

now could be phased in over a period of time and would have minimal impact. But if we wait and follow Mr. Deets' advice, keep our head in the sand and pretend that there is no problem, it is going to come as a great shock and a great surprise to the 33 million people who rely on their AARP mailings when they find out that their own organization has led them down a blind ally, their own organization has sold them out, sold out to a political process that goes against the very best interests of their members.

Mr. President, I am disappointed by the action of the President. I am disappointed but not surprised. As a recent Washington Post editorial stated, you believe this White House "at your peril." With the AARP driving the politics and the decisions of the President and his party, I am sure we can anticipate even more fear mongering on entitlement reform. But ultimately we are going to have to find solutions to these problems. I fear that this difficult process will be made even more complicated by an unprincipled and a timid administration and a deceitful and self-serving American Association of Retired Persons.

Mr. President, with that I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

(The remarks of Mr. CHAFEE pertaining to the introduction of S. 445 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, there are several matters I would like to bring up, if I could. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business so as not to interrupt the flow of the debate on the pending matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WENDELL FORD

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay a special tribute to one of the U.S. Senate's most revered and remarkable Members. I speak of our senior Senator and our friend from Kentucky, WENDELL FORD.

Mr. President, I should note on a personal level I was a law student in Kentucky when WENDELL FORD was Governor of the State of Kentucky, and I developed a fondness and affection for him from afar as a student in that State at the University of Louisville many years ago. I had an opportunity to watch this man preside over State government in the State of Kentucky. He did a remarkable job. In those days I never thought, as I was sitting there as a student, that one day I would be serving in the U.S. Senate with him and calling him my colleague and my friend. It is with bittersweet emotions and sensations here that I rise to recognize, as others already have, that

WENDELL FORD, as we all know, has announced he will not seek reelection in 1998 and will be retiring from the U.S. Senate.

I say bittersweet because on the one hand I am confident that our friend WENDELL FORD and his lovely wife Jean will enjoy some years of retirement, away from the hectic life of public service. So I am glad for him and glad for his wife and for his family. Obviously, on another level, I think all of us would agree, regardless of political persuasion or ideology, that we have come to develop a deep and sincere affection for WENDELL FORD. He will be truly missed in this body.

Just this past Monday, as of course we all know, Senator FORD announced his intention to retire from the U.S. Senate at the end of this term, concluding what I think has been one of the most remarkable and distinguished careers in the history of Kentucky. WENDELL FORD served his fellow Kentuckians for the past 30 years, first in the State senate of that State, then in the Governors Mansion, as I have already mentioned, and finally here in the U.S. Senate, where he has been a Member for the past 22 years. By the time he completes his term in 1999, WENDELL FORD will be the longest serving U.S. Senator in the history of the State of Kentucky.

Throughout my tenure as U.S. Senator, it has been my great honor to serve alongside this remarkable man. He has brought integrity and honesty and a wonderful sense of humor to a body that is far too often devoid of such characteristics. Although narrow and snappy sound bites and polished television appearances seem to garner the most attention in Washington, WENDELL FORD stands in sharp contrast. As long as I have known him, WENDELL FORD never saw a television camera he didn't want to simply walk past. As always, he is more interested in working behind the scenes, crafting legislation, seeking coalitions, seeking compromises. This is the essence of making the Senate function as a body that requires that we get along and work together to seek solutions that Americans look for.

Certainly WENDELL FORD is capable of being outspoken and passionate and as resolute as any Member of this body, but he has also understood there is a time for politics and a time for legislating and the two shall rarely intertwine, in his view. Throughout his career, he remained true to the people and places of his beloved Kentucky. Few Senators fought harder for their States than WENDELL has. As a Member of the subcommittee on aviation issues, he helped bring two international airports to Louisville and northern Kentucky. During the debate in the last Congress on the telecommunications bill, Senator FORD sought to ensure that the interests of rural communities all across America, such as those in his home State, would receive the attention that they deserve. On a

national level as well, he has been a leader in aviation, energy, campaign finance issues, and his efforts have been instrumental in expanding airport improvement programs and other critical civil and Federal aviation issues.

As chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing, Senator FORD has helped cut millions of dollars in Government printing costs. What is more, he has spearheaded greater use of recycled paper by the Federal Government. These issues don't always get as much attention as they should, but certainly, as all of us appreciate as we try to reduce the cost of Federal Government to make it more efficient, things like bringing down the costs of printing, which is voluminous at Federal Government level, and to also see that recycled paper is used, are no small efforts indeed.

I know the major issue for many Americans, of course, was WENDELL FORD's effort to spearhead motor voter registration, which has made it possible for millions of Americans to become enfranchised. He certainly will be remembered for years to come for those efforts as well.

I know that bill had a special significance for WENDELL FORD because it gave him a chance to appear on MTV's Rock The Vote. WENDELL FORD is certainly an MTV kind of Senator. As most of us would appreciate, I say that with a sense of humor, to all who know and love him.

Most of all, I think WENDELL FORD has brought a sense of quiet dignity and forthrightness to this Chamber. Always, he kept his word, never betrayed a confidence, and I doubt there is a Member of this Chamber who will not miss his presence.

It is worth noting, the other day an editorial in the Lexington Herald-Leader, I think, summed up the feelings all of us would have with the announcement that WENDELL FORD will not be with us at the end of this Congress. Let me quote that editorial. It said:

We have known people who have disagreed with Wendell Ford. We have seen people get mad at Wendell Ford. We have even heard of people who wish Wendell Ford would finally lose an election. We have never heard of anyone, however, who doesn't like the senior Senator from Kentucky.

Certainly if that is true in the State of Kentucky, it is true in the U.S. Senate as well. We will miss him and we wish him and his wife, Jean, the very best in the years to come.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, in his recent announcement that our friend from Kentucky, WENDELL FORD, will retire at the end of the term, he said something very instructive and most of us may recall it. It was only a few days ago. Those who love and know the Senator knows he never fails to be instructive in his uniquely witty way. The Senator from Kentucky said one major

reason he was not running again was because he did not want to spend the next 2 years raising \$100,000 a week. Those were his words, \$100,000 a week to raise the necessary dollars to run for reelection in Kentucky.

With that statement, Mr. President, the Senator from Kentucky captured, I think, with crystal clarity, the essence of this debate over campaign finance reform. I think most of us would agree there is just too much money in our political system, and it takes far too much money for the average American to be a part of the political system. So I rise this afternoon to speak about campaign finance reform and what I believe we must do to fix our campaign finance system.

As my colleagues know, I just completed a 2-year term as the general chairman of the Democratic National Committee. I did not ask for that job, but, nonetheless, I am very proud to have been asked to serve in that capacity, an honor bestowed on two other Members in recent years. The former majority leader, Bob Dole, served as general chairman of the Republican National Committee, and Paul Laxalt served as general chairman of the Republican National Committee.

My tenure as general chairman brings a unique perspective to campaign finance reform. I wish to speak briefly about the Hollings campaign finance reform constitutional amendment and the McCain-Feingold finance reform bill that is pending before this body.

I will also, as I said earlier, speak about the role of the Federal Election Commission in our campaign finance system and will introduce a bill shortly that I think will strengthen the FEC and enable it to do the job with which it has been charged by the U.S. Congress.

Mr. President, we have been speaking over the last few days about amending the Constitution, and, like most of my colleagues, I am extraordinarily wary of constitutional amendments. I believe, as I think most do, that our Constitution is a sacred organic document that has guided our lawmakers and this Nation and protected our rights successfully, by and large, for the past 200 years.

The citizens of this Nation have found it necessary to amend the Constitution only 27 times in over 200 years, 17 times since the Bill of Rights was written, and they have been wise, I think, in that restraint. But more than 20 years ago, the Supreme Court ruled in what I believe to be a flawed decision by that Court, the *Buckley versus Valeo* decision, that very simply, money equals political speech.

