

ests through passing campaign finance reform. I'm meeting Mr. McConnell later today to thank him and to bring him up to date. Last year Congress answered my call to stop taking gifts, meals, and trips from lobbyists. In December I signed a bipartisan bill to bring lobbyists out from the darkrooms and into the bright light of public scrutiny. That's half of what Mr. McConnell asked us to do.

When this law's first deadline approached earlier this week, lobbyists were pouring into registration offices for the very first time to let the public know who they are, what they do, who pays them, and how much. This is a tough law. It's good for the American people. I'm proud to have signed it. And I congratulate the Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike, who voted for it. Now we have a chance to finish the job, to make the way we finance campaigns work better, too.

Two distinguished United States Senators have sponsored a sensible campaign finance reform bill that can serve as a foundation for real reform. John McCain is a Republican Senator from Arizona. Russ Feingold is a Democratic Senator from Wisconsin. On many issues it's fair to say that Senator McCain and Senator Feingold don't see eye-to-eye. But they do know this: The health of our democracy goes way beyond partisan politics, and it's high time to reduce the influence money has on elections.

The McCain-Feingold bill includes limits on spending, curbs on the influence of PACs and lobbyists, and an end to the soft money system. The bill will discourage the attack ads that have become all too common by requiring candidates to take responsibility for putting them on the air. Perhaps most important of all, this bill pro-

vides free TV time for candidates so that they can talk directly to citizens about real issues and real ideas.

All these campaign finance reform ideas are ideas I embraced back in 1992 when I was running in New Hampshire. Now, as we work to reform campaign finance, we must do everything we can to ensure that we open, not limit, the political process. Our goal is to take the reins of our democracy away from big special interests, from big money, and to put them back into the hands of ordinary Americans, where they belong.

Our bottom-line test should be: Will our efforts make our Government more representative, not less representative? Will reform make our elected representatives more likely to promote the public interest, even when it conflicts with powerful special interests?

We have an historic opportunity to renew our democracy and strengthen our country. If we truly believe in a Government that puts ordinary Americans ahead of the powerful and privileged, then we must act and act now. I call on Members of Congress from both parties to follow through on what Frank McConnell asked of the Speaker and me: Let's put politics aside, work together, and get this done. If you take pride in our democracy, as I know all of you do, then let's pass a bipartisan campaign finance reform bill now and give the American people something all of us can be proud of.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:19 p.m. on February 16 in the Map Room in the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 17.

Telephone Remarks to the Community of Rochester, New Hampshire *February 17, 1996*

I'm sorry I'm not there, but I'm on the way. We spent 2 hours on the runway in Washington today, waiting for a weather clearance. If you'll wait for me, I'll be there. I'm looking forward to it.

I know between Jeanne Shaheen and everybody else that's there you can find plenty of people to speak until I get there. Just tell old

stories and reminisce, and I'll be there as quick as I can.

Thank you. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. aboard Air Force One en route to Pease International Trade Port. In his remarks, he referred to Jeanne Shaheen, New Hampshire State senator.