

We also want to include, by way of suggesting cooperation and coordination with other Federal agencies and departments, any other election-related reports, and the Senator has correctly identified several. Those all should be included, in my view, in the meaning and the intent of this amendment and should be so construed by any court of law or any administrative agency with responsibility for enforcing this amendment.

Mr. CRAIG. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. COCHRAN. I am happy to yield.

Mr. CRAIG. To our knowledge, there are only the three we have mentioned. Absolute clarity suggests you put those three in the text of your amendment and then say "and any additional" or others that may come along.

Obviously, if your amendment becomes the law and other reports are required that might be outside the scope of the 1971 law, you would identify them with your law and make them a requirement of that filing for purposes of Internet access.

Mr. COCHRAN. I thank the Senator. I think his suggestions have been helpful.

We have staff on the floor who have been working on the drafting of the amendment for several days and consulting with the FEC and representatives of the committee of jurisdiction.

Let me have a chance to address the concerns of the Senator with some suggested modification language and discuss this with him and the chairman and ranking member of the Rules Committee, which has jurisdiction over this subject.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank the Senator.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. COCHRAN. I am happy for the Senator to be recognized in her own right and speak to the issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor to support Senator COCHRAN in his amendment. I think it is an excellent amendment and goes a long way toward moving to a more full and complete disclosure.

I understand some of the questions that have been raised. But as I read this amendment, it is very good. We are doing this in Louisiana and perhaps other States, learning how to use this new technology in many good ways.

It helps our campaign finance system be more transparent. For instance, the Senator is correct; you can take a State such as Louisiana and simply make this requirement for our State agency to make all of these reports available over the Internet on one Web site so people don't have to search through a variety of Web sites.

I commend the Senator for his amendment. I support his amendment and urge the Senator, unless absolutely necessary, not to adjust the amendment. It is very clear. It simply takes the law and all the reports and urges the FEC to put them in one central

site. It will make it easier for our constituents, easier for the news media, easier for us to follow those reports.

I will have an amendment later taking this a step further and requiring the FEC to develop standardized software which will make it much easier for everyone to file the required reports in a timely fashion. My amendment will take this a step further by requiring it to be almost instantaneously reported. Deposit a check in your bank account, and it will appear on the Internet. People can follow the flow of money.

There are many disagreements about limits and whether there should be caps or no caps, and should broadcasters have to give special rates or reasonable rates—since I voted for that amendment, "reasonable rates"—for political candidates.

Frankly, in my general discussions with Senator MCCAIN and Senator FEINGOLD and many people on both sides who support campaign finance reform, the one area on which we all agree is more disclosure. The one thing everybody says, opponents of McCain-Feingold as well as proponents, is that we should be coming forward more aggressively in our disclosure.

That is what the amendment of Senator COCHRAN does. I compliment him for that. I urge my colleagues to look favorably upon it. I thank him for the work he is doing in regard to campaign finance reform. I hope we don't change this amendment too much. It is quite simple and very good in its current form.

Later on today, I will propose my amendment that will make it a virtual reality check on all campaign contributions coming in from a variety of different sources and make it much easier for Members to be held accountable for moneys we are collecting and the votes we cast. The Cochran amendment is very good, and I hope we will adopt it.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

(The remarks of Mr. MURKOWSKI are located in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent my colleague proceed as

in morning business so the time will not come off consideration of the amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I request I be permitted to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. DODD. I thank my colleague.

Mr. COCHRAN. I ask the distinguished Senator how much time he wishes to speak because we are working on an amendment we hope can be adopted pretty soon.

Mr. CONRAD. Maybe 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for approximately 5 minutes.

THE BUDGET

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, yesterday in my role as ranking member on the Senate Budget Committee, I met with Senator DOMENICI, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. He informed me he intended not to have a markup of the budget in the Budget Committee but to come directly to the floor of the Senate. This was pursuant to a request I had made that we proceed to schedule a markup in the committee. I told him I thought a decision not to have a markup in the Budget Committee would be a mistake.

We have never had a circumstance in which we have tried to bring a budget for the United States to the floor of the Senate without the Budget Committee, which has the primary responsibility, meeting first to hammer out an agreement. Senator DOMENICI, the chairman of the Budget Committee, told me he believes it will be impossible for us to reach an agreement. I don't know how anyone can be certain of that before we have tried.

