

meeting. The committee shall meet on that day and hour. Immediately upon the filing of the notice, the clerk of the committee shall notify all members of the committee that such special meeting will be held and inform them of its date and hour. If the chairman of any such committee is not present at any regular, additional, or special meeting of the committee, the ranking member of the majority party on the committee who is present shall preside at that meeting.

That provision applies to the Budget as to any other committee except the Appropriations Committee. So in the rules there is provision for members of a committee, if the majority of the members so wish, to insist upon and to require and to have a meeting of the committee.

Now, there are two problems with this provision. One is that you have to have a majority. We have a 50/50 breakdown. In other words, in the committee we have 11-11. I haven't tested the waters to see if someone on the Republican side—with, I assume a majority, probably unanimous group of Senators on my side—would join to insist that we have a meeting of that committee, the Budget Committee, to mark up the bill. It might very well be that we would get a majority. That is the first problem.

The second problem is as big or bigger. Once the committee meets at the request and insistence of a majority of the committee, if the chairman is not there, the ranking member—which means of the same party—would act as chairman. So far, so good. But the real fly in the ointment would come in the fact that that chairman can call the meeting to order and put the committee out immediately. He has fulfilled his—the request of the majority of the committee. In other words, he doesn't have to sit there and have a long hearing or meeting. He can just call it to order and adjourn.

So why do I call that to the attention of the Senate? Not as a possible—not to indicate that there is a possible avenue which would constitute a threat to the chairman. I do not do that at all. But just to remind Senators that it is there.

When George Mallory, that great Britisher, was asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest, he said "because it's there." So, today, I have taken the time to point out to my colleagues, some of whom may have not read this in quite a while, myself included—that it is there.

Why is it there? It is there because it needed to be there. Why did it need to be there? Because there were some chairmen in the Congress, both Houses, who just refused to have their committees meet. And if the civil rights bills or whatever were introduced, they went to the committee. That was the burying ground. They never came out of that door.

So Congress said, and the people said, and the press said: We have had enough. We are going to require—we are going to put something in here by which a majority of the committee can

be sure that that committee does meet. As I say, the chairman may gavel it in and gavel it out, but he has to do this before the people. Used to be these things did not have to be out in the sunlight, but you have to be in the sunshine now, so the people say. So if he wants to gavel the committee in and gavel it out, OK, he can do that. He is elected for 2 years. Probably—it is unlikely he will be expelled from the body for doing that, but there comes a time when he does have to stand before the bar of the people. If he wants to be high-handed, heavyhanded, or whatever, the people will make a judgment.

So that is why we have in the rules a way to force a committee chairman to meet. We are not talking about that here, for Chairman DOMENICI; he is very excellent about having hearings and so on. But there is just a certain remnant of the evil that existed when chairmen could bottle up matters in their committees, not even have meetings.

We have been having meetings, but we face a very serious matter of having soon to be confronted with a budget resolution which will not have been marked up in the committee, and which will have only details which will have only been provided by the chairman.

I come to a close now just to say again that all I say is meant to be within the spirit of goodwill, but also to indicate my concern about what is happening in this Senate and the way it is happening.

I thank the Chair and all Senators who have been waiting.

Let me thank, again, my own chairman, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, for the excellent work he has done in that committee.

I made it clear at the beginning, may I say to my ranking member, that I am not here posing as top man on my committee. I couldn't be, and I wouldn't want to be. The ranking member has done a very good job.

But as a member of that committee, and as one who has been around here now for 49 years in this institution, I am afraid something is going on that gets to the root of this institution and will hamper the representation of the people by virtue of the fact that our hands, figuratively speaking, are going to be tied, and that we are, to an extent, being gagged to the point where it is going to be done the chairman's way. The way it is going to be done, he has been very forthright about and very frank about. It is just going to come to the Senate without the benefit of amendment. That in my opinion is not for the Senate or for the good of the Nation. So, I respectfully ask my chairman, Senator DOMENICI, let us follow your own advice, let us use the 1993 Reconciliation Act as a role model and have a markup.

