New Mexico: Martin G. Romine, California Superama, Gallup;

North Dakota: Wallace Joersz, J.K. Foods, Inc., Mandan; Stephen B. Barlow, Miracle Mart, Inc., Mandan; Kay Zander-Woock and Terrance Rockstad, Dan's Super Market, Inc., Bismarck;

Ohio: Reuben Shaffer, Kroger Company, Cincinnati; Ronald C. Graff, Columbiana Foods, Inc., Boardman; Walter A. Churchill, Churchill's Super Markets, Inc, Sylvania; David G. Litteral, Festival Foods, New Boston; Earl Hughes, Fresh Encounters, Inc., Findlay;

Oklahoma: Gary Nichols and Holly Nichols, Nichols SuperThrift, Checotah; George Waken and William Waken, The Boys Market, Enid; James R. Brown, Doc's Food Stores, Inc., Bixby; Thomas D. Goodner, Goodner's Supermarket, Duncan; Larry Anderson, Larry's Foods, Inc., Mustang; R. Scott Petty, Petty's Fine Foods, Tulsa;

Oregon: Craig T. Danielson, Danielson Food Stores, Oregon City; Ross Dwinell, United Grocers, Inc., Milwaukie;

Pennsylvania: Dale Giovengo, Giant Eagle, Pittsburgh; Robert McDonough, Redner's Markets, Inc., Reading; Angelo Spagnolo, Tri County Giant Eagle, Belle Vernon; Christy Spoa, Save-A-Lot, Ellwood City; Dr. Arlene Klein Wier, Vience Spring Valley, Inc., Philadelphia, PA;

South Dakota: Ken Fiedler, Ken's Supermarkets, Inc., Aberdeen; Tennessee: Tommy Litton, Big John's Household Foods, Oneida; H. Dean Dickey, Pic Pac Foods, Columbia;

Texas: Jose Fermin Rodriguez, Thrift T-Mart, San Antonio; R.A. Brookshire, Brookshire Brothers, Inc., Lufkin; Stanton L. Irvin, Tri- State Association Grocers, Inc., El Paso;

Utah: Kenneth W. Macey, Macey's, Inc. Sandy; Richard A. Parkinson, Associated Food Stores, Salt Lake City,;

Virginia: Steve Rosa, Camellia Food Stores, Inc., Norfolk; Steven C. Smith, K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc., Abingdon; Douglas A. Tschorn; Jessee Lewis, Mid-Mountain Foods, Abington;

Vermont: The Wayside Country Store, Arlington;

Wisconsin: Thomas Metcalfe, Metcalfe, Inc., Manona; Steve Erickson, Erickson's Diversified Corp. Hudson; James F. Cwiklo, Quality Foods IGA, Wisconsin Rapids; Tom Turicik, Sentry Foods, Inc., Plymouth; James Heden, More 4 Superstore, River Falls; George Miller, North Country IGA, Ashland; Chuck Potter, Potter's Piggly Wiggly, St. Francis; Ronald Lusic, Fleming Companies, Inc., Waukesha; Robert D. Ranus, Roundy's, Inc. Milwaukee; Gail Omernick, The Copps Corporation, Stevens Point;

Washington: H.L. ''Buzz'' Ravenscraft, Associated Grocers, Inc.; Washington, DC: Eric Weis, Giant Food Inc.;

West Virginia: David G. Milne, Morgan's Foodland, Kingwood.

