

out of control. Soft money, a term used to describe an unregulated and unlimited flow of money between the special interests and Washington lawmakers, is severely undermining and compromising the effectiveness of the Presidential system and is making a mockery of every single one of the limits we have in current law that governs how much individuals and entities may contribute to congressional candidates.

So what happened here on the Senate floor last June, Mr. President? After a limited debate we were unable to gain the 60 votes necessary to overcome a procedural hurdle and cut off a filibuster. But we did receive a remarkable 54 votes, including several from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Let me repeat that, Mr. President. A strong majority in the U.S. Senate voted in favor of advancing the McCain-Feingold reform proposal.

Some have said that this doomed any hope for campaign finance reform, that this was the end of the line for this issue. On the contrary Mr. President, this is clearly just the beginning for bipartisan campaign finance reform. It took us 3 years to reform our lobbying disclosure laws. It took us 3 years to finally reform the Senate's rules on the acceptance of lobbyist-provided gifts, meals, and vacation junkets. And it may take us just as long to see real campaign reform enacted into law.

I for one am fully confident that we will prevail. We will prevail because it is becoming increasingly difficult for opponents of campaign reform to defend an indefensible system that is crumbling all around them. To suggest that the current system is fair, is functional, and is worthy of the voters' trust is simply an absurd proposition and no one is buying it.

We have already begun to hear some of the numbers coming in and it is becoming clear that the current trend of skyrocketing campaign costs will continue through the 1996 elections. The distinguished Senator from Arizona and I will be back here during the opening days of the 105th Congress to discuss those numbers and to shine a spotlight on some of the darkest corners of our political system.

Two years ago at this time, my Republican colleagues were touting their Contract With America and the issues they hoped to address in the first 100 days of the new Congress. I said it countless times then that one issue that was conspicuously missing from that contract was campaign finance reform. I was, quite frankly, astonished that although other reform issues were mentioned, there was not a single word about what has to be considered the mother of all reform issues. It was entirely omitted from the contract.

Not surprisingly, we did not debate campaign finance reform in the first 100 days of the 104th Congress. Or the second 100 days. Or the third, or the fourth. In fact, we did not debate campaign finance reform here in the Senate until 18 months after the start of

the 104th Congress. Eighteen months, Mr. President. It was a pretty good strategy by our opponents. They knew that by waiting so long to schedule debate on campaign reform that it would be highly unlikely that there would be enough time in the legislative session for a proposal to work its way through the legislative process and become law.

In the House, the strategy was even simpler. They just refused to allow the bipartisan reform bill modeled after the McCain-Feingold bill to come up for a vote. By only allowing votes on a Democratic reform bill and a Republican reform bill, the House leadership guaranteed that no reform bill would leave the House alive.

So rather than throwing any kind of knockout punch, the Congress has chosen to bob and weave around the issue of campaign finance reform. This cannot be allowed to happen in the 105th Congress, and that is why the Senator from Arizona and I are joining today to call on our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to agree to debate campaign finance reform here on the Senate floor during the first 100 days of the 105th Congress. It does not matter if Republicans retain control of this body or if Democrats can reclaim the majority—campaign reform must be the subject of floor debate in the first 100 days of 1997, regardless of the outcome of the elections.

Mr. President, the campaign finance reform landscape has experienced a significant shift in recent years. When I arrived here in 1993 and in the years before that, there was certainly a significant block of Senators that believed that money had little role in the outcome of elections. They believed that the embodiment of true political reform was to have unlimited campaign spending coupled with even less regulation of the entire campaign finance system.

Some still cling to that viewpoint, Mr. President, but not many. I'd like to point to a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives just about 2 months ago. On July 25, the House voted on legislation backed by Speaker GINGRICH that had as its foundation the Speaker's view that our campaign system is not overfunded as most of us believe, but is in fact underfunded. That legislation, known as the Thomas bill, would have opened up the campaign finance system and permitted unlimited campaign spending to continue without providing any assistance to challengers and not a single reform of the soft money process.

