginning of the year this would be a big issue. Therefore, we have devoted hours to finding a way to break the logjam and move a bill.

Against this backdrop, I have been listening to this debate very closely over the past few days. I have been watching the hearings in the Governmental Affairs Committee, and I have been watching the efforts of colleagues on the other side of the aisle as they attempt to find a compromise.

So far, I cannot see many differences between this debate, and the ones we've had over the past few years. In this debate, we have a bipartisan group of Senators committed to reform. This group has worked overtime to craft a reasonable reform measure that makes sense for America. They have worked to generate support, to make their case to the media and to the public, and to push for the last few votes necessary to pass it. I have been proud to support the effort.

And, like usual, there is the familiar obstruction on the other side of the aisle: a concerted effort to preserve the status quo. Though carefully disguised, their goal is to prevent reform legislation from passing.

There is a big difference this time. The public is paying more attention than ever before. The excesses of the last campaign season, brought to light through the good work of the Governmental Affairs Committee, have made campaign reform a front-burner issue in every kitchen in America. Just yesterday, more than 1 million signatures were delivered to the Capitol. These are signatures from people all over America who, over the past 7 months, have joined a nationwide call for reform.

The people are calling for reform, as they have for years. But this time the call is louder, the focus is more intense, and the opponents of reform will be held accountable.

What exactly is the problem? Money, plain and simple. Too much money, having too much influence over our democratic process. As I have said before, this Congress has reached the point where votes and decisions have become a bidding war between well funded special interests.

When the Senate debates a bill, we are no longer simply 100 Senators representing our States. We are 100 Senators representing our States and every special interest who has ever made a major financial contribution to

the party, or to the campaign, in order to influence government decision-making. This is wrong. This is not the way it should be.

The campaign system is clogged with money, and there is no room left for the average voter. Political campaigning has become an industry in this country. In last election, over \$800 million were spent on Federal elections alone. To what end? To perpetuate the status quo. Just think what \$800 million could do if spent on charitable pursuits.

Instead, that money—much of it undisclosed, from dubious sources—flowed into the political arena and dictated the terms of our elections to the people. Like water, it flowed downhill into campaigns all across the country. Some of it came out in the form of national party ads attacking candidates in the abstract; some came out in the form of issue-ads by interest groups trying to influence the outcomes. Some of it came out in the candidates own TV ads.

It reaches the point where you almost cannot hear the voices of the candidates anymore, only the voices of the dueling special interests. We do not know who pays for these ads, where they get their money, or what they stand to gain if their candidate wins. Yet they have found ways to have a huge influence over the election process.

On the other side of the aisle, the opponents of reform argue against the McCain-Feingold bill on free speech grounds. They wrap themselves in the flag and posture as protectors of free speech. Then they argue politicians and political parties should be able to take money in any amount from anyone in order to make the case for their reelection. They believe that having more money entitles one to a greater influence over our campaigns and elections. I find this argument shocking, Mr. President. I find it profoundly undemocratic, and un-American.

In hiding behind a transparent argument about free speech based on access to money, the opponents of reform conveniently gloss over reality: our campaign system is so awash in money, that the voices of average people and average voters are completely drowned out. Ultimately, people are losing faith in their elected officials and their government. It is simply not a healthy situation for our country.

Mr. President, the opponents of reform miss the point. In America, money does not equal speech. More money does not entitle one to more speech. The haves are not entitled to a greater voice in politics than the have-nots. In America, everyone has an equal say in our government. That is why our Declaration of Independence starts with, "We, the people."

The last time we debated reform, I told a story of a woman who sent my campaign a small contribution of \$15. With her check she enclosed a note that said, "please make sure my voice

means as much as those who give thousands." With all due respect, Mr. President, this woman is typical of the people who deserve our best representation. Sadly, under the current campaign system, they rarely do.

I have tried to live by my word on this issue. My first Senate campaign was a shoestring affair. I was out spent nearly 3 to 1 by a congressional incumbent. But because I had a strong, grassroots, people-based effort, I was able to win.

Since then, I have worked hard to keep to that standard. I have over 20,000 individual donors. The average contribution to my campaign is \$42. Over 90 percent of my contributions come from within Washington State. I firmly believe that's the way campaigns should be run: by the people.

We need more disclosure, not less. We need more restrictions on special interest money, not fewer. We need less money in the system, not more. We need to amplify the voices of regular people, instead of allowing them to be shouted down by special interests.

Mr. President, I believe we have made this debate way too complicated. After all the maneuvering, the cloture petitions, the technicalities, the procedural votes, this issue boils down to one basic question: are Senators willing to make some modest reforms to reduce the influence of big money in politics and encourage greater voter participation? Or are they more interested in protecting the current system, and the ability of parties and politicians to turn financial advantage into political advantage?

Are you for reform, or against it? Are you with the people, or against them on the need for a more healthy democracy? The votes we are taking today will show the answers to these questions.

