

profession and I have always been proud to serve.

However, with the explosion of fund raising and the erosion of our laws, many citizens believe that the credibility of our electoral process has been impugned by the view that special interests have special access and therefore have undue influence.

We must reform our system to restore faith in our democracy.

We all are witnesses to the perception that money has a growing influence. Political parties and candidates are engaged in an endless pursuit of campaign funds made up of both hard and soft money. Not a day passes without a full schedule of events, receptions, coffees, meetings, dinners, lunches, discussions, and, forums—many ultimately intended to establish the climate to eventually raise money.

Soft money, campaign contributions not directly used in behalf of federal candidates and not required to be reported has become the crack cocaine of politics and parties and candidates are addicted.

As the ranking member of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee I have spent all year looking into campaign fund raising. It is clear to me that many contributors believe that they get what they are seeking. They pay for access in the legislative and executive branches, and they get it.

We have been examples of contributors who want to appear to have influence by being seen with important officials and to have their pictures taken as a way to impress others. We have also seen contributors who have a special interest or particular project that they want considered. Through their contributions they obtain access.

Many contributors do have interests that can be affected by government decisions. No one can underestimate the impact on the American people when headline after headline links governmental action and campaign contributions. The \$50 billion tax benefit for tobacco companies in this year's tax bill, inserted in secret and with no debate, only serves to make many citizens believe that the integrity of our electoral process has been compromised by special interests.

NEEDED REFORM

Eventually, Mr. President, I believe that the answer to our concern is to eliminate the role of private money in campaigns. We should allow campaigns to be fairly and equally underwritten by all Americans through a some form of publicly supported financing.

That is why I joined with my colleagues Senator Kerry of Massachusetts and Senator Wellstone of Minnesota in cosponsoring a bill, the Clean Money Clean Campaign Act, based upon the Maine plan to limit campaign spending, prohibit special interest contributions, eliminate fund raising efforts, provide equal funding and a level playing field for all candidates and end the loopholes that have wrecked our current system. Through a publicly funded system we can end the current abuse and establish a system that takes us back to our major responsibility, representing the interests of "all the people, all the time".

I recognize that the time has probably not yet come to move to federal financing, but I believe that the more the American people focus on the current system and its exploding abuses, the more likely it will be that the support will grow for such a change.

MCCAIN-FEINGOLD

The bill before us originally contained spending limits for Congressional candidates. In an effort to reach out for a consensus on this issue, those provisions have been eliminated. Nevertheless, we now consider a bill which I believe addresses many important concerns.

We must address the question of soft money contributions. We must find a way to require the disclosure of funds used for express advocacy and issue advocacy.

I believe we have to take a hard look at the FEC. We must have enforcement of election law—present or future—or we encourage scofflaw parties and candidates. The FEC cannot do an adequate job. Currently the FEC has 30 enforcement attorneys. Mr. President, that is fewer than the number of lawyers currently working on the Governmental Affairs investigation. The FEC has two—count them—two full time investigators. In order to insure better enforcement we must consider that the \$28 million FEC budget should be increased and if expected to do an adequate job it should be nearly doubled. Furthermore, while the FEC is being expanded I believe that investigative assistance should be provided by at least a small group of FBI agents.

SUMMARY OF FEC BUDGET WOES

Fiscal 1995: Had over 10% of budget rescinded half way through the fiscal year, the largest percentage agency rescission of any government agency

Fiscal 1996: Sought \$32 million but received only \$26 million with some funds "fenced" for particular purposes.

Fiscal 1997: Had travel budget limited and fenced such that it was difficult to conduct depositions and court appearances including those undertaken in connection with the Christian Coalition litigation

Fiscal 1998: Asked both the House and Senate for \$29 million plus an additional \$4.9 million just to deal with cases arising from the 1996 federal election. Actual budget is still in conference but have been told specifically not to hire more staff. Summary of FEC Provisions in Clean Money Clean Campaign Bill

Adds "independent" Commissioner selected by independent commission to the FEC

Limits Commissioners to one six year term
Prohibits contributions from individuals not qualified to vote (juveniles, felons and foreign nationals)

Permits the Commission to conduct random audits of PACs, candidate and party committees

Grants the Commission the authority to seek an injunction to halt illegal act PRIOR to the election

Lowers the threshold for opening an investigation from reason to believe a violation has occurred to reason to open an investigation

Mandatory requirement to file disclosure reports either electronically or by fax.

Through this debate I hope that we can work together and make needed improvements to our system of campaign finance. We must clean up campaigns and restore faith in our government.

Ms. COLLINS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the distinguished Senator from Maine.