I thank all Senators for listening. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The distinguished Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from West Virginia for making us aware of the situation which we are coming into. I speak as a committee chairman who is deeply concerned about the process and how we are going to be meaningful in our participation to handle some of the very serious issues of this country. I thank him very much for his help.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, I thank him, not for what he said but I thank him for being a Senator who is independent in his thinking, who has the courage of his own convictions, and who is unafraid to state them. I thank him for his service not only to his State and the people who sent him here but also on behalf of the Senators from other States who respect that kind of integrity.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I thank the Senator.

SNOWE-JEFFORDS PROVISIONS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to more fully discuss the Snowe-Jeffords provisions of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. Accountability and transparency are two of the most important principles in a democracy. The Snowe-Jeffords provisions will strengthen our campaign finance laws and democracy by ensuring the financial sponsors of sham issue ads are accountable to the voters through increased disclosure.

I am concerned that the intent and effect of these provisions have been distorted by some of those who oppose campaign finance reform. I am here today to set the record straight.

I have been proud to work with my good friend the senior Senator from Maine to develop these provisions that our citizens demand and that abide by the First Amendment. Senator SNOWE has shown great leadership and dedication in developing a legislative solution that will fully and fairly address the proliferation of these sham issue ads.

Let me begin with a discussion of what the Snowe-Jeffords provisions would do. First, they require disclosure of certain information if an individual spends more than 10,000 dollars in a year on electioneering communications which are run in the 30 days before a primary, or 60 days before a general election. Second, Snowe-Jeffords prohibits the direct or indirect use of union or corporate treasury monies to fund electioneering communications run during these time periods. For my colleagues and those watching on C-SPAN, an electioneering communication is any broadcast, cable, or satellite communication which references a clearly identified federal candidate within the time period explained above.

Now let me explain what the Snowe-Jeffords provisions will not do:

The Snowe-Jeffords provisions will not prohibit groups like the National Right to Life Committee or the Sierra Club from disseminating electioneering communications;

It will not prohibit such groups from accepting corporate or labor funds;

It will not require such groups to create a PAC or another separate entity;

It will not bar or require disclosure of communications by print media, direct mail, or other non-broadcast media;

It will not require the invasive disclosure of all donors, and

Finally, it will not affect the ability of any organization to urge grassroots contacts with lawmakers on upcoming votes.

The last point bears repeating. The Snowe-Jeffords provisions do not stop the ability of any organization to urge their members and the public through grassroots communications to contact their lawmakers on upcoming issues or votes. That is one of the biggest distortions of the Snowe-Jeffords provisions. Any organization can, and should be able to, use their grassroots communications to urge citizens to contact their lawmakers. Under the Snowe-Jeffords provisions any organization still can undertake this most important task.

My colleagues may wonder what led Senator SNOWE and I to work so hard for the inclusion of these provisions in the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. Since the 1996 election cycle we have both seen, and experienced first hand, the explosion in the amount of money spent on these so-called issue ads. From the 135-150 million dollars spent in 1996, spending on these so-called issue ads has ballooned to over 500 million dollars during the last election cycle.

It is not the increase in the amount spent on these so-called issue ads alone that concerns us. Studies have shown that in the final two months of an election, 95 percent of television issue ads mentioned a candidate, 94 percent made a case for or against a candidate, and finally 84 percent of these ads had an attack component. Does anyone think these statistics are just a coincidence? An overwhelming majority of the public recognizes this problem. They see an ad identifying, 90 percent, or showing a candidate, 83 percent, or an ad being shown in the last few weeks before an election, 66 percent, as ads that are trying to influence their vote for or against a particular candidate.

Some of my colleagues are of the opinion that this increase in money spent on sham issue ads is fine. They believe that more money in the system will better inform the electorate about the candidates. Unfortunately, these sham issue ads are corrupting our election system and are not better informing the voters about the candidates.