I hope very much that he will—and I asked Senator DOMENICI yesterday to reconsider to give us a chance to debate and discuss the budget in the Budget Committee and to have votes.

That is how we make decisions.

I still hold some optimism that after discussion and debate we might find agreement. It might not be on precisely what the President has proposed. Someone recommended yesterday that we try to agree on a 1-year budget.

But we have a country that has some serious challenges. Anybody who has been watching the markets knows they continue to decline, and decline precipitously. While it is true that the best immediate response is monetary policy and the Federal Reserve Board lowering interest rates, that has now been done three times, and still the slide continues, and still we see warning signals about the economy. We see Japan in a perilous position. We have had a serious energy shock in this country. We see high levels of individual debt in America. We see very dramatic weakness in the financial markets.

I personally believe we have an obligation and a responsibility to try to respond as quickly as possible. I think

that means, on the fiscal policy side, we fast-forward the parts of the President's proposed tax cut to try to provide some stimulus to this economy.

We can wait, and we can doddle and deliberate, or we can act. I hope very much that we take the opportunity to work in the Budget Committee to try to find common ground, to try to find a basis on which we can agree so we can get a swift response on the fiscal side to provide some confidence to the American people, to provide some confidence that their Government is responding to what is happening in their daily lives.

Some have said, well, if you agree on something that is other than precisely what the President has proposed, that will be seen as a defeat for the President. I don't think we need to be in that position. I think we can find perhaps an overall global agreement that would be seen as a win for the country, a win for the President, and a win for the Congress. Nobody is defeated, nobody is hurt, but that collectively we have worked together to do what is best for the country.

I really think we can do that, and at the end of the day it might be precisely what the President has proposed. But it may well enjoy his support. The fact is, circumstances have changed. He made a proposal during the campaign. I didn't agree with every part of it, but I respect him for doing it. The question now is, What do we do in light of what we face today? It does not need to be exactly what was proposed more than a year ago. Circumstances have changed. We have a requirement and a responsibility to respond to what is occurring.

I am again asking Senator DOMENICI to reconsider. I am asking colleagues on both sides to urge Senator DOMENICI to reconsider. The Members on the Budget Committee have been very diligent in their responsibilities. We had an outstanding set of hearings. We ought to debate and discuss a budget resolution for this country before it comes to the floor of the Senate. I think it really invites chaos to come out here with the Budget Committee for the first time ever failing to even meet and failing to even try. What kind of procedure is that?

I hope very much that Members of goodwill will get together in this Chamber and try to do what is best for the country and try to go through the kind of process we normally do to reach agreement. This idea that we predict failure before we have tried I think is a mistake. We ought to try debate and we ought to discuss and vote and provide some leadership so that we have a budget resolution out on the floor that has been carefully vetted by the Members who have the primary responsibility—the Senate Budget Committee.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this has been cleared with the managers of the bill, Senators DODD and McCONNELL.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. FEINGOLD, be recognized for 5 minutes as if in morning business, and following that Senator HOLLINGS be recognized for 10 minutes as if in morning business, and the time not count against the amendment that has been filed by the Senator from Mississippi.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. President.

I am pleased that the distinguished ranking member of the Budget Committee is still on the floor because I rise at this point not to talk about campaign finance reform but to strongly agree with the comments he has made.

I am very pleased to be a member of the Budget Committee. It is something I wanted to have an opportunity to do when I came here because it was the issue on which I ran originally—and I believe the issue on which the Senator from North Dakota ran—getting this country's fiscal situation under control. That is actually the most important thing we can do. If you care passionately about campaign finance reform, nothing is more important than the appropriate and thoughtful budgeting of the people's resources. I am grateful for his extremely skilled leadership on our side in the Budget Committee.

I am pleased to join with the ranking member of the Budget Committee and my colleagues on the committee to talk about the need for the markup in our committee of the concurrent budget resolution.

I, too, was disappointed to hear our chairman indicate that he may not convene a markup. I believe his stated reason is that he does not want to conduct a markup unless he can be assured the resulting product will have the support of a majority of the committee.

I very much hope the chairman will reconsider his decision.