HEALTH CONCERN CAUSED BY INCREASING AMOUNT OF IMPORTED FOOD AND VEGETABLES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, Americans have long been urged by our doctors, our teachers, and our parents to eat at least five servings every day of fruits and vegetables. When we follow this good advice, we assume that the fruits and vegetables that we are consuming are wholesome. Recent reports, however, have raised questions about

the safety of imported food products. Our markets are increasingly filled with imported food that may not meet U.S. food safety standards. Thus, American consumers seeking a healthy diet face the unappetizing risk of unknowingly subjecting themselves to tainted imported food.

As the chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, I am conducting an investigation into the safety of food imports. I have asked the General Accounting Office to examine whether or not the Federal Government adequately protects the American people from tainted imported food. We need to know how imports are currently being inspected, what resources are being devoted to food safety and whether the highest risks are being given the highest priority in the inspection process. We should make certain, Mr. President, that our food safety programs are effectively and efficiently managed to safeguard the public's health.

Recent news reports have shown several instances where tainted imported food has caused serious illnesses. Food safety programs and food safety problems are not limited to beef and poultry, and it is not just food coming from domestic facilities that can cause health problems.

Imported fruits and vegetables in increasing numbers are causing serious illnesses. In March, over 260 children and teachers from Michigan developed hepatitis after eating frozen strawberries that were imported from Mexico. Those berries were illegally provided to the School Lunch Program, which requires food used to be produced in the United States. Instead, the tainted Mexican berries had been shipped to over 1,500 locations across the country, including my home State of Maine. In another example, over 2,000 people were infected with cyclospora in the last 2 years from eating tainted raspberries from Guatemala, making it the largest outbreak of food-borne disease in recent years.

Mr. President, I believe Congress must thoroughly examine the safety of imported food products. Currently, the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service have shared responsibility for the regulation and inspection of imported food. Agriculture officials are responsible primarily for meat and poultry, while the Food and Drug Administration regulates and inspects other food products. Standards in enforcement are thus different, depending on the type of food. In addition, the significant increase in food imports has resulted in a system where consumers cannot be assured of the safety of the food they eat. A New York Times article on September 29 of this year, just this past week, indicates that food imports have doubled since the 1980s, straining the limits of our current inspection system.

Later this week, President Clinton is expected to announce several initiatives to increase and improve Federal

attention to food safety. I welcome the President's increased interest in the safety of imported food products, and when his proposal is transmitted to the Congress, I will closely examine it to determine if it is, in fact, an effective and adequate response to this problem.

As chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, I want to make sure that our current programs are being effectively managed and that both existing and new resources are efficiently administered to promote safe food, especially imported food.

Mr. President, the safety of food product imports is literally a life-and-death issue for many Americans, especially our elderly and our children. Food safety deserves close attention of the administration and the Congress, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the months ahead as my subcommittee continues its investigation and conducts hearings on this important matter.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, September 30, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,413,146,011,397.34. (Five trillion, four hundred thirteen billion, one hundred forty-six million, eleven thousand, three hundred ninety-seven dollars and thirty-four cents)

One year ago, September 30, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,224,811,000,000. (Five trillion, two hundred twenty-four billion, eight hundred eleven million)

Five years ago, September 30, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$4,064,621,000,000. (Four trillion, sixty-four billion, six hundred twenty-one million)

Ten years ago, September 30, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,350,277,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred fifty billion, two hundred seventy-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$3 trillion—\$3,062,869,011,397.34. (Three trillion sixty-two billion, eight hundred sixty-nine million, eleven thousand, three hundred ninety-seven dollars and thirty-four cents) during the past 10 years.

U.S. FOREIGN OIL CONSUMPTION FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 26TH

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute reports that for the week ending September 26, the U.S. imported 8,262,000 barrels of oil each day, 1,726,000 barrels more than the 6,536,000 imported each day during the same week a year ago.

Americans relied on foreign oil for 56.5 percent of their needs last week, and there are no signs that the upward spiral will abate. Before the Persian Gulf war, the United States obtained approximately 45 percent of its oil supply from foreign countries. During the Arab oil embargo in the 1970's, foreign oil accounted for only 35 percent of America's oil supply.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil? By U.S. producers using American workers?

Politicians had better ponder the economic calamity sure to occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply—or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 8,262,000 barrels a day.

BAILEY HOWELL

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the State of Mississippi is very proud of the induction of Bailey Howell into the Basketball Hall of Fame.

His college career at Mississippi State University still stands as the most impressive in the school's history.

He was second only to Wilt Chamberlain in the 1959 NBA draft, and he became one of the best professional players ever.

