

of some court decisions, is that we have a campaign finance system in total chaos.

I come to the floor today to support the McCain-Feingold bill which will be voted on this week by the U.S. Senate. We have some Members of the Senate who have stood and said, "We intend to filibuster; we don't think that anything should be passed by the Congress; we believe anything that Congress does limits someone else's speech." And, in effect, I guess they are saying there ought not be any rules.

We are told somehow that money is speech in politics: The more money you have, the more speech you have, the more you are able to speak. Some of us believe that there ought to be in politics campaign finance reform that begins to set some reasonable limits on what kind of money is spent in political campaigns. We think that the current regime of campaign finance is just completely spiraling out of control, and we think the McCain-Feingold bill, while not perfect, is a good piece of legislation for this Congress to enact.

Mr. President, I also intend to offer, if I am allowed in the context of these debates, one additional piece of legislation I would like to mention just for a moment. Federal law currently provides that all television stations must offer candidates for Federal office the lowest rate on their advertising rate card for commercials for a certain amount of time preceding the election. To repeat, under current law, we say candidates are entitled to the lowest rate on the rate card for political advertising for a certain period prior to the election.

Everyone has a right to put on the air what they wish to put on the air about their opponent. In politics, unlike most other forms of competition, the normal discourse is to say, "There's my opponent. Look at what an awful person that opponent is. Let me tell you 18 awful things about my opponent." Is that the way you see airlines advertise? "Look at my competing airline over here. Let me tell you about how awful they are, how awful their maintenance record is." I don't think so. Is that the way automobile companies advertise? No. It is the way people in politics advertise because it has worked.

My point is this. I am going to offer an amendment that says we will change the Federal law that requires the lowest rate on the rate card for the 60 days prior to elections. We will say that the television stations are required to offer that lowest rate only to television commercials that are 1 minute in length and only in circumstances where the candidate appears on the commercial 75 percent of the time.

Why do I do that? Because I would like candidates to start taking some ownership of their commercials instead of the 30-second slash-and-burn commercial that the candidate never appears on. Oh, everybody has a right to

continue to run those. However, we are not required, in my judgment, to tell television studios they must offer the lowest rate for these kinds of ads.

Air pollution in this country is a problem. We have been concerned about air pollution for some long while. One form of air pollution in this country is the kind of political commercial that has been very successful. I don't deign to suggest now we can ban it. We can't. Free speech in this country and free political speech allows anybody to do anything they want in their campaigns in a 30- or 60-second ad.

But I believe we ought to give an incentive for those who put commercials on the air during political campaigns that say to the American people, "Here's what I stand for, here's what I believe, here's what I want to fight for as we debate the future of this country," in which the candidate himself or herself asserts positions that they think ought to be a part of public discourse and public debate. It seems to me we ought to try to provide incentives for that by saying the lowest rate card in campaigns, the lowest rate on the bottom of the card, will go to commercials that are at least 1 minute in length and on which the candidate appears 75 percent of the time.

I don't know if we are going to get to that. I intend to offer it as an amendment.

First and foremost, I rise to say I support the McCain-Feingold bill. I think Senator MCCAIN and Senator FEINGOLD have done a good job. Is it perfect? No. It is an awfully good start to try to bring some order and establish some thoughtful rules to a campaign finance system that is now a mess.

I want to be involved in the debate in the coming hours, when I hear people stand on the floor of the Senate and say, "Gee, we think the campaign finance system is wonderful," because I want to ask them what they have been reading, what they have been watching. Not the campaigns that I have seen, not the reports that I have seen about campaign finance awash in soft money, awash in issue ads financed by soft money flying all over the country to pollute the air waves, that never allow the American people to understand who was the donor, who put in half a million dollars to go after this or that candidate. That has become a perversion of fair rules and fair standards in campaign finance reform, and I hope when we pass McCain-Feingold we will finally begin to make some order and some thoughtful response to campaign finance reform.

