

The President's Radio Address *May 8, 1993*

Good morning. In the early days of our administration we've moved quickly to deal with the problems that concern you most. Our endeavors are ambitious and none will be accomplished easily, some will require time and repeated struggle. But all of them relate directly to improving our economy, to creating more jobs and better incomes and opportunity for hard-pressed working families.

Many of the efforts we're making are opposed by lobbyists, defenders of the status quo and special interests. We're fighting, after all, to do something that no generation of Americans has had to do before: to make dramatic reductions in the Federal deficit, even as we ask for new, very targeted investments in the education and training of our people, in incentives for our industries, in new technologies for new jobs in the 21st century.

Many special interests are trying to stop our every move. They don't believe in a program which cuts spending in areas they don't want to have spending cuts or which raises most of the tax burden from wealthy people whose incomes went up and taxes went down in the eighties, while the middle class paid more in taxes while their incomes went down. We want to reverse that, but most working people don't have lobbyists here to help them.

We're fighting hard to reform our health care system. And soon, we'll put forward a plan to provide real security and health care for every American family. And already, special interests are trying to carve the plan to bits.

We're trying to make it possible for every young person to go to college, to borrow the money that he or she needs and then to pay it back as a small portion of their incomes after they go to work. And already, banks and their allies are out in force since they make enormous profits from the current student loan system, even though it imposes great burdens on many students.

Well, this is what always happens in Washington. Narrow interests exercise powerful influence. They try to stop reform, delay change, deny progress, simply because they profit from the status quo. Because big money and the special access it buys are the problem, we have

to reform the political system even as we try to improve the economy, and open opportunities to all our people.

Unless we change fundamentally the way campaigns are financed, everything else we seek to do to improve the lives of our people will be much harder to achieve. Economic reform and reform of the political system go hand-in-hand. It's time to curb the role of special interests and to empower average citizens in the way our country is governed.

Yesterday I announced a comprehensive campaign finance reform proposal, a proposal to reform the political process, restore faith in our democracy, and ensure once again that the voice of the people is heard over the voices of special interests. The plan will change the way Washington works, the way campaigns are financed, and the way the game of politics is played. Here's how it will work: First, it will impose strict spending limits on congressional campaigns. Spending has gone up too far and too fast. When spending is out of control, candidates who lack access to big money simply can't compete. In the last 2-year election cycle, spending on congressional campaigns increased by 50 percent over the previous 2 years.

Second, this plan will rein in the special interests by restricting the role of lobbyists and PAC's, political action committees. For the very first time, our plan will ban contributions from lobbyists to the lawmakers they lobby. It will bar lobbyists from raising money for the lawmakers that they lobby. If adopted, believe me, this proposal will change the culture of Washington. And it will curb the role of political action committees. We want to cap the amount of money any candidate can receive from PAC's. And we'll limit PAC contributions to \$1,000 for Presidential candidates and \$2,500 for Senate candidates.

Third, our political reform plan will open the airwaves and level the playing field between incumbents and challengers by providing access to the broad airwaves, for candidates who agree to the spending limits.

Let me make this clear, this broadcast time will not be paid for by middle class taxpayers. It will be funded by repealing a major tax loop-

hole that allows many businesses to deduct the cost of their lobbyists. Corporate lobbying has only been deductible since 1962. We can close that loophole and use that money to open the airwaves to all candidates.

This proposal will change the status quo. And, believe me, the special interests will mobilize against it. They don't want to see their ability to give or to raise campaign contributions curbed. They don't want to see the influence of PAC's curbed. They don't want to see limits on election spending.

But Government will work only for middle class America, if Washington works in the national interest and not just for narrow interests. And that won't happen unless we change the way we finance campaigns in this country.

This political reform bill is for real. It goes hand-in-hand with another bill we're supporting, which has already passed the United States Senate. That bill requires all lobbyists to register and now requires them to report all the money they spend on particular Members of Congress to try to influence or support their causes. And even if the special interests object to these efforts, even if they try to filibuster this campaign finance reform legislation or delay, I believe we will pass it. And I'll sign it because I think you will support it.

When all is said and done, this issue is really about our liberty. It's a matter of preserving

our personal freedoms and expanding our opportunity by revitalizing the political freedoms on which they rest. To create jobs, as we must, to increase incomes, to make our health care system better, to open more educational opportunities, we need a democracy where more, not fewer, Americans play a role and have a real say in the decisions that powerfully affect their lives.

Last November, we had a huge increase in turnout, especially among our young people. Since then, I have received more letters in the first 3½ months of my first year than my predecessor did in the entire year of 1992. The American people want to be heard in their political system. If you want to do it, we've got to pass the lobbying bill and we've got to pass this campaign finance reform bill which will pay for equal access through lobbying contributions, control the influence of lobbyists, limit PAC's, and limit campaign spending.

These are changes I'm fighting for. But they won't happen unless you'll fight for them, too. If you'll help we can win this battle and we can keep turning America around.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks to the Community in Cleveland, Ohio

May 10, 1993

Thank you very much. Thank you, Congressman Stokes, Senator Metzenbaum. I want to thank Lou Stokes and Howard Metzenbaum for the support that they have given to this administration to making a new beginning for America, to putting the American people back to work, and to giving Washington back to you.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to my friend Eric Fingerhut for coming here, the leader of the freshmen in Congress and a great Representative, someone who believes in the cause of reform. I want to thank your fine Mayor, Mike White, who labored mightily to try to get some more money for jobs here in Cleveland.

I wish people all over America who think that our cities aren't working would come to Cleveland and see houses being built, the sta-

dium going up, new malls being built, and things happening. I think it is very, very impressive what is happening here under the leadership of Mike White. And I appreciate him very much.

I also want to thank Congressman Hoke for coming here. I'm glad to see a bipartisan Representative. I'm trying to govern in a bipartisan way, and some of those fellows in the Senate don't want me to. But if we get together on America's problems as America, we'd do a lot better than pointing partisan fingers.

Finally, I want to thank attorney general Lee Fisher and your State treasurer, Mary Ellen