The principal work of a member of that committee and the reason we are so eager to be a part of that committee and, frankly, one of the best parts of being in the Senate for me has been the experience of going through the markup of a budget resolution. It is extremely interesting, and it is extremely important in terms of the priorities of our country. Forgoing a markup renders membership on that committee much less meaningful.

As many of my colleagues may know, the inability of the Budget Committee to muster a majority to report out a bill would not prevent the Senate from considering a budget resolution. The precedents of the Senate provide for just such gridlock.

Unfortunately, it appears that this very precedent will be used to circumvent the committee entirely, leaving the writing of the budget resolution to unelected staff.

While this might have little practical effect on just about any other bill where debate and amendment are much more open, debate on the budget resolution is severely constrained.

We are warning our few colleagues, including the Presiding Officer, that we are about to experience "vote-arama" where we vote on scores of amendments with just a few minutes' notice because of the inability to find time and to have time for people to actually fully debate amendments on the budget resolution.

Stringent germaneness standards severely restrict the ability of the body to amend the resolution, and those standards flow from the baseline resolution that comes to the Senate.

This makes the work of the Budget Committee on the resolution all the more important. The threshold for adopting an amendment can be a simple majority, or a supermajority, depending on the underlying structure of the concurrent resolution crafted by the Budget Committee.

The chairman has considerable say in the way the concurrent resolution is structured even with a committee markup. But others on the Budget Committee should have a say as well.

We are in an unusual posture with an evenly divided Senate and evenly divided committees. Perhaps we are the victims of some ancient curse, having to "legislate in interesting times."

But these "interesting times" are all the more reason to respect the rights of Members to participate fully in their respective committees.

I simply wanted to rise to strongly agree with the ranking member that we need to have a markup in the Budget Committee.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I thank the Chair and my distinguished colleague from Arizona.

Mr. President, I just want to reemphasize the point made by the Senators from North Dakota and Wisconsin relative to a markup of the budget in the Budget Committee.

Yesterday morning, Marjorie Williams had an intriguing op-ed piece in the Washington Post emphasizing that the key watchword of the Bush administration is "transparency," "transparency." Apparently, at every turn, the emphasis has been: We're transparent. We're transparent. We're open.

This bemuses this particular Senator because the one thing they are absolutely nontransparent about is the budget. I have been trying, as a former chairman of the Budget Committee—and working here now for 25 years on this particular problem—to get the President's budget figures. We have had different people make some very interesting, amusing, and entertaining appearances on C-SPAN, but nobody has pointed out the actual outlays and the spending in the President's budget.

We are on a collision course. What will happen come April 1st, under the

budget rule, the majority leader can propose and lay down a budget, and start debating. If that is the game plan, we are headed now on a course of a train wreck. That is not going to fly.

We do not have any idea of the figures. And to just vote willy-nilly as an exercise, to bypass all proceedings of the budget in the Budget Committee, just to get it to a conference, and then to mark up, for the first time, what the President wants, is really the process of arrogance.

It is disturbing how little confidence the market has in us—in the Congress and the President—at this particular time. They see the Congress headed in one direction, and the President running around, continuing in his campaign, talking about the budget. He is out selling his so-called tax cut and budget everywhere but in the Budget Committee. We do not know exactly what he wants for defense, education, housing, and transportation. These are all important items to be discussed.

At the beginning—weeks back—not having a real detailed budget, I thought we should take this year's budget—that we passed only in December—and just more or less have a budget freeze like you would have as a Governor. You would just take the President's budget and debate what cuts you had on there, and say, for any increases—the so-called pay-go rule—that you had to have offsets, and then hold up on the tax cuts until it became apparent whether it was going to be a soft or hard landing.

I have to say in the same breath, this is a hard enough landing for this Senator. And rather than hold up, I have amended my initiative to put in an immediate economic stimulus package in the Finance Committee. But my budget is in the Budget Committee. I have written the chairman and asked him to please let me know when we are going to have a markup so we can discuss my budget, the President's budget, and any and all budgets.

This is, as I say, the process of arrogance in which the debate and the consideration of the individual Senators and their opinions makes no difference in the committee. It is a ritual: Now that we have the bare majority, what we have to do is ram through—right now—what we want, irrespective of any debate or consideration. That is going to erode the confidence we have in the White House and the confidence the White House has in the Congress itself.