I thank the President, and I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

SENATOR RIBICOFF

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me say to my colleague from Connecticut, I imagine he came to the floor to speak about Senator Ribicoff. I will not be long. I will say, although I did not have a chance to know Senator Ribicoff, I know so much about him. He was a great Senator. I pass on my sympathy and love to the State of Connecticut and his family.

ISTEA

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me also thank my colleagues from West Virginia and North Dakota for talking about ISTEA, the transportation bill, which is all about investment in infrastructure, which is all about investment in our economies. And Minnesota is another State that awaits anxiously for us to take up this piece of legislation and pass it.

SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I want to talk about 2 issues, and I want to talk about them briefly.

First of all, I would like to talk about this past weekend. I feel as if I speak on the floor of the Senate with a sense of history. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, said when he went to Iraq that he considered this to be a sacred mission. I think he was right. I think it was very important and is very important for our country and the international community to have resolve with Saddam Hussein and to make it clear that it is extremely important that there be unhindered inspection so that we, in fact, know what exactly is going on in Iraq and, for that matter, for other countries, I wish it would be the same in terms of development of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President, I have to say this from the floor of the U.S. Senate. I believe as a Senator that war is always the last option. When you can talk instead of fight and when you can work out a peaceful solution and when diplomacy works and where there is a nonviolent resolution to a conflict, the world is better off for it. We should have no illusions, though sometimes people come to the floor of the Senate and people talk to each other and we get all pumped up and we talk about going to war and how awful Saddam Hussein is. I certainly agree he is a very cruel—very cruel—man. But, Mr. President, there is no question that if military action was to be necessary, a lot of innocent people would die. One child, one mother, one civilian in Iraq is one too many. One of our soldiers is one too many.

I am prayerfully thankful that Saddam Hussein seems to have understood the importance of these demands and, most important of all, because of the strong position that our country has

taken and also because of the very, very skillful diplomacy—very skillful diplomacy—of the Secretary General, I would like to thank the Secretary General for his effort.

We haven't dotted all the i's and crossed all the t's, and we have not seen the specifics, but I believe as a United States Senator that his mission was a sacred mission. I am very hopeful that we will have a political settlement. I am very hopeful that diplomacy will have worked, and I think the world will be better for that. Whenever we can avoid loss of life, let's first do that.

So we all wait to see. From what I have read, from what I have heard, and the Secretary General is a man who is very careful with his words, when he says he believes this will be acceptable to the United Nations, to the Security Council, I don't think he would have said that unless there is good cause for it.

So I am very hopeful that this will be acceptable to the Security Council, and we will have a resolution to this conflict without having to go to war, without having to take military action.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me briefly talk about this campaign finance reform bill that is coming to the floor. By the way, this, I think, will be the business of the Senate this week. This is a core issue. This is the core problem, and this is going to be a real important debate for our country. I think it should be very clear to everybody in the country where all of us stand.

I know we have differences. Probably the Chair and I have differences on this issue. But I can't help but believe that we can't get some good things done together, because I can't but believe that any of us who have been through these campaigns just hate this system. It is just crazy.

I remember when I ran in 1990 in Minnesota the first time around. It was as if the only thing that mattered was how much money you had in terms of who gets to run, in terms of whether you have a viable campaign, in terms of who wins, in terms of what issues get discussed, in terms of who the people are who have access to the Congress all too often, as opposed to so many of the people who don't.

This is a core issue, and if you believe that each person should count as one and no more than one in a representative democracy, all the ways in which big money have come to dominate politics severely undercut our democracy. As a matter of fact, I think it is part of what has led to this serious decline of participation of our citizens which really can only lead to decline of our democracy.

So there are many concerns that people have, and they care about a lot of issues that are important to themselves and their families. But the prob-

lem is, they don't believe that their concerns are of much concern in the Halls of the Congress or, for that matter, the White House, because they believe that the political process in Washington, DC, has become so dominated by big money and special interests.

