

the amount raised from each donor to \$100 per election.

For the primary, participants would receive a base grant that would vary in amount based on the population of the state that the candidate seeks to represent. Participants would also receive a 5-to-1 match for small-dollar donations up to a defined matching cap. The candidate could raise an unlimited amount of \$100 contributions if needed to compete against high-spending opponents.

For the general election, qualified candidates would receive an additional grant, further small-dollar matching, and vouchers for purchasing television advertising. The candidate could continue to raise an unlimited amount of \$100 contributions if needed.

The Fair Elections approach frees candidates to spend more time with constituents and in policy debates and less time with wealthy donors and special interest lobbyists.

Our country faces major challenges.

Everyone knows that we need to reduce the deficit, modernize our energy policy, and reform the Tax Code—among other things.

What many people may not know is that, at every turn, there are high-powered, special interest lobbyists ready to fight every proposal.

It is mighty hard for Members of Congress not to pay attention to the concerns of big money lobbyists and donors when Members of Congress may need to raise money from these same people during their next campaign.

This bill would dramatically reduce the influence of these lobbyists and corporations, because Fair Elections candidates would not need their money to run campaigns.

Let me be clear: I honestly believe that the overwhelming majority of the people serving in American politics are good, honest people, and I believe that Senators and Congressmen are guided by the best of intentions.

But we are nonetheless stuck in a terrible, corrupting system.

The perception is that politicians are corrupted by the big money interests . . . and whether that is true or not, that perception and the loss of trust that goes with it makes it incredibly difficult for the Senate to take on tough challenges and have the American public believe that what we are doing is right.

This problem—the perception of pervasive corruption—is fundamental to our democracy, and we must address it.

Fair Elections is not some farfetched idea.

Fair Election systems are already at work in cities and states around the country.

Similar programs exist and are working well in more than 12 jurisdictions, including Maine, Arizona, North Carolina, and Vermont.

These programs are bringing new faces and new ideas into politics, making more races more competitive, and dramatically reducing the influence of special interests.

The vast majority of Americans agree that it is time to fundamentally change our system of financing campaigns.

Recent polling shows that 75 percent of Democrats, 66 percent of independents, and 55 percent of Republicans support Fair Elections-style reform.

The Fair Elections Now Act is supported by several good government groups, former Members of Congress from both parties, prominent business leaders, and even . . . lobbyists.

Special interests lobbyists and big corporations are entitled to a seat at the table, but they shouldn't be able to buy every seat.

The Fair Elections Now Act will reform our campaign finance system so that Members of Congress can focus on implementing policies that benefit the people that sent them to Washington.

#### CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF PLATTE COUNTY, WYOMING

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I am pleased to recognize the Centennial of Platte County, WY.

Although today's Platte County is vastly different than that of 100 years ago, its vibrant history connects the two. The early inhabitants, who were then part of Laramie County, campaigned passionately for the division of the county. They had distinguished themselves as functional communities, and they contributed to the State's economy by strengthening their ties to the railroad, agricultural development, and mining industries. They wanted an independent identity. On April 28, 1911, a headline in the Wheatland World jubilantly announced, "County division carries! Platte County a reality." Their success represents Wyoming's spirit of independence.

Platte County consists of 8,200 residents in the five communities of Wheatland, Guernsey, Hartville, Glendo, and Chugwater. Parts of Wheatland's unique irrigation system are still visible. In the early 1880s, engineers created a system of canals to transport water from manmade reservoirs through the mountains to the town below. Such foresight assisted in the taming of a small section of the great Wild West. A few miles outside of Guernsey stands Register Cliff, a sandstone outcropping upon which emigrants recorded their names and dates as they traveled the historic Oregon Trail. Wagon ruts from the trail are also visible and remind us of the grand journey people made. The Sunrise Mine, located just outside of Hartville, was one of the largest iron mines in the country, producing over 42 million tons of iron ore during its 80-year operation. Platte County is the only county in Wyoming with two State parks: Guernsey State Park and Glendo State Park. Both parks contribute to the area's irrigation systems, as well as provide excellent year-round recreational opportunities for Wyoming residents. Livestock production has always been a

major enterprise in Wyoming; Chugwater earned distinction as the headquarters for Swan Land and Cattle Company, one of the largest cattle outfits in the United States. Now, new generations of ranchers continue the cattle legacy.

Today, Platte County helps meet America's growing energy demands. The Laramie River Station powerplant, located northeast of Wheatland, delivers electricity to two separate power grids and is one of the largest consumer-operated, joint power supply ventures in the country. Strides have been made in developing renewable energy technology, including plans to harness Wyoming's wind. Also impressive is Platte County's proximity to the Niobrara Shale Formation, a shale rock formation that covers four States in the West. Drilling beneath this formation will provide numerous opportunities for oil and natural gas production.

Madam President, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Platte County, I invite my colleagues to visit this historic place. This year, the Platte County Centennial Committee has planned several countywide celebrations and has announced its motto, "The People, the Land: Past, Present and Future." I applaud the citizens of Platte County in their efforts to celebrate such rich history and to present it to visitors from all over the world.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO DR. CASS PENNINGTON

● Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I am pleased to commend Dr. Cass Pennington of Indianola, MS, for his service and contributions to the State of Mississippi while serving as the 76th president of Delta Council. Delta Council is an economic development organization representing the business, professional, and agricultural leadership of the alluvial floodplain commonly known as the Mississippi Delta. The organization was formed in 1935 and is widely respected for its role in meeting the challenges which have historically been faced by the economy and quality of life for this region of our State.

Cass Pennington has served as president of Delta Council during a time when our Nation and the State of Mississippi have experienced enormous economic challenges at the local, State, and national levels. During his career, Dr. Pennington has been best known for his contributions to education and improved access to healthcare throughout the 18 Delta and part-Delta counties of northwest Mississippi. Prior to becoming the president of Delta Council, Dr. Pennington served as Superintendent of Education for school districts in Tallahatchie and Sunflower Counties, MS. He has served as a college sports referee and is a past chairman of the Board of Institutions