60 days of the election? Is that the understanding of the Senator from Utah?

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, it is my understanding that is the way the bill is written. I think James Madison would be turning over in his grave, although I think he would take comfort from the fact that the institution he helped create—the Supreme Court—would clearly strike it down.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I say to my friend, so if you have the situation that on September 3rd of a given year a group of citizens could go out without registering with the Federal Election Commission, without subjecting themselves to that arm of the Federal Government, and criticize a politician by name, but then on September 4th, I ask my friend from Utah, that would become illegal. Is that correct?

Mr. BENNETT. It is my understanding that the bill would make that illegal and improper.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, will the Senator from Utah yield for a question?

Mr. BENNETT. Yes.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Does the Senator realize that under the Snowe-Jeffords amendment, which is included in the version of McCain-Feingold that is before the Senate, at this time there is no restriction on individuals such as Mr. Hiatt? Are you aware that was the rule by a majority vote of this body?

Mr. BENNETT. I was unaware that Mr. Hiatt would be allowed to spend his soft money for a faction. I think it is still true that he would not be able to spend his soft money for a party. Is that not the case, I ask my friend?

Mr. FEINGOLD. As I understand it, he would still be able to do it for the types of ads the Senator was indicating. The question that I would ask is, if you have a concern with regard to the bill at this point concerning individuals and groups that are not corporations or unions, the whole purpose of the Snowe-Jeffords amendment was to make it clear. And in the spirit of compromise that it would not affect what the individuals have been able to do in the past in that area, I just wanted to make sure the record is clear, because much of the comments of the Senator from Utah have to do with individuals who are not restricted in the way that the Senator has suggested.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I would suggest that individuals are seriously restricted under this bill because they cannot exercise their constitutional privilege of giving the money to a political party. Mr. Hiatt has made the choice not to give the money to the political party, if the article is to be believed solely on the basis that it didn't work, not because he was motivated by some other higher spirit. He decided to give the money directly to a faction because he thought it would be more effective.

If this bill passes, as I understand it, Mr. Hiatt would be prohibited from changing that decision. That is, if he were to decide that, ''Gee, I could make things better if I gave it directly to the political party, I want to go back to what I was doing before,'' he would be prohibited from doing that on the grounds that this is soft money, and he is forced by the law to give his money to a special interest group rather than to a political party or to a political candidate.

This puts us in the position of paradoxically strengthening the hands of special interest groups at the expense of political parties and political candidates. This puts us in the position of saying that eventually political discourse in this country will go the way that it is going in California. I lived in California for long enough to know that the California pattern of putting issues directly on the ballot with no spending limitation whatsoever eclipses elections for candidates. The amount of spending that went on in the last California election on the various referenda vastly outstripped and eclipsed the amount that any candidate was able to spend. And if we get to the point where political candidates are squeezed out of access to the voters by groups funded by people like Mr. Hiatt who have unlimited amounts to spend, we are going to be in great difficulty.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I have a question about that very point. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Utah. Many of his remarks were devoted to the proposition that Mr. Hiatt couldn't give to various groups; independent groups.

Mr. BENNETT. I didn't say he couldn't give to various groups.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I believe I heard several comments to the effect that he would be prevented from doing that. I just want the record clear that the only concern the Senator from Utah has at this point in light of the effect of the Snowe-Jeffords amendment is the amendment's effect on what he can give to parties.

Mr. BENNETT. Exactly.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I want that clear for the record.

Mr. BENNETT. Sure.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Because I was not certain in light of your remarks.

Mr. BENNETT. That is not the only effect. If I can repeat once again, this bill, in light of the Snowe-Jeffords amendment, would hasten the day when people would abandon candidates and abandon parties and give their money directly to special interest groups, as Mr. Hiatt has voluntarily decided to do in this situation, and I think that would be tremendously deleterious to the cause of worthwhile political discourse in this country.

I pause at this example. Let us suppose that in the State of Utah the Sierra Club were to decide that their No. 1 goal was to drain Lake Powell. Indeed, they have announced many places that that is soon to be their No. 1 goal.

