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

amounts that are coming into political parties, or for that matter—I have never done it—for individual organizations that are spending money in a so-called generic fashion as well.

One of the reasons, I say to the Senator from Wisconsin, I feel strongly that change is needed is because we have added a fourth requirement to the Constitution for service in the Senate. The Constitution lays out three requirements for someone who wants to run for office—you have to be a U.S. citizen for 9 years; you have to be 30 years of age; and you have to live in the State for whose office you are running. But there has been a fourth requirement added, and that is you have to be able to raise enough money or you will not be a credible candidate.

Those who have been challenged before, those who have run for office will tell you, if you do not have enough money to advertise on television—I know the Senator from Wisconsin ran on an anti-incumbent strategy, but it is very difficult for most citizens. In Nebraska, there are only a handful of people who are eligible given that fourth requirement.

I wonder if the Senator from Wisconsin will tell me if what I am saying is true. I like Shays-Meehan. I like the bill. The junior Senator from Nebraska, Mr. HAGEL, has an amendment I like as well. The trouble is, when these amendments are adopted, if these amendments are adopted, it reduces the chances of our defeating a declared filibuster. It makes it much more likely we will fail to break a filibuster and, as a consequence of that failure, fail to enact legislation, and as a consequence of that, we will never go to conference and never change the law.

I wonder if he can comment on that a bit because there are a lot of us who will be facing amendments coming up on this bill. The comment we will have is: Gee, I like that amendment; why not vote for it? There may be a good answer why not to vote for it. It may be the amendment will make it difficult for us to succeed in changing the law and reducing, in my mind—I understand and appreciate the problem of apparent corruption. I would like to get that out of the system. The big thing I see in the system right now is we have a very high barrier to public service, and it is much harder, as a consequence, to persuade men and women that they ought to take one of us on and try to come and serve their State and Nation.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nebraska for his question. I first compliment him. Not only has he, obviously, done a good job when he was in the role of being a leader for our political party committee, which involved fundraising, but he has always been an ardent supporter of campaign finance reform at the same time. He knows very well because he was involved.

The fact that people do not have a lot of money can keep them out of politics. It almost kept me out of politics. That is the reason I got involved in this issue in the first place. I certainly was not aware of what soft money was at that time.

In answer to the Senator's question, this clearly is not comprehensive reform; Shays-Meehan is not comprehensive reform. But when we get to the point of simply banning soft money, we should take the opportunity.

In specific answer to his question about what happens when these amendments come up, all I can do is tip my hat and say let's follow the example of the other body which, on two occasions, has shown us what to do.

You have to be willing on some occasions to vote against a good amendment in which you believe—I am even prepared, if necessary, to vote against a bill that has my name on it—if you believe the reason for putting that amendment on is to destroy the chance to pass a reasonable and appropriate bill. They had to do that in the House. Members had to vote against amendments that had to do with disclosure, almost an indisputable principle. They had to vote against other amendments they liked very much in order to make sure they could pass a reasonable bill, such as the Shays-Meehan bill, that included a number of important provisions.

We have to be ready to do the same thing. I believe in some cases, I say to the Senator from Nebraska, the amendments that will be offered will be helpful and do not threaten our ability to win, but in some cases I think they are poison pills and we need to work together to defeat them. I am confident we have a majority of people in this body who are reformers and understand the importance of taking the vote you have to take in order to win this battle.

Mr. KERREY. The Senator is very kind to say I have always been a supporter. Actually I have not always been a supporter. When I came to the Senate in 1989, this was not a very important issue. Indeed, at one point, I joined the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. MCCONNELL, to defeat campaign finance reform.

Then I had the experience of going inside the beast in 1996, 1997, and 1998 when I was Chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee—I do not want to raise a sore subject for the Senator from Maine. It changed my attitude in two big ways: One, the apparent corruption that exists. People believe there is corruption. If they believe it, it happens. We all understand that. If the perception is it is A, it is A even though we know it may not be, and the people believe the system is corrupt.

Equally important to me, I discovered in 1996, 1997, and 1998 that there are men and women who would love to serve. They say: I can't be competitive; I can't possibly raise the money necessary to go on television; oh, and by the way, my reputation could get damaged as a consequence of what could be said on television against me.

I am persuaded this law needs to be changed for the good of the Republic, for the good of democracy. I hope Members, such as myself, who are enthusiastic about changing that law will take the advice of the Senator from Wisconsin and the Senator from Arizona to heart because we may have to vote against things we prefer in order to make certain we get something that not only we want but the Nation desperately needs.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, if I can respond briefly, I cannot think of a more helpful remark than what the Senator from Nebraska just said. What he is talking about—and this is his nature—is to actually get something done. Not just posture but actually accomplish something. I am grateful because that is the discipline we are going to need when we start voting next week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. I thank the Chair. I thank the Senator from Maine for her thoughtfulness.

MEDICARE COVERAGE FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to talk about the effort I have launched with the other Senator from Maine, Ms. OLYMPIA SNOWE, around the only bipartisan effort now before the Senate to get Medicare coverage for prescription drugs for the Nation's senior citizens.

As my colleagues can see in this poster next to me, Senator SNOWE and I are urging that senior citizens send in their prescription drug bills to Members of the Senate in Washington, DC, to help show how important it is we address this issue in a bipartisan way for the millions of vulnerable elderly people.

Here are a few of the prescription drug bills I have received from senior citizens from my home area in the Pacific Northwest. I will take a few minutes this afternoon on behalf of Senator SNOWE and myself to talk about why this bipartisan issue is so very important.

Let me read from a letter sent October 1 from an elderly women in Lebanon, OR. She said:

> Please find enclosed a copy of the prescription costs for the past 6 months. As you will note, the average cost each month is $236.92 without the over-the-counter medications I must take. Please make use of these figures any way you can in your effort to obtain prescription coverage for those of us receiving Medicare. I'm 78 years old and doubt if I will see the time prescriptions are a covered item. However, keep fighting for the next generation.

I want to tell this older person in Lebanon, at home in Oregon, that we are going to be fighting for her. We are not going to wait until the next generation to get older people the coverage they need. To think that this