How important it is that we at least take some steps toward eliminating some of this corrupting influence of this big money and try to begin to make these campaigns sane, try to begin to make these campaigns at least a little bit more of a level playing field.

The Washington Post had an editorial today:

McCain-Feingold is already a limited bill.

I agree. I wish we had the clean money-clean election option passed by Maine and Vermont, but McCain-Feingold is a very important step forward.

For lack of votes, the original proposals meant to clean out the stables of congressional campaign finance almost all have been dropped. Congress's indignation with regard to financing of presidential United States campaigns somehow does not extend to the financing of its own.

Well, I would just ask people in Minnesota and people in the country: Please be vigilant. Please keep an eye out on our work. Do not let the U.S. Senate block reform. And do not let the U.S. Senate pass some piece of legislation that has that made-for-Congress look with a great acronym which pretends to do so much and ends up doing so little.

That is the worst of all cases. I'd just as soon we not do anything as opposed to passing something which we claim will make an enormous difference but really does not and will just add to the disillusionment of people in our country.

So I just say, this will be an important week. This is going to be an important debate. I hope we will get some things done.

For my own part, if the majority leader will let us, I will have a set of amendments that will apply to the Congress. I will have a set of amendments that will apply to our campaigns which will be an effort to begin to go after some of the influence of big money in congressional campaigns along with some of the other things that we will be talking about, like soft money.

If I cannot bring those amendments to the floor in this debate, I will bring these amendments to the floor in the next bill that comes up or the following bill that comes up, because I do not think there is any more important issue that is facing this country.

So to Minnesotans and to people in the country: Please hold all of us accountable. Do not let people get away with blocking reform. Do not let any of us get away with passing some piece of legislation which has no teeth and makes really no difference at all. Make sure that we take some steps in this U.S. Senate that will at least get some

of this big money out of politics and at least move us a little bit more toward elections as opposed to auctions going to the highest bidder.

Mr. President, I think that I have about run out of my time. I yield the floor to my colleagues from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR ABRAHAM RIBICOFF

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate an extraordinary life. We in the U.S. Senate have lost a former colleague and a leading light of the U.S. Senate—Abraham Ribicoff.

Abe Ribicoff, Mr. President, was born and raised in New Britain, CT. He was the son of poor Polish immigrants. Yet this humble son of Connecticut rose to become one of our State's and our country's most distinguished public servants. He served in this body for 18 years—beginning in January of 1963 and retiring in 1981.

One of the highest honors I have had in public life, Mr. President, was to succeed Abe Ribicoff in the U.S. Senate, and I take great pride in the fact that in 1981 Abe Ribicoff placed my name in nomination for this office.

Abe Ribicoff believed fervently that the highest calling one can have in American life is public service. He obeyed that calling as few Americans ever have. He is the only person in our Nation's history to have served as a State legislator, a municipal judge, a U.S. Representative, a Governor, a Presidential Cabinet Secretary, and a U.S. Senator.

But to appreciate Abe Ribicoff, it is important to understand that he did more than occupy an impressive collection of public offices. What distinguished Abe Ribicoff from his peers, from his predecessors, and from those who have come after him is not the number of offices he held, but the manner in which he held them. Abe Ribicoff brought to his life's work integrity, candor, high principle, an unshakeable faith in America's Government, and a deeply held belief in the goodness and decency of our people.

Abe Ribicoff had the rarest and most important of all qualities we seek in public leaders—courage in the public arena. Time and again, in ways large and small, he demonstrated a commitment to principle even in the face of fierce opposition. He was willing to fight for what he believed to be right. And he fought hard, though always—always—in a decent and honorable manner.

In Abe Ribicoff's politics, there was no place for meanness, no place for personal attacks. He understood the importance of public opinion, but he never relied on polls to shape his political decisions. He was guided not by emotion, not by numbers, but by judgment, by reason, and by principle.