CONSUMER BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 4:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will now begin 30 minutes of debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1301, which the clerk will report.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to finish my thought.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I ask that I be given the opportunity to respond briefly to the Senator's remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BENNETT. I withdraw my request and suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. FEINGOLD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

Mr. BENNETT. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The legislative clerk continued the call of the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 394, S. 1301, a bill to amend title XI, United States Code, to provide for consumer bankruptcy protection, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time for debate between now and 5 p.m. will be equally divided between the Senator from Iowa and the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I might consume from my portion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to say a few words today before we have our cloture vote on S. 1301, and that is the Consumer Bankruptcy Protection Act. That is going to occur, as stated by the Chair, at 5 o'clock. We are going to vote at that time on whether we can even consider this very important piece of legislation that is called the Consumer Bankruptcy Protection Act.

As I said yesterday, I think the necessity of having a cloture vote and the objection to taking this bill up was a desperation tactic. If the opponents of reform want to fight reform, let's have a fight about the merits of bankruptcy reform. I would like to get to the bill. I would like to have everybody vote for cloture on the motion to proceed, and then we are there debating this legislation. When we get to the bill, I want to

assure everyone that I am going to work hard to further accommodate concerns expressed by members of the minority. I have proceeded in this fair way since we started to consider bankruptcy reform, and we have been at this at the subcommittee and committee level probably almost a year to this point.

In subcommittee, when we marked up the bill, I personally saw to it that many of the changes which my distinguished ranking minority member, Senator DURBIN, wanted were inserted into the bill, and at the full committee markup I worked with Senator HATCH to ensure that a number of Democratic amendments were offered. I did not accept these provisions because I supported them or thought these provisions were the best policy choice. I accepted these amendments out of a desire to accommodate the concerns of the Democratic Members. So there is no reason for them to filibuster this bill at all. If the Democratic Members want to be respected, then it seems to me that the members of that party also have to act responsibly when those of us in the majority go out of our way to accommodate the concerns of the minority. There is no need to clutter up the bill with amendments that are totally irrelevant or unrelated to the issue of bankruptcy.

For instance, I have heard that the issue we just left, campaign finance reform, might be offered. I have heard that the minimum wage bill might be offered. I have heard that it is health care reform, that any or all of these could be added to this bill. That is why we have to vote for cloture now and, later on, on the bill. Otherwise, without imposing cloture, the bill becomes a vehicle for people who oppose reform to load this bill up with excess baggage.

As I have said repeatedly here on this floor, the American public overwhelmingly favors bankruptcy reform: 68 percent of the people in a national poll; in my State of Iowa, 78 percent of the people. So let's stop playing games and get to the business of the country. The cloture vote is one of the key votes on bankruptcy reform. A vote against cloture is a vote against a piece of legislation that deals head on with an issue of extreme national importance. The Consumer Bankruptcy Reform Act that we have before us, or will have before us if we vote cloture, is fair and balanced. It passed out of the Judiciary Committee on a 16-to-2 vote. How could a bill that got out of committee 16 to 2 be subject to a filibuster? So, let's get to the bill and, hopefully, pass it.

The Consumer Bankruptcy Reform Act is a bipartisan effort. It is a bipartisan effort which keeps the best of old law while curbing abuses. S. 1301 continues to help those who need the protection of the bankruptcy laws but implements measures to screen out those who use the bankruptcy system to avoid paying debts that they can afford to repay.

The fair nature of this bill is represented by the overwhelming bipartisan support that it received in committee. The near unanimous consensus of the committee action reflects a belief that something must be done to curb the skyrocketing rate of bankruptcies, which reached an all-time high last year, and that this bill is thus a necessary step in restoring common sense to our bankruptcy laws and the system of bankruptcy.

As the prime sponsor of this bill and chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over bankruptcy, I went out of my way to make sure the minority was treated fairly. At my hearing we invited every witness the minority requested. And every time my distinguished friend, Senator DURBIN, sought to insert language into the bill, I personally saw to it that his desires were accommodated. The only time that I could not accommodate his desires was sometimes he asked for certain language to be deleted.