I have never quite seen the logic in that decision. I believe that the poor woman next door who can only make a very small or no contribution at all has just as much right to be heard as someone who can make a sizable contribution, and, yet, obviously the voices have different weight. So I do not be-

lieve we ought to necessarily assume because people can or cannot make a contribution that their voices are going to be heard with the same volume and intensity.

I am not alone in this assessment that the *Buckley* decision is flawed. Fifty prominent constitutional scholars led by Ronald Dworkin, and 24 attorneys general, believe the *Buckley* decision was simply wrong.

So, while money floods endlessly in our election system, the voice of the average American too often is drowned out. My fear is democracy will be the victim. I repeat, I am extremely wary of amending the Constitution, much less the first amendment, but I have come to the conclusion that there is simply too much money in the system and that our campaign finance troubles are so great that I think an amendment is warranted in this case. Therefore, I am lending my name as a cosponsor and will be supporting the constitutional amendment when it comes for a vote before this body.

But I think we must also be realistic. The fact is that this amendment is going to fail. There are not enough votes to carry it. I know that, and I think the Senator from South Carolina does as well. The process of passing this amendment would be a long and arduous one, if it is ever passed, and I understand that as well.

We simply cannot, however, let our democracy languish, in my view, in the current campaign finance system any longer, much less until we are able to pass a constitutional amendment, which makes clear everyone has a right to be heard regardless of how much money they have, how deep their pockets are. That is why I am a strong supporter of the McCain-Feingold legislation that has been the subject of much discussion over the past several months.

One of the McCain-Feingold's great advantages is that it is written with the Supreme Court's *Buckley versus Valeo* decision, in mind. Trying to avoid the assertions that have been made by many, and I believe with good reason, they are concerned whether or not this bill would actually pass constitutional muster. But I think Senator MCCAIN and Senator FEINGOLD have gone out of their way to try and craft this bill in such a way as to answer those concerns that have been raised by legitimate scholars of the Constitution and legitimate scholars of the *Buckley versus Valeo* decision.

The bill acknowledges, as I am sure the Presiding Officer knows, the constitutional constraints laid out in *Buckley*, and it tries to fashion a workable solution to most of our campaign finance problems, including the soft money issue, within those constraints.

Since the opening gavel of the 105th Congress, the Senate and the House, and much of Washington—of course the media—have spent countless hours discussing the fundraising practices that have been raised during the 1996 elec-

tions. Finally, a couple of days ago, the Senate finalized the budget and scope of the investigation into most of these alleged improprieties.

It will be an investigation that will examine aspects of both Presidential and congressional elections, performed with a reasonable amount of money, in my view, and within a reasonable amount of time.

Mr. President, you may recall, and others may recall, that I abstained during those votes. I did so not because I did not support the investigation. On the contrary, I do support the investigation. I think it is necessary. Rather, as I explained before the Rules Committee last week, I did abstain in order to avoid any question about the motives that I might have in casting votes on various matters that could have come up.

As it turned out, we had only a couple of votes, and they were carried unanimously in this Chamber. I could not have anticipated that, given the division during the consideration of the resolution in the Rules Committee and prior to the consideration of it when it came to the floor of the Senate. I did not want my motives to be impugned or second-guessed and decided, having served as the general chairman of the Democratic National Committee, I would abstain on the votes affecting that investigation and that committee's work.

I am glad, as I said earlier, that an agreement has been reached unanimously, and I hope it will get us to the bottom of all of the alleged misdeeds that have been raised by everyone in this process, Republicans, Democrats, and others.

That said, I think it is clear that while Americans want us to find out what happened in 1996, it is just as clear that they are also asking us to fix a system that led to the alleged problems that occurred in 1996. Indeed, Americans have been urging us for quite some time to fix our campaign finance system, and I do not think we need to wait much longer or go through lengthy hearings to analyze the various proposals and ideas that have been suggested.