What happened to that bill, Mr. President? Quite simply, it was obliterated on the House floor by a vote of 259 to 162. Nearly 70 Republican House Members, nearly 70 of them Mr. President, rebelled against the Speaker and voted against his bill.

We have seen some amazing things happen in the other body over the course of the last 2 years. We have seen some eye-opening votes over there. But I cannot think of another single vote

where so many Republican House Members defied Speaker GINGRICH and voted against a bill that he was so prominently a part of.

Mr. President, considering that the Speaker's point of view was so universally condemned on the floor of the House, and considering that the McCain-Feingold bill received a majority of votes in this body, I not only think that bipartisan campaign finance reform is a strong possibility, I think that it is a strong probability. Republicans want it, Democrats want it, incumbents want it, challengers need it, and most importantly, the American people are demanding it.

I would hope that our other colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, will join the senior Senator from Arizona and I in insisting that the 105th Congress address the issue of campaign finance reform in the first 100 days of the next congressional session. I want to once again thank my colleague and friend from Arizona for his perseverance on this issue.

NATIONAL STUDENT/PARENT MOCK ELECTION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to highlight a program that brings a greater comprehension and appreciation of the democratic process to millions of American students from kindergarten through high school: the National Student/Parent Mock Election.

The benefits of this fine program cannot be underestimated. Students who have participated in the National Student/Parent Mock Election report that it had a profound effect on them and made them aware of the rights and the responsibilities inherent in their U.S. citizenship. By stressing the importance of voter participation early on, these students gain a greater understanding of the democratic process, particularly the fact that democracy does not happen by itself. It succeeds only if citizens are informed and participate.

Many of the "State Election Headquarters" which collect the votes from the schools will host spirited mock "conventions" complete with student "delegates" and "anchors" reporting the outcomes of the Presidential and Congressional elections. Taking part in these events gives students a sense of political ownership. Students also see first hand the work and effort that go into a political campaign.

State participation in the National Student/Parent Mock Election is crucial. For example, in my own state of Utah, Governor Michael Leavitt has proclaimed October 30 as "Mock Election Day." More than 46,000 Utah students have registered to vote, doubling voter turnouts from the last election.

The California Mock Election will employ a formal voter registration procedure so that students can better understand the voting process. Besides voting for the President and 52 Members of the House of Representatives,

California students will vote on 3 statewide propositions dealing with clean water, racial discrimination, and the minimum wage.

In Kansas, a local public broadcasting station plans to air a live town hall meeting. Candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate will answer questions put to them by schoolchildren.

Those who are interested in participating in the Mock Election can call the Mock Election's toll-free number (800-230-3349) and may visit the Mock Election's new Internet Website at <http://allpolitics.com>.

Mr. President, it only makes sense that habits learned young set the course for adult behavior. Through the Student/Parent Mock Election, young people are hopefully beginning a commitment to responsible citizen involvement that they will continue as adults. I commend those individuals who have worked so hard to make the National Student/Parent Mock Election a nationwide success.

1996 NATIONAL STUDENT/PARENT MOCK ELECTION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, every Member of Congress understands the importance of elections. We know that the votes cast on November 5 will determine the future leadership and direction of communities across the country, and of the Nation as a whole. We know that informed voters are the essence of our democracy.

As citizens across the country focus on this year's elections and its outcomes, the National Student/Parent Mock Election is helping young students learn about the importance of the election process. The Mock Election offers parents and teachers across the country an opportunity to help students learn about democracy, make decisions about key issues, and understand the meaning of the civic responsibility on which democracy survives and thrives.

On October 30, 1996, millions of students and parents across the country will cast their votes for President, Vice President, Senators, Representatives, Governors, and local officials as part of the National Student/Parent Mock Election. In 1992, over 5 million Mock Election participants cast votes in all 50 States and Washington, DC. Every State called in their votes on who would win the elections and recommendations on key national issues to the National Mock Election Headquarters, as over 20 million viewers watched on television.

