

of some court decisions, is that we have a campaign finance system in total chaos.

I come to the floor today to support the McCain-Feingold bill which will be voted on this week by the U.S. Senate. We have some Members of the Senate who have stood and said, "We intend to filibuster; we don't think that anything should be passed by the Congress; we believe anything that Congress does limits someone else's speech." And, in effect, I guess they are saying there ought not be any rules.

We are told somehow that money is speech in politics: The more money you have, the more speech you have, the more you are able to speak. Some of us believe that there ought to be in politics campaign finance reform that begins to set some reasonable limits on what kind of money is spent in political campaigns. We think that the current regime of campaign finance is just completely spiraling out of control, and we think the McCain-Feingold bill, while not perfect, is a good piece of legislation for this Congress to enact.

Mr. President, I also intend to offer, if I am allowed in the context of these debates, one additional piece of legislation I would like to mention just for a moment. Federal law currently provides that all television stations must offer candidates for Federal office the lowest rate on their advertising rate card for commercials for a certain amount of time preceding the election. To repeat, under current law, we say candidates are entitled to the lowest rate on the rate card for political advertising for a certain period prior to the election.

Everyone has a right to put on the air what they wish to put on the air about their opponent. In politics, unlike most other forms of competition, the normal discourse is to say, "There's my opponent. Look at what an awful person that opponent is. Let me tell you 18 awful things about my opponent." Is that the way you see airlines advertise? "Look at my competing airline over here. Let me tell you about how awful they are, how awful their maintenance record is." I don't think so. Is that the way automobile companies advertise? No. It is the way people in politics advertise because it has worked.

My point is this. I am going to offer an amendment that says we will change the Federal law that requires the lowest rate on the rate card for the 60 days prior to elections. We will say that the television stations are required to offer that lowest rate only to television commercials that are 1 minute in length and only in circumstances where the candidate appears on the commercial 75 percent of the time.

Why do I do that? Because I would like candidates to start taking some ownership of their commercials instead of the 30-second slash-and-burn commercial that the candidate never appears on. Oh, everybody has a right to

continue to run those. However, we are not required, in my judgment, to tell television studios they must offer the lowest rate for these kinds of ads.

Air pollution in this country is a problem. We have been concerned about air pollution for some long while. One form of air pollution in this country is the kind of political commercial that has been very successful. I don't deign to suggest now we can ban it. We can't. Free speech in this country and free political speech allows anybody to do anything they want in their campaigns in a 30- or 60-second ad.

But I believe we ought to give an incentive for those who put commercials on the air during political campaigns that say to the American people, "Here's what I stand for, here's what I believe, here's what I want to fight for as we debate the future of this country," in which the candidate himself or herself asserts positions that they think ought to be a part of public discourse and public debate. It seems to me we ought to try to provide incentives for that by saying the lowest rate card in campaigns, the lowest rate on the bottom of the card, will go to commercials that are at least 1 minute in length and on which the candidate appears 75 percent of the time.

I don't know if we are going to get to that. I intend to offer it as an amendment.

First and foremost, I rise to say I support the McCain-Feingold bill. I think Senator MCCAIN and Senator FEINGOLD have done a good job. Is it perfect? No. It is an awfully good start to try to bring some order and establish some thoughtful rules to a campaign finance system that is now a mess.

I want to be involved in the debate in the coming hours, when I hear people stand on the floor of the Senate and say, "Gee, we think the campaign finance system is wonderful," because I want to ask them what they have been reading, what they have been watching. Not the campaigns that I have seen, not the reports that I have seen about campaign finance awash in soft money, awash in issue ads financed by soft money flying all over the country to pollute the air waves, that never allow the American people to understand who was the donor, who put in half a million dollars to go after this or that candidate. That has become a perversion of fair rules and fair standards in campaign finance reform, and I hope when we pass McCain-Feingold we will finally begin to make some order and some thoughtful response to campaign finance reform.

I thank the President, and I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

SENATOR RIBICOFF

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me say to my colleague from Connecticut, I imagine he came to the floor to speak about Senator Ribicoff. I will not be long. I will say, although I did not have a chance to know Senator Ribicoff, I know so much about him. He was a great Senator. I pass on my sympathy and love to the State of Connecticut and his family.

ISTEA

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me also thank my colleagues from West Virginia and North Dakota for talking about ISTEA, the transportation bill, which is all about investment in infrastructure, which is all about investment in our economies. And Minnesota is another State that awaits anxiously for us to take up this piece of legislation and pass it.

SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I want to talk about 2 issues, and I want to talk about them briefly.

First of all, I would like to talk about this past weekend. I feel as if I speak on the floor of the Senate with a sense of history. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, said when he went to Iraq that he considered this to be a sacred mission. I think he was right. I think it was very important and is very important for our country and the international community to have resolve with Saddam Hussein and to make it clear that it is extremely important that there be unhindered inspection so that we, in fact, know what exactly is going on in Iraq and, for that matter, for other countries, I wish it would be the same in terms of development of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President, I have to say this from the floor of the U.S. Senate. I believe as a Senator that war is always the last option. When you can talk instead of fight and when you can work out a peaceful solution and when diplomacy works and where there is a nonviolent resolution to a conflict, the world is better off for it. We should have no illusions, though sometimes people come to the floor of the Senate and people talk to each other and we get all pumped up and we talk about going to war and how awful Saddam Hussein is. I certainly agree he is a very cruel—very cruel—man. But, Mr. President, there is no question that if military action was to be necessary, a lot of innocent people would die. One child, one mother, one civilian in Iraq is one too many. One of our soldiers is one too many.

I am prayerfully thankful that Saddam Hussein seems to have understood the importance of these demands and, most important of all, because of the strong position that our country has