

I am sure the Court will take notice, if we ever get to that point, that many Americans share that view, and it is very significant that one of the great Justices of the Supreme Court took notice that it gives him the feeling there is an appearance of corruption in this system.

To finally respond to the point the Senator from New Jersey made, the Senator from New Jersey said—I don't know what his historical basis for this is, but it is an interesting comment: "We only get a chance once every 10 years to do campaign finance reform." He said that is why we had to do the Shays-Meehan approach rather than the soft money ban.

But this is what I know to be true. Not only is it worth it to ban soft money, but if we don't take this opportunity to at least ban soft money, there will be no campaign finance reform at all during the 1990s. The opportunity to have any campaign finance reform will have been destroyed by Congress after Congress after Congress. This is our chance to break down this system that is destroying anybody's sense that there is a system of one person one vote in the United States anymore.

This is a chance. This is the one we must take. This is the one on which we must have a yes-or-no vote early next week.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, once again the Senate is considering campaign finance reform. As my colleagues know, the House of Representatives in September passed a strong, bipartisan reform measure. Senators MCCAIN and FEINGOLD have put a bipartisan reform proposal before the Senate.

The House has acted overwhelmingly in favor of reform and the majority of Americans support them. It is imperative that the Senate pass a tough campaign finance reform measure this year.

I have consistently supported campaign finance reform since coming to Congress. As many of my colleagues know, I started my career in politics as a community activist, working to prevent a highway from demolishing my Fell's Point neighborhood. I don't want the next generation of community activists shut out of the political process. I want them to know that their efforts matter. I want to restore each American's faith and trust in government. This bill is an important step in restoring the faith of the American people and ensuring that our citizens have a voice in government.

Vote after vote in the past has shown that the majority of the United States Senate supports the McCain-Feingold reform proposal. Unfortunately, through parliamentary tactics and filibuster, a majority of the Senate has not been able to work its will on this issue. I hope this year will be different, and that we will pass and enact meaningful campaign finance reform.

During my time in the United States Senate, I have voted 19 times to end

filibusters on campaign finance reform. So I know we have a fight on our hands. But it is time for action, and it is time for reform. The American people are counting on us.

I believe we need campaign finance reform for a number of reasons. First and most important, we need to restore people's faith in the integrity of government, the integrity of their elected officials, and the integrity of our political process.

Many Americans are fed up with a political system that ignores our Nation's problems and places the concerns of working families behind those of big interests. Our campaign finance system contributes to a culture of cynicism that hurts our institutions, our government and our country.

When Congress fails to enact legislation to save our kids from the public health menace of smoking because of the undue influence of Big Tobacco, it adds to that culture of cynicism. When powerful health care industry interests are able to block measures to provide basic patient protections for consumers who belong to HMOs, that adds to the culture of cynicism. Is it any wonder that Americans do not trust their elected leaders to act in the public interest?

It's time for the Senate to break this culture of cynicism. We can enact legislation to eliminate the undue influence of special interests in elections.

How does this bill do that? First of all, it stems the flood of unregulated, unreported money in campaigns. It will ban soft money, money raised and spent outside of federal campaign rules and which violates the spirit of those rules.

During the 1996 Presidential election cycle, the political parties in America raised a record \$262 million. In just the first six months of the 2000 election cycle, the parties have raised an astounding \$55.1 million. That's 80% more than they raised in the same period of the 1996 cycle. The need to shut down the growing soft money machine is clear.

This bill will also codify the Beck decision, by allowing non-union members who pay fees in lieu of union dues to obtain a refund of the portion of those fees used for political activities. Unions play a vital role in our political process. This provision enables unions to more accurately reflect the views of their members.

These are reasonable reforms. They will help get the big money and the secret money out of campaigns. They will help to strengthen democracy and strengthen the people's faith in their elected officials.

Mr. President, we can improve our political process, making it more fair and more inclusive, without compromising our rights under the Constitution.

By limiting the influence of those with big dollars, and increasing the influence of those with big hearts, we can bring government back to where it belongs—with the people.

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act will help us to do that, and I am proud to support it and encourage my colleagues to do likewise.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. The distinguished assistant Democratic leader and I have agreed it would be in the best interests of both sides to put the Senate into morning business, which will give everyone an opportunity to talk on whatever subject they would like to speak. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. The Senator from Kansas and I have a colloquy into which we are going to enter. It is my understanding the Senator from Oregon has just a few brief remarks to make. I wonder if he wants to go before the Senator from Kansas and myself, since we anticipate using approximately a half-hour.

Mr. WYDEN. If the Senator will yield, I have about 10 minutes. I appreciate her thoughtfulness. Perhaps we can go into a quorum call and work all this out.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I had asked the Senator from Oregon if I could speak for no more than 5 minutes. I want to engage the Senator from Wisconsin in a colloquy on campaign finance reform. I will leave and let the two Senators work it out. He was kind to say I could go ahead of him. Is that OK?

Ms. COLLINS. That is certainly acceptable to the Senator from Maine, assuming the Senator from Oregon does not take more than 10 minutes.

Mr. WYDEN. That is acceptable to me as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to describe why I think it is very important to hang on to the bill the Senator from Wisconsin and the Senator from Arizona have put before us on campaign finance reform.

There will be all kinds of amendments offered to change the bill, some of which I support strongly. It seems to me our only chance of getting this legislation passed is to stick as closely as possible to the bill we currently have in front of us.

I have had a fair amount of experience in soliciting soft money contributions from donors. I can say that both the contributors and myself, and anybody else who solicits, would have a difficult time denying they are extremely uncomfortable with the dollar