American business lost around $40 billion last year as a result of bankruptcies. This translates into a hidden tax of $400 per family. We need to cut this hidden tax and put more money into the pockets of American families. We do this by reducing or eliminating the costs that we have of goods and services in America to every family of four by a figure of $400.

Efforts to burden this bill with minimum wage and other completely unrelated amendments ought to be resisted. This bill is too important and time too short to allow political stunts and unrelated side issues to impede or delay its passage. As I said, 68 percent of the American people support bankruptcy reform. In its letter to the Judiciary Committee, the administration of President Clinton indicated its support for reform, and I thank the President and his people for helping this legislation along. I think there is a real consensus that now is the time to act. We have a fair, effective, bipartisan bill which deserves to be considered. As I said, we are willing to work with the minority to accommodate their concerns even further.

It comes down to this. Do the Members of this body support bankruptcy reform? Will they vote for cloture today? And will they also follow on voting for cloture of the bill itself? I ask my colleagues to vote ''yes'' at 5 o'clock.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset, I am going to support this motion for cloture to proceed on the bill because I agree with my colleague and friend, the Senator from Iowa, that this is an important issue that should be addressed by this Congress. He has been eminently fair in all of his dealings with me on this legislation. Being a member of the abject minority, I appreciate that, and that sort of fairness I hope will be rewarded in the passage of a bankruptcy reform bill which both Senator GRASSLEY and I will be proud of.

I am hoping during the course of this debate we can point out those areas of the bill that need to be addressed and address them in a responsible way. I think this is, at its heart, a good bill. I think there are some elements of it which can be changed and improved to make it better.

Let me address at the outset his frustration, and mine, too, over the fact that this bill may become a vehicle for other issues. First, why is this necessary? Why would any Senator want to come and put a measure such as an increase in the minimum wage on the bankruptcy bill? It does not seem to follow very closely. I guess there is some connection to it, but by and large you would think we could vote separately on the minimum wage bill. The honest answer is, we should. The honest answer is, we cannot. The Republican leadership refuses to afford an opportunity for many of the more serious measures that have been brought before this Congress to be considered. Some of my colleagues, in frustration, look for virtually any bill, any vehicle, to move important measures such as reform of HMOs, campaign finance reform, or an increase in the minimum wage. I hope, while Senator GRASSLEY and I address the merits of this legislation, that the Republican and Democratic leadership in a bipartisan fashion can come to an agreement as to the proper time and place for us to consider important measures such as an increase in the minimum wage.

Having said that, let me address the issue of bankruptcy reform. As I mentioned the other day, it is truly an area that deserves our attention. The dramatic increase in the filings in bankruptcy in America suggest that we should look at the bankruptcy system. We have tried to do that in the committee, both in the full committee and the subcommittee. We will address it again on the floor of the Senate. There are many people who have many explanations for the increase in the filings in bankruptcy. One of the most cogent explanations that I have found is demonstrated by this chart.

Why do more people file for bankruptcy in a time when the American economy is expanding and more jobs have been created, people are building homes and starting businesses, and inflation is down? Why in the world would more people be filing for bankruptcy? I think this chart answers that question. Bankruptcy cases track consumer debt. As Americans become more deeply indebted, particularly unsecured debt—not their home or their car, but unsecured debt like credit card debt—they become more vulnerable. One bad occurrence in a person's life—the loss of a job, a divorce, a serious illness in the household —and they find themselves pushed over the edge. A lot of people find that as their debt increases they are more vulnerable to bankruptcy.

Just look at this chart which tries to track the number of filings in bankruptcy per capita along with the debt-to-income ratio. It is no surprise to me that they are in lockstep. So the credit industry that comes to us and talks about bankruptcy reform must accept some share of responsibility for the increases in filing.