We need not wait for an investigation. We do not have to wait for the conclusion of a debate on a constitutional amendment. The McCain-Feingold legislation, I think, is the way we can do that, and I believe we should do it now. Indeed, the questions raised during the last election about campaign finance spending serve, I think, to highlight the critical importance of the need for immediate legislative action.

Over the past 10 years, Mr. President, this Congress has spent a great deal of time looking at our campaign finance laws. Let me share with you a litany of how much we have accumulated in terms of testimony and ideas that have come forward.

The Congress has produced in 10 years 6,742 pages of congressional hearings on campaign finance reform.

There have been 3,361 speeches that have been given on the floor of this body on campaign finance reform. There has been over 1,000 pages of committee reports on campaign finance reform. There have been 113 votes in the U.S. Senate on campaign finance reform. We have heard from 522 witnesses before the U.S. Senate on campaign finance reform. And we have had one bipartisan commission established to examine campaign finance reform and make suggestions. And yet, at the conclusion of all of that, Mr. President, we are no better off today than we were 10 years ago on this issue.

So while I am certain there will be additional hearings this year, I would urge those who may be interested in examining various ideas—I am quite confident the bulk of the speech and documents and hearings and testimony already accumulated, the amount of evidence, I think, would provide us with the basis for crafting legislation and answering the questions that have been raised.

Survey after survey of Americans in this country indicates that people believe our campaign system is in desperate need of reform. What is worse, the same surveys indicate that the American people's lack of faith in the campaign system is translating itself—this may be the most serious problem aside from the issue of campaign contributions and donations—the most serious problem may not be that, as bad as that is, but the lack of faith, the declining level of faith that the American people have in our democratic institutions. For that is at the very heart of what is at stake here.

Some of our colleagues who oppose reform have said we need more, not less, money in politics. Well, Mr. President, we have gotten more. There is no question about it—a fourfold increase in campaign finance donations in just the past 8 years, from \$220 million raised by both parties in 1988, to \$881 million raised in 1996, a 73-percent increase over 4 years ago—a 73-percent increase in political costs since 1992. While wages rose 13 percent and education costs rose 17 percent during that same period of time, the cost and expenditures of campaigns rose 73 percent.

And what has all that money done? How has it paid off? One might assume, well, if we spent more money and more people are involved today, more people are participating, maybe it is worth it. That assumption is clearly wrong.

Last November, Mr. President, only 49 percent of the eligible population in the United States of America bothered to vote in a Presidential election. That is the lowest turnout since the 1920's, more than 70 years ago. So while the dollar volume has increased, the amount of ads have risen, and proliferation about people's points of view have certainly grown tremendously, we are watching an inverse reaction and fewer and fewer people seem to be participating in the process.

While there is a great deal of attention, obviously, in the media and here on Capitol Hill on the Democratic Party's efforts to raise campaign funds, I think it is important that we try to put this issue in perspective.

First of all, let me say at the outset, Mr. President, I think that my party, the Democratic Party, made a huge error in 1993 when President Clinton was inaugurated into office. The Democrats were in the majority in the U.S. Senate. We were in the majority in the House of Representatives. We should have passed, in my view, campaign finance reform, and we did not. I think those who wish to take us to task on that issue are right in doing so. We made a mistake. And we missed an opportunity.

Having said that, Mr. President, the mistake should not be compounded, in my view, by letting the succeeding Congresses go on without trying to come to terms with this issue. And if nothing else comes out of the great attention to what happened in 1996, then maybe, just maybe, that as a result of the attention being paid to what happened, we might finally get an opportunity here to come together and pass some meaningful campaign finance reform.

But, Mr. President, I cannot resist in pointing out as well that when it comes to the question of dollars raised in these efforts, of course, in the last cycle our friends on the Republican side raised \$549 million compared to the \$332 million raised by the Democratic Party.