The following state associations are instrumental in coordinating information relative to the community service activities of their members: Arizona Food Marketing Alliance, Rocky Mountain Food Dealers, Iowa Grocery Industry Association, Illinois Food Retailers, Kentucky Grocers Association, Mid-Atlantic Food Dealers, Minnesota Grocers Association, Nebraska Retail Grocers Association, New Hampshire Grocers Association, North Carolina Food Dealers, North Dakota Grocers Association, Ohio Grocers Association, Oklahoma Grocers Association, Pennsylvania Food Merchants, Tennessee Grocers Association, Vermont Grocers Association, Wisconsin Grocers Association. Manufacturers: Borden Foods Corporation; Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company; Electronic Warranty Group, Inc.; General Mills, Inc.; Kellogg USA Inc.; NOVUS Services; Procter & Gamble Company; Ralston Purina Company; RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM PROJECT

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, today, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues and other interested persons, a letter from the campaign finance Project. As my colleagues are aware, this project is being led by two of our former colleagues, Nancy Kassebaum Baker and former Vice President Walter Mondale. They were asked by President Clinton earlier this year to lead a bipartisan effort to develop a solution for reforming our campaign finance laws.

Last week, they issued an open letter to the President and to the Congress about their observations and what they believe should constitute real and meaningful reform. They have identified several key areas that they believe are essential to these reform efforts: a complete ban on ''soft money;'' refine and sharpen the definitions of ''issue advocacy'' and ''independent expenditures;'' improve disclosure of campaign finances; and strengthen enforcement and leadership at the Federal Election Commission.

I have the privilege to meet with both Vice President Mondale and Senator Kassebaum Baker. They are sincere in their efforts to reform our campaign finance system. They believe, as I do, that our failure to act in this issue will only fuel the public's cynicism about the institutions of the Congress, the Presidency, and the electoral process as a whole. I commend this letter to my colleagues attention and ask unanimous consent that the text of the letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES FROM NANCY KASSEBAUM BAKER AND WALTER F. MONDALE—JUNE 18, 1997

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: In March, the President asked that we help in the cause of campaign finance reform. Since then we have observed closely the national discussion of this issue, which we believe is central to the well-being of American democracy. We would now like to report about our initial recommendations, with a plea, in the best interests of our political process, that the Executive and Legislative Branches commit themselves to a course of urgent debate leading to early and meaningful action.

One of us is a Republican. The other is a Democrat. We are inspired by the bipartisan efforts of Senators John McCain and Russell Feingold, and Representatives Christopher Shays and Martin Meehan, to achieve campaign finance reform. The bipartisan effort of new members of the House, led by Representatives Asa Hutchinson and Thomas Allen, is also a foundation for hope. We are mindful that no change will occur unless there is a consensus in both parties that reform is fair to each. We also believe the imperative task of renewing our democracy requires that we all look beyond party. Guided by basic lessons from our Constitution and national experience, we must identify specific measures and commit ourselves to action where agreement is within our grasp, even as we identify other questions for further consideration.

The Constitution, in this as in all public affairs, is our first teacher. It directs that the Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech. The Supreme Court has provided substantial guidance how that command applies to campaign finance laws. Whether any of us might wish that the Court had decided particulars of prior cases differently, our national legislative task is to give full honor to its free speech decisions.

The Constitution also enshrines political democracy. One of its central purposes is to ensure that every individual has the right to participate fully in the electoral process. As Madison said of the Congress in The Federalist Papers (No. 52), ''the door of this part of the federal government is open to merit of every description, . . . without regard to poverty or wealth.'' Our campaign finance system must respect, and do everything it can to bolster, the constitutionally rooted primacy of individual citizens in our political democracy.

In applying constitutional values to campaign finance, we do not have to start from scratch. We have had a century of debate and legislation about several essential matters, including what we now describe as ''soft money.'' From early in the twentieth century, federal law has prohibited contributions from corporate treasuries to federal election campaigns. Starting in the 1940s, this bar has been applied equally to contributions to federal election campaigns from union treasuries. The basic principle of these constraints, upheld by the Supreme Court, is that organizations which are granted special privileges and protections, provided by federal or state law for economic advantage, should not be permitted to leverage that advantage to cast doubt on the integrity of our national government.

In the 1970s, in response to the constitutional crisis that began twenty-five years ago this week, the Congress established limits on individual contributions to candidates and political parties, and barred large individual contributions to them that threatened to undermine governmental integrity in reality or appearance. Though it subsequently invalidated several other reform provisions of that time, the Supreme Court sustained this central element of our campaign finance law.