Who are the people filing for bankruptcy? There are clearly exceptions to the rule, but if you look at the average person filing for bankruptcy, you will see that consistently the income of the person filing for bankruptcy has been descending, going down over the years; the average income in 1997, $17,652. These are people who are making less than $10 an hour who are filing for bankruptcy. So they are not the fat cats, the ones who are going to the canny attorneys who can find some way to bring them to bankruptcy court. These are genuinely low-income Americans. The average debt of the person filing for bankruptcy is about $28,000. That is the average.

What this bill tries to address is not that average person but the person who is the exception filing for bankruptcy, the one who is, perhaps, trying to take advantage of the system.

The reason this debate is important—and I hope my colleague, the Senator from Iowa, will note in the information that we have shared with him—is our belief that we should address not just the bill as it is written and some changes in it but some other aspects of this question. I do believe, as does Senator SARBANES of Maryland and Senator DODD of Connecticut, who are joining me in offering an amendment, that we should call on the credit card companies to accept more responsibility, too. If the people who are incurring debt are asked to be more responsible, so, too, should these companies.

How many credit card solicitations have you received in the last month or two? You almost have to shovel them away from the mailbox. Whether you have asked for it or not, a lot of people want to offer you credit, perhaps more credit than you should have. Time and again, more people take these credit cards and get more deeply in debt and then struggle to find a way to pay for them.

I also think we have to address the billing system, the minimum monthly payment on your credit card. I think the credit card companies should tell you how long it will take to pay off your balance and how much interest you will pay if you pay the minimum monthly amount. Is that unreasonable? I think it is only fair. It really gives a person at least some sobering message, perhaps, that they cannot continue to pay the minimum monthly balance and expect to ever come out of debt.

Finally, you may not realize it but some of the credit cards that we own, when we go to charge on a purchase, establish a security interest. What does that mean? It means that if you find yourself in hard times, the credit card company can claim the item you purchased. You didn't know that? A lot of people do not. I don't think it is unreasonable that the credit card companies make that disclosure.

We also want to make sure the credit card solicitations are done in an honest way. We find a lot of people, and some nonhumans, I might add, who are receiving credit card solicitations who should not—people who are mentally incompetent, people who are too young to own a credit card in any State. I think this needs to be cleaned up.

We also need to protect retirement income in bankruptcy. If you file for bankruptcy, did you know your 401(k) plan is protected but your IRA is not? Why would that be? One of the amendments we are offering is to make sure that there is equal treatment of retirement income.

We also want to change the area of farm bankruptcy. That has not been touched in 15 years, and it should be.

In the area of reaffirmations, when it comes to the debts that the creditor should convince you that you shouldn't step away from, you should still accept responsibility for, let's make a level playing field. Let's make certain there is not too much pressure on the debtor.

We also talk about tax returns with this bill. As it is written, if you walk into bankruptcy court and file a petition and do not produce within 65 days your income tax returns for the previous 3 years and your pay stubs for the previous 6 months, you are thrown out of court. I asked the Internal Revenue Service, if I asked for my income tax returns, how long would it take me to receive them? They said 60 days, if you are lucky. But you ask somebody who writes to the IRS, and they tell you it takes a lot longer. We ask that there be some provision in the bill that is sensitive to this.

One of the other areas of the bill says you can't file for bankruptcy unless you have been to a consumer credit counselor. That sounds reasonable, but the consumer credit counseling industry came to us and said, ''We can't handle this. We can't handle over 1 million people coming through our doors each year. We can't be the threshold for bankruptcy court.'' That is what this bill does. I am afraid it goes too far.

Another thing that concerns me is, in bankruptcy there are certain categories of debt that are protected. One of them is the area of child support. If we are going to have a mother with children, who was perhaps involved in a divorce and now relies on child support, receive enough money to raise her children, we can't send her into a bankruptcy court that diminishes her ability to recover those child support payments. Unfortunately, this bill does.

I have just outlined a handful of the amendments that we think are important to make this a better bill. I believe that my colleague, the Senator from Iowa, is going to accept some of these or some form of these, as he has been very responsive and open in the past to talk about some changes, constructive changes in the bill.

