does at least two very important things. First, it will reduce the amount of big, unregulated donations from corporations and unions and wealthy individuals in our campaigns. Second, it will regulate the huge amounts of money spent by so-called ''independent'' special interest groups on advertising, which is disguised as ''issue ads'' but in fact is designed to advocate the defeat of a particular candidate.

The original McCain-Feingold bill did even more, but the bill had to be scaled back to reduce the objections from some of the opponents to campaign finance reform. I stand ready to support the motion to allow a vote on the modified version of McCain-Feingold. I hope today that minority of Senators who have repeatedly denied the people an up-or-down vote on this bill will change their minds. I hope that with the historic passage of the bill by the House—representing a majority of the voters of the United States—this minority of Senators will see that they should not again thwart the clearly expressed will of the people.

I hope this minority of Senators will not want to be the single force responsible for continuing the undermining of our national political system that is accomplished each day by the millions and millions of dollars of unregulated campaign money when today they have a unique and historic opportunity to change all of that.

So, I hope those who have, in recent months, opposed the will of the people on this vote, on this issue, will vote for cloture, will give the people the up-or-down vote they very much want and very much deserve.

ANGELA RAISH

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, as most of know, Angela Raish retired at the end of July from her position as Personal Secretary to our colleague, Senator PETE DOMENICI. This is an event viewed with mixed emotions by all of us New Mexicans who have had the pleasure of working with Angela over the years. On the one hand, we are glad that she and her husband Bob are taking some much-deserved time for themselves. On the other hand, and there's always another hand, all of us who have come to know and admire her will miss our day to day dealings with her.

Twenty-one years of service to one Senator, one Senate office and one state—our own New Mexico—represent a remarkable career of attention and devotion. Ever gracious and thoughtful, she has been a wonderful friend to my staff and me. I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of Senate Resolution 272 which Senator DOMENICI introduced on Tuesday of this week. It expresses what we all feel for this lovely person and the work she has done for the Senate. We are fortunate to know her.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 2237 which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2237) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

McCain/Feingold amendment No. 3554, to reform the financing of Federal elections.

AMENDMENT NO. 3554

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time between 10 a.m. and noon is to be equally divided between the Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, and the Senator from Washington, Mr. GORTON, on amendment No. 3554.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to control the time of Senator GORTON.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I yield to the distinguished Senator from Alaska such time as he may need.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Kentucky, who has labored in the area of campaign finance for an extended period of time, whose expertise many of us depend upon because once again this Senate is being called upon to reform our campaign finance laws.

As with many issues, the issue of so-called reforming the laws is somewhat in the eyes of the beholder. As a consequence, I ask my colleagues to consider this legislation in perhaps a different context. The issue before this body, in my opinion, is simply: To what extent, if any, should the Federal Government regulate political free speech in America? The campaign finance debate is not just about politicians and their campaigns. At the core of this debate are the values and freedoms guaranteed by the first amendment. As a consequence, I suggest when Government attempts to place limitations on speech, it has an overwhelming burden to demonstrate why such restrictions to our fundamental freedoms are necessary. Surely the Government can no more dictate how many words a newspaper can print than it can limit a political candidate's ability to communicate with his or her constituents, yet that is precisely what the sponsors of this legislation are proposing for candidates for office.

The McCain-Feingold legislation bristles with over a dozen different restrictions on speech, provisions that I believe flagrantly violate the first amendment as interpreted by the Supreme Court. I cannot overemphasize the point that was made by George F. Will in a Washington Post editorial. He stated, commenting on the McCain-Feingold bill:

> Nothing in American history—not the left's recent ''campus speech codes,'' nor the right's depredations during the 1950s McCarthyism or the 1920 ''red scare,'' not the Alien and Sedition Acts of the 1790s—matches the menace to the First Amendment posed by campaign ''reforms'' advancing under the protective coloration of political hygiene.

One of the most serious problems with this bill is that it contains restrictions on ''express advocacy'' within 60 days of an election by independent groups. And what is ''express advocacy''?

Mr. President, if this proposal ever becomes law, we can change the name of the Federal Election Commission to the Federal Campaign Speech Police. Every single issue advertisement would be taped, reviewed, analyzed, and perhaps litigated. The speech police will set up their offices in all of the 50 States to ensure the integrity of political advertising. Is that what we in this Chamber really want? I don't think so. But that is what will eventually happen if we adopt McCain-Feingold.

I assure my colleagues, and hope they understand, that this wholesale encroachment on the first amendment would be immediately struck down by the courts as unconstitutional.

Moreover, if a group of citizens decide to pool their money and advocate their political position in newspaper advertisements and television ads, what right does the Federal Government have to restrict their right of speech? Indeed, do we want to turn over the debate on political issues to the owners of the broadcast stations, the owners of the newspapers, and the editorialists during the 60-day period leading up to an election? Would my colleagues who are supporting this bill be ready to stand up and vote to ban election editorials in newspapers and on television in the last 60 days of a campaign?

Many members of the public think we need fundamental changes to our election financial laws because in the 1996 Presidential election they witnessed the most abusive campaign finance strategy ever conceived in this country.

There is an answer to those who abuse power. And the answer does not mean you have to shred the first amendment. The answer is a very simple one. It is that our current election finance laws must be strictly enforced, something that this administration has been extremely reluctant to do for obvious reasons.

Mr. President, as grand jury indictments amass with regard to Democratic fundraising violations in the 1996 Presidential election, we learn more and more about President Clinton's use of the prerequisite of the Presidency as a fundraising tool. It is important to recall some of those abuses as we consider this debate.

You recall, Mr. President, the Lincoln bedroom. During the 5 years that