

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. You mentioned Republicans in the House. This weekend Speaker Gingrich was unusually caustic, accusing your staff and your lawyers of blocking pursuit of the truth in law. Have you looked back at your records and the phone calls that you have made and come to any new conclusion about your own involvement?

The President. First of all, I think—no, I have not come to any new conclusion. But I think the remarks this weekend were an attempt to divert the public attention from the fact that the leadership of the Republican Party in the

House opposes campaign finance reform, and has consistently, and continues to do so.

But I am encouraged that along with our Democrats who are supporting it, there are an increasingly vocal band of brave Republicans willing to stick up and be for it. And again, this is our chance to pass this bill, and I think we'd all be making a mistake to be diverted. I don't intend to be.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:03 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks at the National Arts and Humanities Medals Dinner
September 29, 1997

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to begin the dinner by saying a special word of welcome to all of you.

Frequently in this room, it is my privilege on behalf of the people of the United States to offer a toast to a visiting leader of another nation or to showcase our culture to the world. Tonight it is my privilege to honor the leaders of that culture, our artists and scholars and those who support their work.

Our economy is measured in numbers and statistics, and we got some more good numbers today, and for that I'm very grateful. But nonetheless, in our childhood, at the end of our lives, and in the most important moments in between, we know that our own enduring worth and the enduring worth of our Nation lies in our shared values and our soaring spirit.

Lewis Mumford once wrote, "Love, poetry, disinterested thought, the free use of the imagination—here are the sustaining values of a living culture." Through the work you do and the lives you lead, you are sustaining our living culture and swelling the chorus of American voices.

I have to note, sadly, as many of you must doubtless know now, that we lost one of those great voices today when Roy Lichtenstein passed away. Two years ago I had the great privilege

of giving him the award that I was able to bestow on several of you today. He was especially valuable and treasured by us here in the White House because of his support for our Arts in Embassies program.

The point I think he would like me to make tonight is that every one of us, each in our own time, has just a little time, whether we live a short or a long life by conventional standards. Therefore, it falls to every one of us to make sure that there is a next generation of artists and scholars who have the opportunity to learn and to create, so that the next generation of ideas can take root and grow.

So tonight, as we celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of the men and women we honor here, let us also rededicate ourselves to that future mission.

Now, I ask you all to join me in raising our glasses in a toast to the 1997 National Medal of Arts and National Humanities Medal recipients.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:43 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to artist Roy Lichtenstein, 1995 National Medal of Arts recipient.