When it is all said and done, I believe we can pass a good Bankruptcy Reform Act, one that is a credit to both parties that have been involved in this debate, and particularly a credit to the chairman of the subcommittee who has worked so long and hard on this measure.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Four minutes, 52 seconds.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I probably will not use all that. I can yield back some time. I will comment briefly.

First of all, in order to get to the point where Senator DURBIN needs to be to get consideration of his amendments, we have to get through this cloture vote and a cloture vote on the bill so we can get down to talking about these very serious matters.

Many of the things that Senator DURBIN has stated that he is interested in changing I would not want to say right out that I agree with every one of those. Some of them, I think, maybe go a little bit too far, but I have not seen—maybe I shouldn't say I haven't seen any, but I have seen few issues that he brought up in the course of the last year as we constructed this bill, that it wasn't possible for us to work out a lot of differences, particularly for those things that are included in the bill.

As I said in my opening remarks, some things that he wanted removed, we didn't remove. I look forward to that opportunity, if we get it by getting through two cloture votes, to sitting down with Senator DURBIN and some of his colleagues on his side of the aisle who now have an interest in this legislation to see what we can work out and even minimize the number of votes or the length of debate we ought to have on this bill.

I will make one comment about one of the things Senator DURBIN made reference to about opposition from the National Foundation for Consumer Credit to some of the ideas of Senator SESSIONS. To Senator SESSIONS' credit, he did work out some compromises that needed to be done. We have a letter dated August 6 from the National Foundation for Consumer Credit that says that they support those provisions of the legislation as well, and there is a copy of that letter to Senator DURBIN.

I think we have a process here that has worked so well. If you would stop and think—and Senator DURBIN has worked in this spirit—for the years I have been on this subcommittee, either as chairman or as ranking member—and I served 16 years with the predecessor of Senator DURBIN, and that was

Senator Heflin from Alabama—there has not been a single piece of bankruptcy legislation to get through this body in that 16-year period of time that didn't have the cooperative effort of the Democrat chairman or ranking member and the Republican chairman or ranking member, depending on who was controlling the committee at that time in history. That reputation has been continued through Senator DURBIN at this point.

If we can just get everybody on Senator DURBIN's side of the aisle to be in that same spirit that has promoted good bankruptcy legislation through this body for that period of time, we can be successful, not only with this piece of legislation, but also to emphasize that this is a needed piece of legislation. Even Senator DURBIN, working with us, has helped us develop the first major change in legislation to be considered on the floor of this body since the passage of the 1978 bankruptcy law.

I hope that the spirit that former Senator Heflin of Alabama and I have worked in, and has been continued by Senator DURBIN and me thus far, can be fully accepted by people from his side of the aisle. I know he has to satisfy a lot of interests. I even have, I say to Senator DURBIN, some interests on my side that are not satisfied with the legislation we brought out of committee. So I have some problems with which I have to work.

The point is, if, since 1981, this effort can be successful, it can be successful this time. I just plead with everybody who might want to filibuster this for some extraneous issues that probably can be brought up in some other way on other bills that would satisfy the Senate majority leader, we can get there.

I urge, as Senator DURBIN has, a very positive vote on this. I hope it will be followed, assuming we are successful this time, with a positive vote later this week on cloture on the entire bill.

I yield the floor, and I yield back what few seconds I have remaining.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time having been yielded back, the hour of 5 p.m. having arrived, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provision of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 394, S. 1301, the Consumer Bankruptcy Protection Act.

Trent Lott, Orrin G. Hatch, Charles Grassley, Arlen Specter, Strom Thurmond, Connie Mack, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Thad Cochran, Tim Hutchinson, Wayne Allard, Christopher Bond, Rod Grams, Rick Santorum, Chuck Hagel, Larry E. Craig, and Jon Kyl.