At the end of the 1970s, the Federal Election Commission began to erode these important protections. The Commission authorized national party committees to spend the proceeds of a new category of contributions

which we now know as ''soft money.'' This allowed previously prohibited corporate and union treasury contributions, and also unlimited contributions from individuals, to the national political parties. The theory has been that if contributions are not used directly in a federal election, federal campaign finance laws do not limit them. At first, the amounts of soft money involved were relatively small. But as happens with cracks in dikes, the power behind the breach has overwhelmed all defenses. The resulting flood of money to the national parties and their campaign organizations now threatens the credibility of our entire electoral process.

We believe that Congress, as a matter of high priority must stop, unambiguously, all ''soft money'' contributions to the national parties and their campaign organizations. The Congress should also prohibit the solicitation of soft money by those parties and organizations, any federal office holder, or any candidate for federal office for the seeming benefit of others, but in truth to circumvent the prohibition of soft money to the national parties. These interrelated acts would do much to reinvigorate the basic concept of the Federal Election Campaign Act: that, while we must remain mindful of the political parties' needs for resources to perform their vital role in the political process, it is individuals, subject to contribution limits established by Congress, who are the heart of the system of private contributions for federal elections. The prompt end to soft money solicitations by presidential candidates, among others, would also assure that the public gets full value for its investment in publicly financed presidential elections.

A recurring observation about the 1996 and other recent federal elections is that candidates have lost control of the conduct of their campaigns. Indeed, many candidates are at risk of becoming bystanders to campaigns waged by others in the name of ''issue advocacy.'' As a result, the accountability of the candidates for the conduct of campaigns is seriously compromised. Part of the problem is the need to sharpen definitions, that may have worked twenty years ago, to distinguish campaigning for candidates from a more general public debate of issues. Another part is the need to update the disclosure requirements of the Federal Election Campaign Act. Progress on both counts is necessary to assure that our political process achieves the substantial benefits that should result from an end to the ''soft money'' system.

First, it is essential that Congress establish, on the basis of the experience of recent elections, an appropriate test consistent with the First Amendment for distinguishing advocacy about candidates from the general advocacy of issues. The purpose of this test should be to identify for consistent treatment under the Federal Election Campaign Act significant expenditures for general communications to the public, at times close to elections, that are designed to achieve specific electoral results. The Supreme Court has said that Congress may regulate federal campaign activity to avoid corrupting influences or appearances. In doing so, the Congress should look at reality, not the self-applied labels of partisans. Our objective should be to assure that comparable expenditures are treated comparably.

The gains from ending ''soft money'' will be incomplete if money currently spent by parties is only redirected into so-called issue advertisements, including those by surrogate organizations established to circumvent campaign finance laws. A tightened, realistic definition of statutory terms will not foreclose communications to the public on behalf of the interests of business enterprises and unions even up to Election Day, under regulations evenly applied to their political action committees. It will mean that communications to the general public in periods close to elections that are designed to achieve electoral wins or losses are financed through the voluntary contributions of individuals, such as to their parties, political action committees, or candidates.

Second, disclosure is an essential tool because it allows citizens to hold candidates accountable for the means by which campaigns are financed. On election day voters can only express themselves about candidates on the ballot. Even candidates, however, may not know the true identity of entities that dominate the airwaves during the closing weeks of a campaign with electoral messages patently targeted to favor or disfavor them or their opponents. Broader disclosure of the sources of financing of campaign advertisements would contribute to the robustness of political debate. It would ensure that candidates know to whom they might respond, and that the electorate knows who can be held accountable for the accuracy or demeanor of advertisements.

Additionally, we should take advantage of an electronic age in which information can be transmitted rapidly from, and updated frequently by, party and campaign officials, and made readily available to the public with equal rapidity.