Second, of course, Democrats have long supported reform. Many Republicans do as well. In fact, the lead cosponsor of the bill that I mentioned earlier, the McCain-Feingold, is a Republican. For those who may not be familiar with our colleague from Arizona, JOHN MCCAIN is a Republican, and RUSS FEINGOLD is a Democrat from Wisconsin. And yet despite that, in the previous Congress we had 46 out of 47 Democrats support JOHN MCCAIN's bill along with RUSS FEINGOLD. But it failed to muster the necessary votes to break a filibuster.

We had a majority of people here that were willing to at least bring the McCain-Feingold bill to the floor, but you need, of course, a supermajority to break a filibuster. We never could produce the supermajority even to bring the bill up so the people could offer their ideas and suggestions on how they might modify or amend the McCain-Feingold proposal.

Mr. President, I have been involved in these issues for some time, going back to 1979 when some of the first proposals were offered on limiting political action committees. I count about 6 proposals that have come up in the past 10 years or so, mostly in the mid-1980's, which I supported and was anxious to see come to a vote.

I am a cosponsor of the McCain-Feingold bill and was when it was first introduced in 1995.

Let me quickly say about the McCain-Feingold bill, Mr. President, this is hardly what I would call a perfect piece of legislation. I have never seen one of those anyway, and this certainly does not fall into that category either. And there are areas, clearly, where I think some changes may be necessary.

But, in my view, Mr. President, it represents the best place to begin. If our standard is going to be that we will not bring up legislation unless it is perfect, then we would never bring up any legislation. And so, McCain-Feingold, I think, ought to be the proper vehicle. It is the one that has garnered the most attention and support, and, as I said earlier, it does try to track very carefully the concerns that were raised by the Buckley versus Valeo decision.

It is clear, I think, if we were truly and effectively to clean up our campaigns, we must provide the appropriate agency, however, with the tools to do so.

Mr. President, we must give, in my view, the Federal Election Commission the power to promptly and effectively enforce the laws. It has been suggested that we do not need new laws; we just need to make the present ones work. There is some legitimacy in that. It is not entirely wrong.

We need also, I argue, to be able to enforce the laws that today prohibit certain activities. But I think one thing that was said over and over again last fall and this winter is, the very agency we created and charged with being the cop on the beat when it comes to campaign finance reform is basically a toothless tiger. We created an agency and then deprived it of the tools and the resources necessary to do the very policing that ought to be done to help try and avoid some of the problems that some have suggested have occurred, in this past campaign.

Over the past few years, the sheer number of cases, Mr. President, that the FEC has dealt with is growing, and the growing complexity of campaign laws and a series of counterproductive court cases are making it increasingly difficult for the Federal Election Commission to fulfill, in my view, its watchdog role in a timely and effective manner.

I sat through the testimony of the FEC before the Rules Committee a few weeks ago, Mr. President. I was shocked to learn, for instance, the tremendous backlog in the caseload at the Federal Election Commission and the sharp increase in the activity that the Federal Election Commission has been asked to oversee.

At the end of December, the FEC had a total caseload of 361 cases. Because of reductions in staff, only 112 of those cases are active, compared to 160 active cases in 1995.

And the case filed in October, I might point out, by the Democratic National Committee, in which the Democratic National Committee asked the FEC to investigate its campaign fundraising in

the 1996 elections—I might point out, even before the election had occurred—I discovered has not even begun yet. Here we are in the middle of March, and a request was made in October to look at allegations involving the Democratic National Committee has not even begun. That was prior to the election, and they have not even begun to look at the issues because they lack enough staff to do so.

Here is the body and the organization, the agency, as I said earlier, that is the cop on the beat, and they have not even begun to look at the questions that were raised last fall.

Add to that heavy 1996 workload of regular cases, Mr. President: In 1996, the FEC was asked to examine 33 percent more complaints than it did in 1994.

Congressional spending in 1996 general elections was \$626.4 million—just the congressional elections here—\$626.4 million. That was an increase of about 7 percent since 1994 levels, 2 years earlier. It was the FEC that had to oversee this spending.

And an unprecedented \$2.5 billion in financial activity was reported to the Commission in 1996.