The 1996 National Student/Parent Mock Election is sponsored by Time Magazine, CNN, Time Warner, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, Xerox Corp., American Happenings, and Electronic Data Systems, and is also supported by an \$80,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The National Student/Parent Mock Election is an on-going project. In the fiscal year 1997 Omnibus Appropriations Act, passed by the Senate on Monday, September 30, and signed by

President Clinton, the project will receive \$125,000 from the U.S. Department of Education to continue to educate students on key issues and the principles of democracy throughout the school year that begins in September, 1997.

This year, the Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications [MCET] serves as the Massachusetts Mock Election coordinator. MCET plans to make the Massachusetts Mock Election one of the most important mock elections in the Nation. Through the use of new technologies, MCET will reach a wider audience than ever before and will provide interactive programming so that students can actually debate the issues that are important to them—not just read about them.

A live, interactive broadcast series of these programs will be delivered to all Massachusetts schools via satellite well before the election. The first program will engage students, parents, and teachers in discussions of election-related issues important to students—education and employment. The second program will offer students the opportunity to talk to local politicians and others working in politics about what it takes to be a leader. The third program will be the Mock Election Day coverage on October 30. Massachusetts students will cohost all three programs with Katy Abel of Boston's Channel 7 News.

The lessons that students and their parents learn as participants in the Mock Elections will benefit American politics for years to come. If the next generation of Americans is well prepared for the challenges of democracy, our liberties will be in good hands.

SENATE ACTION ON CONFIRMING FEDERAL JUDGES

Mr. BIDEN. I'm glad that I have been able to work closely with my Republican colleagues in a spirit of cooperation on a number of important issues that have come before the Senate this year.

I must say, however, I am disappointed this bipartisan spirit has not allowed us to confirm seven judicial nominations remaining on the calendar—all well-qualified people who have had hearings and were reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee.

I think that we should stop, right now, and talk about what's going on here.

No one understands better than I the heat that can be generated over judges in an election year. But let me set the Record straight—absolutely straight: The Senate, under Democratic leadership, faithfully confirmed Republican Judges in Presidential election years.

All year, Republicans have been offering assurances that the Senate would continue this bipartisan approach and put judges through.

But today, it has become crystal clear that the bipartisan spirit of the

past has been broken. And let's tell it like it is: My Republican colleagues have decided to grind confirmations to a halt as we head toward the coming Presidential election.

Currently, there are 63 vacancies on the Federal bench.

This year, the Judiciary Committee has held only 5 nominations hearings, and reported out only 23 nominees to fill these vacancies. We should have done more.

The Judicial Nominees who were fortunate enough to pass through the committee this session have been further held up here on the floor.

Not one judge was confirmed before July 10 this year and none have been confirmed since August 2.

As a result, the Senate has confirmed only 17 district judges and no circuit judges this session. Seven nominees are currently pending on the floor—three for the district courts and four for the circuit courts.

Some have suggested that shutting down the confirmation process is par for the course in an election year. They are wrong. And let me set the record straight.

George Bush made nearly one-third of his 253 judicial nominations in 1992, a Presidential election year. As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I held 15 nominations hearings that year, including 3 in July, 2 in August, and 1 in September.

In 1992—the last Presidential election year—the Senate continued to confirm judges through the waning days of the 102d Congress. We even confirmed seven judges on October 8—the last day of the second session.

As a result, the Senate confirmed all 66 nominees the Judiciary Committee reported out that year—55 for the District courts and 11 for the circuit courts. Let me repeat: This session, only 17 district judges have been confirmed and no circuit judges have been confirmed.

And let me say: 1992 was not an off year. To the contrary: It represented the Senate's practices over the last decade:

In 1988—an election year—we confirmed 42 district and circuit court nominees, including 12 judges confirmed in October that year.

In 1984—an election year—we confirmed 43 nominees, including 13 judges in October.

And in 1980—an election year—we confirmed 64 nominees, including 10 judges on September 29.

Overall, during the past 16 years, since 1980, the Senate has confirmed an average of 51 nominees each year.

Overall, during the last 4 election years, the Senate has done even better, confirming an average of 54 nominees each year.

Let me repeat: our track record this session: The Senate has only confirmed 17 judges.

The Senate has been dragging its feet despite the undeniable fact that these judges are badly needed. The Federal