No limitations and no disclosure requirements are worth much in the absence of timely and effective enforcement. Indeed, the absence of credible enforcement causes damage beyond the campaign finance laws by engendering real doubts about the application of the rule of law to powerful members of our society. The American public believes resolutely that a fundamental premise of our constitutional democracy is that high elected officials, like ordinary citizens, are subject to the rule of law, and to the timely application of it. The Congress and the President need to work together to assure the public that campaign finance laws are not pretenses.

The President and the Senate should take immediate action to assure that vacancies on the Federal Election Commission are filled by knowledgeable, independent-minded individuals who are not subject to the suggestion that they are appointed to represent political organizations. We say this because we need a clean break from the past, not to be critical of any former, present, or potential member of the Commission. It is within the President's power to accomplish this new start for the Commission, beginning today. We urge the President, in consultation with the leadership of the Congress, to name an advisory panel of citizens whose task would be to recommend highly qualified candidates for the President's consideration for appointment to the Commission, subject of course to the Senate's advice and consent.

Congress can take further steps to protect the independence of the Commission. If commissioners were limited to one term, they would have no occasion to measure the impact of their decisions on the possibility of reappointment. The independence of the Commission can also be furthered by placing its funding on a more secure, longer term basis.

The potential for deadlock inheres in the requirement that the Commission have an even number of commissioners. Because the Congress also has made the Commission the official gatekeeper to the United States courts, judicial action to resolve complaints under the Federal Election Campaign Act is impeded unless permitted by a majority of commissioners. Thus, a deadlocked Commission is an obstacle to the adjudication of meritorious claims. It is important to rely on the expertise of the Commission, but when the Commission is unable to resolve complaints, our respect for the rule of law requires that complainants have the right to a fresh start through a direct action in the United States courts against alleged violators. The law should be amended to provide for this in the event that the Commission is unable to act because of deadlock or a lack of resources.

We have not attempted to set out an exhaustive list of reforms which may be attainable and would make a significant contribution. Other important proposals by members of Congress or students of campaign finance reform merit consideration, such as encouraging small contributions through tax credits, or providing greater resources to candidates through enhanced access to communications media or through flexibility by the parties in supporting candidates with expenditure of hard money contributions. Rather, our purpose is to illustrate that it is possible to identify and act on particular, achievable improvements, which should not be postponed or neglected. We very much encourage and support a larger debate about other changes at the federal and state levels in the manner in which political campaigns are financed. Additional changes will be essential to renewing American democracy. The enactment of immediate reforms may give us a measure of time to address other reforms, but should never become an excuse for avoiding them.

We urge that the work of the Congress over the next few months be spurred by one overriding thought: no one would create, or should feel comfortable in defending, the campaign finance system that now exists. Public cynicism about our great national political institutions is the inevitable product of the gaps that exist between our principles and the law, and between the law and compliance with it. The trend lines, also, are all wrong. If we were unhappy about campaign financing in the election of 1996, as the public is and as members of both parties ought to be, then we should anticipate with great trepidation the election of 2000, absent prompt reforms.

The challenge for this Congress is to put in place changes for the presidential and congressional election cycle that will start the day after next year's elections, a little more than sixteen months from now, to enable an election in the year 2000 in which we will have pride and the public will have confidence. Your leadership in that endeavor will serve the interests of American democracy, and command the enduring appreciation of all of us who know how needed that leadership is.

Sincerely,

NANCY KASSEBAUM BAKER.
WALTER F. MONDALE.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, June 23, 1997, the federal debt stood at $5,332,782,057,516.70. (Five trillion, three hundred thirty-two billion, seven hundred eighty-two million, fifty-seven thousand, five hundred sixteen dollars and seventy cents)

Five years ago, June 23, 1992, the federal debt stood at $3,937,817,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred thirty-seven billion, eight hundred seventeen million)

Ten years ago, June 23, 1987, the federal debt stood at $2,292,959,000,000. (Two trillion, two hundred ninety-two billion, nine hundred fifty-nine million)