Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I appreciate the unanimous consent to speak for 20 minutes. Let me associate myself strongly with both sets of remarks by the Senator from Connecticut—first, as to our good friend and great loss with regard to Secretary Brown, who we will miss greatly. And, second, nothing could be more on our minds today than the horror of last year in Oklahoma City. The moments of silence here and across the country were a fitting reminder of that tragedy, but also a time to feel some real gratitude toward the employees of our Federal Government, who do not always get treated with all the respect and admiration they deserve. They had a very rough year in 1995. I, for one, want to thank them for their services and the sacrifices of their families throughout the country, particularly with regard to those who suffered the loss in Oklahoma City.

I thank the Senator from Connecticut for his remarks.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, it looks like a very ambitious agenda has been announced for this session until Memorial Day. I welcome much of that agenda, and I especially welcome the type of bill that we handled yesterday, the so-called Kennedy-Kassebaum bill.

That bill regarding health care reform is a classic example of a good, bipartisan effort that I think the American people are really starved for. They want nothing more than to see those of us who have the honor of being elected to Congress work together on a bipartisan basis. What we did yesterday, I think, exemplifies better than anything else the possibilities of working together in this body for the good of the country.

In fact, Mr. President, in his State of the Union, President Clinton endorsed the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, saying that that bipartisan effort was acceptable to him and that he would be happy to sign it. That gave the bill a lot of impetus, and I think it was a very important moment in the State of the Union.

Mr. President, the President of the United States also endorsed another bipartisan bill that night on another topic that might be even more fundamental—I would say it is even more fundamental than the important bill we passed yesterday. The topic that the President was referring to was campaign finance reform, and the bill that he endorsed was S. 1219, the first bipartisan bill on campaign reform in this body in about 10 years.

Mr. President, I rise today—and, in a moment, a couple of my colleagues will also rise—to say that the time is now to take up the issue of campaign finance reform on this floor, to take up this bipartisan effort, which, among other things, will, for the first time, voluntarily limit the overall amount a candidate can spend when they run for the U.S. Senate or the House of Representatives, and for the first time say that you have to get a majority of your campaign contributions from individuals, from the people from your own home State, not from PAC's or from out-of-staters, but the majority from your own home State, if you want to get the benefits of the bill; and finally, for the very first time, some reasonable incentives to get people to not spend unlimited amounts of their own cash, so that people get the sickening feeling that elections can be bought.

All of this is highlighted in S. 1219. In doing so, of course, Mr. President, I especially pay tribute to the first sponsor of the bill, who has been central to the bipartisan reform efforts in the 104th Congress, the senior Senator from Arizona, Senator MCCAIN.

He has been steadfast and very dedicated to this effort. He, I, and the others who are involved in this speak almost every day about how we can move this effort from concept to fruition during the 104th Congress.

In addition, my friend who will speak next, the Senator from Minnesota, Senator WELLSTONE, and others have worked together almost on a daily basis to try to move this issue forward. We have been very encouraged that this is not just happening in this House. It is also happening in the other body where another very similar bipartisan effort is being led by a group of people from very disparate ideological viewpoints. It is one of the rare examples, I am told, where there is not just a bipartisan effort going on but a bicameral effort, a real groundswell of effort in both Houses working together for campaign finance reform.

Of course, I would be remiss not to mention the tremendous public support we are finding for S. 1219—groups like Common Cause, Public Citizens, and over 50 newspapers have endorsed the bill.

So I think it is fair to say we are in an excellent position to say that the time is now to have this issue debated on the floor.

So I, Senator MCCAIN, and the others who have been working together on this bill have come to the conclusion that it may well be necessary now to seek to amend another piece of legislation, perhaps the next appropriate vehicle, to move this issue forward given the inability of having this bill scheduled on its own at this point. I would prefer—I think we would all prefer—that the bill be scheduled separately. But, given the passage of time, I think we have very little alternative.

Mr. President, given the unprecedented level of bipartisan support, there is clearly a consensus among the public that S. 1219 ought to come to the floor. Admittedly, there was a time some years ago when I did not think we could, having passed campaign finance reform in both Houses in the 103d Congress and see it die. I was skeptical. When I read the Contract With America and saw the other party win the election, campaign finance reform was not even mentioned in the Contract With America.