In my view, Mr. President, a restructuring and strengthening of the Federal Election Commission is long overdue. That is why today, Mr. President, I will be introducing Federal Election Commission improvement legislation.

I have not written an aggressive or radical proposal to overhaul the FEC. Rather, this bill stands as a modest effort to give the FEC the resources and the authority it needs to properly enforce our campaign finance laws.

Because, Mr. President, I so strongly support the FEC improvement provisions in the McCain-Feingold bill, the proposed legislation I will offer shortly simply repeats them. I also add a few other provisions of my own.

I have heard numerous colleagues say over and over again, campaign finance reform is not the issue in 1997.

It is the illegalities of 1996 that many say must be the issue. Yet, at the same time as they make that assertion, we hear that they are against funding and providing the authority to the very agency that should be the first one to uncover and punish any wrongdoing.

If we are serious about enforcing the law, Mr. President, then the bill I introduce today deserves serious and, I hope, favorable consideration by my colleagues. The Federal Election Commission has been called a toothless tiger, and it is; an ineffectual agency, and it is; a monument to congressional paralysis, and it is. It is time to change it.

My bill authorizes full funding for the FEC, including a \$1.7 million supplemental fiscal year 1997 appropriation to enable the Commission to handle this increased workload that I have enumerated.

And to satisfy our friends who have said that we must try and get as much reporting and disclosure as soon as pos-

sible, this legislation also requires electronic filing. Increased disclosure is the magic elixir, some have suggested, so by mandating electronic filing at the Federal Election Commission for all Federal candidates' reports, we would ensure that disclosure reports are available in a timely fashion. Too often the reports become available weeks and months after the election is all over with. Electronic filing would allow you to know instantaneously exactly where the campaign contributions are coming from prior to an election, on a timely basis during a campaign. Today the technology exists to do it. This legislation would require, mandate, electronic filing by all candidates for Federal office.

Furthermore, the legislation would allow the FEC to establish standard fines for minor reporting violations and conduct random campaign audits. That had been stopped and prohibited. Nothing, I think, would have a more salutary effect on campaigns than to know that you could be the subject of a random audit at any time. This, I think, would help strengthen the FEC's ability to report to the Congress on the kinds of practices that ought to give us concern, and possibly the subject of further reform.

I think we must acknowledge, Mr. President, that the Federal Elections Commission was charged with the responsibility of enforcing our election laws, and that part of the reason our election system is so out of control is that Congress, in my view, has refused over the years to provide the FEC with the ability and the tools to carry out the duties that we have charged them with performing.

As we rush to establish Federal investigations into election law violations, let us not forget we do have an Agency balanced with Democrats and Republicans that is charged with the very responsibility we have just taken upon ourselves.

In my view, Mr. President, the FEC must be given the ability to do its job, and that is the goal of the legislation I will be proposing.

I conclude, Mr. President, by adding that genuine campaign finance reform will not occur if we do not elevate the issue above partisanship. It is not a Democratic or Republican issue. As I mentioned earlier before the Presiding Officer arrived in the Chamber, I think the Democrats made a huge error in 1993 and 1994 when we had an opportunity to do something about campaign finance reform. The Presiding Officer was a Member of the House of Representatives in those years, and so we are properly criticized, in my view, for not acting.

Having said that, I do not think we need to necessarily perpetuate that by not stepping forward in these coming weeks and try to take steps to strengthen the FEC, pass McCain-Feingold with whatever amendments people want to offer, and try to provide some framework. I think there are is-

suues which we will find great unanimity of support, given the chance for expression here on the floor of the U.S. Senate, obviously while going forward with the investigation, and to allow the Justice Department and others to do the work, of course, which they are charged with doing. All of these efforts, if done properly and well, I think, can at the end of the day, provide us with a different system than we presently have.