Mrs. HUTCHISON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I think by unanimous consent I have the next 45 minutes reserved. I would like to yield the first 20 minutes, or 25 if he needs it, to the Senator from Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. ROBERTS. Thank you, Mr. President. I wish to thank my colleague from Texas for reserving this time.

Mr. President, we are going to change the subject in regard to campaign reform. Let me just simply say that I think it is always a wise suggestion to check under the banner of what is alleged campaign reform, and I think if we would check under the banner in regards to the McCain-Feingold bill, that campaign reform is an oxymoron. But having said that, I am not going to take any more time of the Senate on this particular subject.

#### BOSNIA AND NATO ENLARGEMENT

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I want to talk about what is happening in re-

gard to mission creep in Bosnia and how that reflects on the hearings that will start very quickly in the Senate in regard to NATO expansion.

Mr. President, when President Woodrow Wilson exhorted Americans to make the world safe for democracy, he did not mean sending U.S. troops to attack foreign television stations and to attempt to try to shut down political speech in other countries. Yet that is exactly what happened last week in Bosnia as NATO troops, or SFOR troops, took over four television transmitters in an effort to control news broadcasts in that shattered region. State Department officials, in declaring victory, pledged to create a system "free of the monopolizing influence of political parties." Let me emphasize that again. Free the system—"free of the monopolizing influence of political parties." Then they set about the task of deciding what television content from United States networks might be appropriate for viewing by the citizens of Bosnia—content that is not "ethnically biased."

Wrote Lee Hockstader of the Washington Post:

As a result of the seizures of the TV towers, NATO generals and Western diplomats have cast themselves in the roles of media executives determined to construct an even-handed state television station in a country that has never had one. That represents a new level of involvement in Bosnia's affairs for the West \* \* \*

A new level of involvement indeed.

The trouble is, neither the American public nor Congress have been told by President Clinton just what our expectations are in Bosnia. What is our mission? How long will it last? How much will it cost? What will be accomplished? How do we extract our troops from the mess they are in?

None of these questions have been answered.

Is this war? If U.S. troops were involved in a war situation, we could expect media outlets to be military targets.

Is this war? If so, we can expect costs and casualties far beyond what the administration has projected.

Is this war? If so, what national security interests are at stake?

Is this war? If so, our troops cannot be expected to defend their lives with Nielsen ratings.

Mr. President, given this outlandish situation, we are tempted to treat these events as farce:

So when a television station in our home State gives a Senator a rough time, maybe we should call the Marines instead of the news director.

And certainly many Americans would agree they should not be bothered by the "monopolizing influence of political parties" during next year's campaign season.

Now we are back to campaign finance reform. But, Mr. President, Bosnia is serious business. Lives are at risk. Regional stability is on the line. We have serious obligations.

A few days ago Congress adopted an important amendment to the Defense appropriations bill, kindly referred to by the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee as the "Roberts amendment." It requires the President to certify to Congress by May 15, 1998, that the continued presence of United States forces in Bosnia is in our national interest and why.

He must state the reasons for our deployment and the expected duration of deployment.

He must provide numbers of troops deployed, estimate the dollar cost involved, and give the effect of such deployment on overall effectiveness of U.S. forces.

Most importantly, the President must provide a clear statement of our mission and our objectives.

And he must provide an exit strategy for bringing our troops home.

If the President does not meet these conditions, funding for military deployment will end next May.

Following our actions against the television stations, Serbian officials warned there would be retaliation. And the New York Times reported that Bosnian Muslims are secretly arming themselves.

A senior NATO commander was quoted, "The question no longer is if the Muslims will attack the Bosnian Serbs, but when. The only way to prevent such an attack, at this point, is for the peacekeeping mission to extend its mandate."

Sound familiar. You bet it does.

Extend the mandate—that's mission creep by any name.

And it is the dangerous result of a policy that is lacking in direction, lacking in leadership and lacking in purpose.

The events of the last few days are alarming. They make it more urgent that the administration develop and articulate a course of action that is based on sound policy.

Taking over TV transmitters? Trying to figure out on an even basis what should be programmed, what the people of Bosnia should hear and listen to?

I suggested to one of my colleagues that if we had a choice of programs we should put "Gunsmoke," which is a favorite TV show of mine, on the Bosnian TV stations. I don't know what would be the opposing viewpoint. Maybe "Natural Born Killers" could be posed for some of the people who have been convicted or who have been indicted under the war crimes trials. Maybe in terms of programming we could decide on old newsreels of Tito. Maybe that would do some good.

This is incredible in terms of taking over the TV transmitters.

We need hard answers on Bosnia.

We need direction.

We don't need Nielsen ratings.

In that regard, I thank my colleague from Texas for bringing up this special time for us to consider how Bosnia also segues in our decision in regard to NATO expansion.