CALL OF THE ROLL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1301, the bankruptcy bill, shall be brought to a close? The yeas and nays are required under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ABRAHAM). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 99, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 263 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Abraham	Feingold	Lott
Akaka	Feinstein	Lugar
Allard	Ford	Mack
Ashcroft	Frist	McCain
Baucus	Glenn	McConnell
Bennett	Gorton	Mikulski
Biden	Graham	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Gramm	Moynihan
Bond	Grams	Murkowski
Boxer	Grassley	Murray
Breaux	Gregg	Nickles
Bryan	Hagel	Reed
Bumpers	Harkin	Reid
Burns	Hatch	Robb
Byrd	Helms	Roberts
Campbell	Hollings	Rockefeller
Chafee	Hutchinson	Roth
Cleland	Hutchison	Santorum
Coats	Inhofe	Sarbanes
Cochran	Inouye	Sessions
Collins	Jeffords	Shelby
Conrad	Johnson	Smith (NH)
Coverdell	Kempthorne	Smith (OR)
Craig	Kennedy	Snowe
D'Amato	Kerrey	Specter
Daschle	Kerry	Stevens
DeWine	Kohl	Thomas
Dodd	Kyl	Thompson
Domenici	Landrieu	Thurmond
Dorgan	Lautenberg	Torricelli
Durbin	Leahy	Warner
Enzi	Levin	Wellstone
Faircloth	Lieberman	Wyden

NAYS—1

Brownback

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 99, the nays are 1. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Mr. KERRY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is the motion to proceed to S. 1301, the bankruptcy reform bill.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO KIRK O'DONNELL

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I want to pause for a few moments to acknowledge that many of us, particularly those of us from Massachusetts, are feeling the loss this week of one of our Nation's most savvy political strategists and one of our most contributing and admirable citizens. Kirk O'Donnell was a man who lived his life in a way that proved not only can you work in politics without losing your soul but that politics from Fields Corner in Dorchester to city hall in the heart of Boston, all the way up to the lofty office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, can in fact be a most honorable profession.

Mr. President, we all know that we live in very difficult political times, where endless cynicism seems to find too many citizens turning away from political dialog that they seem to find disappoints them. But Kirk O'Donnell, through every fiber of his body and in every step that he took in life, reminded us that political parties can stand for a set of ideals and that politics can still be an art form mastered in order to advance the common good—not individual good, but the common good. That is what Kirk always fought for.

Like so many of us in Massachusetts—and many are Republicans—Kirk O'Donnell was a Democrat by birth. But through his decades in public service he became a Democrat by conviction and a Democrat by sacrifice and by life work. The young man who fell in love with football at the Boston Latin School and at Brown University—so much so that at Boston Latin he was enshrined in their sports hall of fame—found his passions attracted him to an equally rough and tumble game on the field of Boston politics.

Kevin White's 1970 campaign for Governor in Massachusetts inspired Kirk to get involved in politics for what he thought was a ''brief stint.'' That ''brief stint'' became a remarkable career. When Kevin White made good on his promise as mayor of Boston to ''bring city hall to the neighborhoods,'' he turned to Kirk O'Donnell to run his Fields Corner little city hall. From his office in a trailer, Kirk brought city government to street corners, to newsstands, and to neighborhood picnics. He knew how important it was to show his fellow Bostonians that government worked for them, if only they knew how to work within the system. And within that system, Kirk was their devoted guide. Tip O'Neill could not have chosen a more dedicated or more skillful individual to be his counsel than Kirk O'Donnell, a man who said, in his own unassuming way, ''if you can understand Fields Corner, you can understand Congress.'' Kirk was right—and Tip O'Neill knew it. For 8 years, it was Kirk O'Donnell who gave the Speaker the extra set of eyes and ears he needed to hold a Democratic majority together in spite of all of the force of President Reagan and the Reagan era. Kirk talked with Members of Congress the same way he would with a friend of 20 years or a constituent in Fields Corner or West Roxbury—warm, honest, straightforward. Tip O'Neill knew that in Kirk O'Donnell he had found a true friend.

Thousands of people to this day will tell you they were friends with Tip O'Neill, the Speaker. Tip O'Neill was a politician who never forgot a name and