So the future Wendell Fords of this body who, when they consider whether or not they ought to seek reelection, as he announced in his statement, would not look at the prospect in March, as many as 18, 20 months before election day, of raising, as he felt he would have to do, \$100,000 a week for 80 weeks in order to be a viable candidate for a State the size of Kentucky—not to mention, of course what it costs in other States like my colleague from Pennsylvania, or California, New York, Florida, Illinois, or Ohio. In large States with huge populations, these numbers become astronomical. If it is going to take that on the part of individual candidates, then, I think, obviously the results speak for themselves.

I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue. I am going to send to the desk and ask that this bill be reported to the appropriate committee to strengthen the Federal Election Commission so it can do its job. I thank the Presiding Officer and my colleague from Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be referred to the appropriate committee.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I had come to the Senate Chamber to speak on the resolution on the independent counsel but on my way I noted the morning press have comments to make in advance of that. However, before my distinguished colleague from Connecticut leaves, I agree with him on some of what he has said. I will not go into the parts where I disagree with him. It would take too long.

When he talks about the Federal Election Commission, strengthening the Federal Election Commission, funding adequately the Federal Election Commission, I think that is something that ought to be done. The Federal Election Commission needs to be able to pursue alleged election violations. They have very broad powers and we have heard very little from them. It may be that their investigations are yet incomplete. But it also may be that if they had sufficient investigative resources they might have done more already.

We do not need to await the results of the Governmental Affairs Committee, on which I serve. We are just getting started with the funding authorization. Nor do we need to await the results of the public integrity section, the FBI or their investigations, nor do

we need to wait to see what will happen with the independent counsel, as I will address in a few moments.

We have a Federal Election Commission, and were they strong enough they could have acted already on these very, very important matters.

Mr. DODD. I made the point last October when the allegations arose about the Democratic National Committee, Don Fowler, who is the chair of the DNC, and myself, asked the FEC to immediately conduct an investigation into these allegations.

The FEC came before the Rules Committee a couple of weeks ago to present its budget, as they do on an annual basis. I asked them how the investigation was going. This was now March. I was stunned to have them report they have not even begun to look at this.

So here is a request made 6 months ago on, obviously, a very serious matter, and they have not even begun to work on it. The reason, they say, is the caseload is backed up so much on them and there has been a reduction in their staff allocations. Now, obviously, more probing about that may be necessary.

Mr. SPECTER. Did the Senator make a suggestion that they might look upon the current matters on a priority basis? I had not known of the request which was made, obviously. It is surprising to me that in light of the pressing public policy on current matters that they would not address them but would be addressing other matters.

Mr. DODD. That is a good point.

Mr. SPECTER. It is a matter of prioritizing. We have a hemorrhaging system. There is blood on the floor and there is blood coming out of the patient. I would think as a matter of priority they would at least address that and try to give some first aid. I do not know what they have found, and I do not know the specifics upon what injunctive relief they might seek, but they have attorneys that might look at the current system and act now.

They are a constituted agency and they have conducted criminal investigations. They could work this in the civil field. It comes as a surprise to me when a Senator of your standing, Senator DODD, makes that suggestion to them, and months go by without any response to it.

Mr. DODD. I thank my colleague, Mr. President, for his observations. I do not think I asked that question because I think I was so stunned by the response, I assumed things were moving along. I do not know how they determine—of course, it is a bipartisan Commission—how they determine what basis they look at matters, but I do not disagree.

My colleague has been generous in his comments.

A TRAGEDY IN JORDAN

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I came to address the subject of independent counsel and, en route, I picked up the morning newspapers. I am horrified by what has occurred in Jordan. The head-

line is blaring: "Jordan Soldier Kills Seven Israeli Schoolgirls."

The lead report from the Philadelphia Inquirer is:

A group of Israeli schoolgirls was standing on Peace Island yesterday, overlooking the Jordan River and fields of wild yellow flowers, when a Jordanian soldier opened fire with an assault rifle, killing seven students. Six other pupils were wounded, as girls dove into the bushes and screamed for help.

After seizing a comrade's M-16 rifle, the soldier fired from an observation tower, then descended and chased the screaming junior high school girls down a hill firing wildly.