Today, he is living in Starkville, MS, where he spends much of his time engaged in church-related activities. He is a wonderful role model for today's star athletes.

I ask unanimous consent that two articles from the Clarion-Ledger describing his great career be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Clarion-Ledger, Sept. 29, 1997]

HOWELL TO ENTER HALL OF FAME

(By Mike Knobler)

Mary Lou Howell will never forget what she said to the 6-foot-7 stranger in 1958 at a Baton Rouge church.

"I asked the dumbest question of all, 'Do you play basketball?'" Howell recalls. "I know he thought, 'Oh, this girl is really dumb.'"

"When I told my father, he said 'He won't be interested in you. He's really big-time.'"

Dad, it turns out, was only half right about Bailey Howell, who has been married to Mary Lou for 38 years and tonight becomes the first Mississippi man inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame.

Bailey Howell's brilliant career, at Mississippi State University and with four NBA teams, included enough honors and statistical superlatives to fill most of this news-paper.

Thirty-eight years after his final MSU season, Howell still holds numerous school records, including highest career scoring average, most points in a game and most rebounds in a game, season or career.

No wonder he was the second player picked in the 1959 NBA draft, behind only Wilt Chamberlain.

But talk to Howell and the people who know him and you hear less about the numbers and more about the man behind them, a man dedicated to his family, to his God and to never-ending competition.

Former Boston Celtics teammate Satch Sanders tells of Howell's approach to pregame layup drills. Most players jogged through them casually; Howell sprinted fullspeed.

"You had to get out of the way," Sanders says. "We'd say, 'Bailey, save something for the game.' His philosophy was: If you ever take it easy going to the basket, there's a strong possibility you'd do that in a game."

Son-in-law Scott Stricklin tells of a two-on-two game he played during his first vacation with the Howell family. It was Stricklin and Howell against the two other sons-in-law.

"The other guys wound up with bruises and knots on their heads," Stricklin says. "He was almost 60 and playing with guys in their 20s, but he was so competitive it was like an NBA championship game."

Howell competes even when he's mowing his lawn. He times himself, always pushing to work faster and more efficiently. "I'm one-third through," he'll shout.

That kind of relentless intensity helped make him a dominating center in college and a six-time all-star forward in the NBA.

Howell won NBA championships with the Celtics in 1968 and 1969 after winning State's first Southeastern Conference championship in 1958. One of Howell's few regrets is that that 24-1 team in 1958 wasn't allowed to try for an NCAA championship. The Bulldogs were chosen for the NCAA Tournament, but Mississippi government leaders barred State from participating because it would have played against racially integrated teams.

Decades later, coach Richard Williams paid his respect to Howell by including him in the official traveling party for State's 1995 trip to the NCAA regionals and its 1996 trip to the Final Four.

VERY SPECIAL HONOR

Delta State University coach Margaret Wade and player Lusia Harris are the only Mississippians in the Basketball Hall of Fame. Howell joins them tonight. He'll be escorted by friend, teammate and Hall of Famer John Havlicek.

"It's just a very special honor and a thrill," Howell says. "To be recognized alongside those individuals that are in there, it's just really, I really struggle with words to express just how special it is."

Bailey and Mary Lou Howell will be accompanied at tonight's induction ceremony in Springfield, Mass., by their three daughters. One of those daughters, Beth Hansen of Jackson, named one of her sons after her dad. Bailey Hansen will be there tonight, too.

Children and family have always been important to Bailey Howell. One time, it carried over onto the basketball court.

As most parents do, Bailey and Mary Lou used to spell out things around the house that they didn't want their young daughters to understand. One night as an opponent lined up for a free throw, Bailey turned to a teammate and said, "If you get this rebound, hit me. I'll be going b-a-c-k-d-double o-r."

During the season, the Howells used to live wherever Bailey played—first Detroit, then Baltimore, then Boston and finally Philadelphia. In the offseason, though, they always returned to Starkville, where Bailey and Mary Lou still live.

When Bailey Howell retired in 1971, he thought about going into coaching.

"At 35, at the age where moving my children was really bothering them, I decided that wasn't something I could do," he says.

But he stayed involved in basketball by working for shoemaker Converse for almost 23 years. And for six of the last seven years, he has served as a role model at the NBA's mandatory rookie orientation camp run by his former teammate Sanders, an NBA vice president.

"He'd talk about staying grounded, thinking in terms of family, religion," Sanders says. "Just homespun good sense. Bailey has always been a highly respected player, but more than that he has always been very grounded. The Hall of Fame as far as I'm concerned will be a better place with Bailey in it."