The market sees this. I think we really are eroding confidence. You are going to see more downturns in the economy, and everything else, until we quit running around and come back home and start working together on the nation's problems.

I see the distinguished President out talking about the Patients' Bill of Rights. That is not before the Congress right now. But we are out politicking on different campaign issues. But if we could show a willingness to work together, I think we would be much bet-

ter off. I have not seen the likes of this in my years, and particularly with respect to the budget.

The budget process was instituted as a result of some 13 appropriations bills, and we did not have one look-see at the Government spending in its entirety. So we put in these particular rules so that we could facilitate a complete and comprehensive debate and treatment of the Government's financial needs.

Those rules are restrictions to help move it along—a mammoth Government budget of all departments—but they are being used to obscure any consideration rather than give comprehensive treatment and consideration.

So instead of knowing what the President intends on education, housing, crime or with respect to the Justice Department, we just operate in the dark, in a casual fashion, and use the limited rules of the budget process—not for a comprehensive treatment and consideration—but, on the contrary, to obscure any consideration, any treatment, any markup, any understanding. That is fundamentally bad Government.

I appreciate the distinguished leaders on the opposite side of the aisle giving me time to comment on this particular matter because I do have a budget. It is a good one. It really responds to our country's needs. But I have not been able to get a markup of my budget. We cannot consider the President's budget.

We are going to take up the budget, willy-nilly, under a limited time—with the leadership relinquishing back most of its time and saying: All right, you Democrats, we have the votes. This is what we are going to pass. Go ahead and put your amendments on, and your time will run out by Wednesday and we will start the “vote-a-rama” around the clock. And the more amendments there are, the longer we will stay. We will stay here Thursday, we will stay here Friday, we will stay here Saturday—and we will stay here Palm Sunday—and just continue to vote if that is what you all want to do, making it appear that there is obstructionism on this side of the aisle, wherein the truth is, we have not had a chance to consider anything and to find out the merit or demerit of the bill or the feelings of the other side on anything.

This is just bad congressional process legislating. I hope the chairman of the Budget Committee and the leadership on the other side of the aisle will say: All right, let's start Monday, meet in formal session and start marking up this budget.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT OF 2001—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 137, AS MODIFIED

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, after consultation with the managers of the bill and their staffs, we have agreed to a modified amendment providing additional disclosure provisions to the bill. I ask unanimous consent to modify my amendment and send the modification to the desk.

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

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

On page 38, after line 3, add the following:

TITLE V—ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE PROVISIONS

SEC. 501. INTERNET ACCESS TO RECORDS.

Section 304(a)(11)(B) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 434(a)(11)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

“(B) The Commission shall make a designation, statement, report, or notification that is filed with the Commission under this Act available for inspection by the public in the offices of the Commission and accessible to the public on the Internet not later than 48 hours (24 hours in the case of a designation, statement, report, or notification filed electronically) after receipt by the Commission.”

SEC. 502. MAINTENANCE OF WEBSITE OF ELECTION REPORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Election Commission shall maintain a central site on the Internet to make accessible to the public all publicly available election-related reports and information.

(b) ELECTION-RELATED REPORT.—In this section, the term “election-related report” means any report, designation, or statement required to be filed under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971.

(c) COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES.—Any federal executive agency receiving election-related information which that agency is required by law to publicly disclose shall cooperate and coordinate with the Federal Election Commission to make such report available through, or for posting on, the site of the Federal Election Commission in a timely manner.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, this simply clarifies the amendment with appropriate legal language. I hate to use that reference because these are lawyers writing these provisions and experienced staff members maybe who aren't lawyers who help them. It does improve the clarity of the language, and it does ensure that election-related reports, those provided for in the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 and amendments thereto, be provided as quickly and as completely on an Internet site as they can by the FEC.

We think this will improve the disclosure of important information to the public about who is financing election campaigns, how they are being financed, where the money is coming from that the candidates are spending, that are required to be filed under current reports and the additional requirements that will be in effect after this legislation is agreed to.

We believe this is an improvement. It supplements and complements the Snowe-Jeffords amendment which has