According to a report in the Washington Post, Rosa Himi, a teacher of the Orthodox Jewish school in Beit Shemesh, near Jerusalem, that the 51 students attended said:

At the beginning, Jordanian soldiers didn't overpower him and didn't do anything. . . . They even pushed one of our teachers and wouldn't let him near the injured girls to care for them. It is only when he failed to put his second [ammunition] clip in the gun that the other soldiers took him.

It is really a very shocking turn of events, Mr. President, in circumstances where one would almost think we were beyond the point of being shocked. There is a sequence of violence that has occurred—candidly, with both sides—like the event at the tomb of Abraham some time ago, where an Israeli fired on people. I suggest that it really requires a new level of sober examination as to what is going on in the Mideast and what the so-called "leaders" in the Mideast are doing which is really inflammatory. King Hussein had sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu, saying that Prime Minister Netanyahu was engaged in the deliberate humiliation of Arabs and was accumulating tragic accidents leading to bloodshed and disaster brought about by fear and despair. There have already been suggestions from a number of quarters that King Hussein was inciting a riot by those inflammatory statements.

I think it is inappropriate to join that chorus. But I do think that King Hussein and others have to tone down the rhetoric and have to be a lot more thoughtful than they have been. I know King Hussein—not well, but I have had occasion to talk to him when he has been in Washington. I talked to him when I have visited in Jordan. I do believe that King Hussein is sincere in his efforts for peace.

The morning press comments about the Crown Prince of Jordan coming to the scene and that he was stricken with remorse and grief, as King Hussein's statements issued after this tragedy reflected his own view. But what is happening in the Mideast requires that there be more restraint by people like King Hussein. That, of course, is easy to say after the fact. But I think it has to be said.

We are now seeing a conference in Gaza, sponsored by the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Chairman Arafat, where the United States has

agreed to participate and Israel has been excluded. I joined a large group of Senators in writing to President Clinton yesterday, urging the President to change his policy on that. In my judgment, and in the judgment of many of my colleagues far beyond this Chamber, there is a strong view that there ought not to be a conference where Israel is excluded. There will be no peace process in the Mideast to which Israel is not a party. For Chairman Arafat to convene a group of representatives of nations of the world to meet and talk about the peace process, which will inevitably involve charges of impropriety by Israel because they appear in the international media daily, without having Israel as a party to that process and allowing Israel an opportunity to reply, it seems to me to be absolutely inexcusable.

We ought not to be saying that parties in interest, like the Palestinians and the PLO, ought to be gathering international strength to attack, impugn, or otherwise move against a party to the peace process. If there is going to be peace, it is going to have to be worked out between the Palestinians and the Israelis. To have this kind of conference compounds the tragedy in Jordan, and I do hope, yet, that the administration will rethink what it has undertaken to do.

I know that a good many of these issues come before the Congress, come before the Senate, come before the Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, and before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, where we are asked to appropriate money. We are now about to be asked to appropriate additional funds. The Congress does not have the power that the President has to conduct foreign affairs, although we do have considerable power in the appropriations process, the power of the purse. We are looking at requests for aid to Jordan. In fiscal year 1997, we gave Jordan \$67.1 million. In fiscal year 1998, the President has made a request for \$74.2 million, an increase of \$7.1 million. Jordan is also asking for an additional \$250 million in funding per year over the next 5 years. I have already been lobbied, individually, about supporting that increase in funding for Jordan.

The initial reaction that I had goes back to Jordan's conduct during the gulf war, where I and many others in this body, many other Americans, and many others around the world were very unhappy—to use a very mild term—with what Jordan did in aiding and abetting Iraq and Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein. They were complicitous in helping Iraq in that war, where American lives were laid on the line and American lives were lost.

A GAO report in February 1992 found specifically that Jordan gave Iraq access to American technology, that Jordan shared intelligence from the American-led coalition. When that happened, it seemed to me that there were strong reasons not to continue to give