The public can differentiate between electioneering communications and other types of communications done to purely inform the public on an issue. A recent study done by the Brigham Young University Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy shows this, and the effect these ads are having on the public.

As you can plainly see from this chart, I have beside me the public views electioneering communications as trying to persuade them to vote against a candidate. These ads—80 percent—evoke as strong of a reaction in the viewing public as the party advertisements—81 percent—and are even stronger than the candidate's own ads—67 percent. This chart also shows that the public knows when it is viewing a pure issue ad as compared to the other types of ads tested. Seventy percent of the public recognizes that.

This next chart, chart No. 2, also demonstrates how the public views these ads, again showing what is the real purpose behind these electioneering communications. Here, like the first chart, you can see that the public is able to differentiate between ads run to help or hurt a candidate versus a pure issue ad meant to inform the public. What is interesting, or frightening, about this chart is that the electioneering communications generate a higher response from the viewing public—86 percent—than even the candidate—82 percent—or party ads—84 percent.

My third chart shows the degree to which the public felt an ad was intended to influence their vote, with 1 being not at all and 7 being clearly intended to influence their vote.

This chart again shows that the public is able to differentiate between the communications they receive. Like before, there is a stark difference in public perception between those ads which are seen as trying to influence a vote, election issue ads, party ads, and candidate ads, versus those seen as portraying a purely informational purpose, pure issue ads. The chart also shows that the public views the intent of these electioneering communications to be to influence their vote as strongly as a party ad—6.3 to 6.3; about even—and even more strongly—6.3 to 5.8—than the candidate's own advertisement. The chart also shows the stark difference in the public's mind between the intent of electioneering communications—6.3—and pure issue ads—3.7.

While the public correctly perceives that electioneering communications are meant to influence their vote, the public is confused about the origin of these communications. As this chart shows, chart No. 4, an overwhelming majority—75 percent—of the public believe that these communications are being paid for by the party or the candidate themselves. The voters deserve to know who is trying to influence their vote, and the Snowe-Jeffords provisions will give them that information.

My final chart, chart No. 5, shows that the public craves the information that the Snowe-Jeffords provisions would provide them. Eighty percent of the public believes that it is important or very important that they know who pays for or sponsors a political ad.

I ask our opponents, do they not believe that the public deserves to know

who is trying to influence their vote? The public both wants and deserves that information, and Senator SNOWE and I provide it to them with our provisions.

I think this is an incredibly important part of the bill. I strongly urge all of my patriots to study the Snowe-Jeffords provisions to make sure they fully understand that all we are requiring is disclosure. We want to make sure people know from where the information to influence them is coming.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

MR. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed in morning business.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business.

MR. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for as much time as I may consume in morning business.

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

THE ECONOMY OF OUR COUNTRY

MR. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have listened with some interest today to some of the discussion on the floor of the Senate, first about campaign finance reform, and then to Senator Byrd, and others.

I come to the floor to talk about the economic circumstances this country finds itself in for the moment. I want to visit about a number of issues that relate to our economy.

Mr. President, I came across one of my favorite books last evening while going through a pile of old books that had been stacked for some long while. The book is written by a man named Fulghum. Most people in this country have read this book or seen the book. It is entitled "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." It is a wonderful little book.

In "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," he describes: "Put things back where you got them." "Don't hurt others." "Play fair." "Clean up your own mess." "Don't hit people." "Wash your hands." "Flush."

There is a whole list of things you learned in kindergarten that represent enduring truths throughout life.

I started thinking about this in the context of the grappling that we do in this country with our economy. We forget the most basic of things—almost kindergarten-like lessons—about our economy so very quickly.

Let me describe just a few of them.

We have been blessed, of course, with a long period of economic expansion, a period in which we have seen almost unprecedented economic growth: new jobs, better income, and more opportunity for most American families. The stock market began to increase in value and rolled to increasing new heights. People felt good about the stock market. They invested in the