Nonetheless, Mr. President, thanks to Members of both parties, this is truly a bipartisan effort. The reform agenda has arisen in the 104th Congress. It has been proven by not just introducing but by succeeding on the issues of the gift ban and lobby reform for which my friend from Minnesota was very central to in both causes. These are among the very few real accomplishments thus far in the 104th Congress. So the reform agenda has done surprisingly well.

Mr. President, I want to especially remind the body today that it is important to do this. This is not just one Senator's view of what ought to be on the floor or just the view of the cosponsors of the bill. This is the will of the body of the U.S. Senate as voted on a bipartisan basis in July of 1995.

Mr. President, last July I authored a bipartisan resolution that simply said we should consider campaign finance reform during the 104th Congress. I thought it would be a quick voice vote and be put away. But it was tested. It was sorely tested. The majority leader left his office and came to the floor personally and urged that that resolution which I had proposed be defeated, and called for a rollcall. As we know, the majority leader rarely fails to prevail. The majority leader almost never fails to get a majority. But on this one he did, and 13 Republicans joined with many Democrats so that on a 57 to 41 vote the Senate voted not to table our resolution that campaign finance reform should be considered during the 104th Congress. Subsequently, in the next vote, campaign finance reform was added to a list of items that we all voted to say ought to be considered in the 104th Congress.

Mr. President, I think that was a very key sign of the desire of this body to do campaign finance reform. I certainly believed that every Senator, when they said they wanted the issue considered, meant that they wanted it considered in a timely manner so that campaign finance reform could become law. In other words, I did not consider this to be something that Senators would want to do so late that it would not wind its way through this difficult process, and so that it would not get to the President who has said he is ready to sign the bill.

Mr. President, since that time, many other items that were on that list that we all voted for have been passed or dealt with. Welfare reform has been dealt with, the Defense Department authorization, Bosnia arms embargo, job training, and legislative branch appropriations have all been considered on the floor of the Senate—but not campaign finance reform.

Here we are in mid-April in the second year of the 104th Congress with no debate on campaign finance reform, no consideration, and thus far no votes on the issue.

So this is obviously somewhat troubling, and it becomes much more troubling when we have a spate of news articles this week announcing what the agenda will be during this floor period ending with Memorial Day. In fact, we have begun the first of several days now that are going to be devoted not to campaign finance reform but just to the issue of term limits. Admittedly, many Americans want that debate on term limits. But where is the mention in the agreement about when campaign finance reform will come up?

Some might say the bill need hearings. It has had extensive hearings in front of the Senate Rules Committee—helpful, meaningful hearings. But that opportunity has now been given, and the time has come to move forward.

So, Mr. President, before I yield to my other colleagues, let me say that I remain very optimistic about this bill. We have preferred to go the route of a separate bill, and maybe that can still happen. But we have no choice at this point but to move forward and try to amend another piece of legislation.

Some are saying that there is already not enough time to pass this bill in this Congress. But do know what that is? That is wishful thinking on the part of those who want this bill to go away. That is what you say when you hope you will try to slow the momentum of those pushing this issue. You tell everyone there is not enough time and we cannot do it until they move on to other things. But supporters of this bill all across the country know that we have bipartisan momentum and that we will come to the floor in the near future. And once that act begins, the public support and feeling about this issue will keep the issue moving in this Congress.

Mr. President, on this one, the public knows because of the bipartisan support that they will reject excuses that there was not enough time. They know that 6 months remain, at least, before we adjourn, and they will certainly tell anyone who tries to tell them there was not time, they will say that, if there is a will, there is a way.

So, Mr. President, I am very encouraged that we are ready to move.

I now yield 5 minutes of my time to the Senator from Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, first of all, let me just say that I am really proud to have introduced this bill with Senator FEINGOLD, Senator MCCAIN, and Senator THOMPSON. Now we have Senator GRAMM and Senator KASSEBAUM. I think that is a really good, bipartisan working group.

I am also especially proud to be out here with my colleague from Wisconsin from the Midwest. I think both of us see this issue in really the same way. This is all about trust.

There was in the Washington Post not too long ago an article about the Harvard-Kaiser Foundation study—really, the erosion of trust that people have in basic institutions of American life. By the way, right there at the top of the Congress is politics. I think it is because of the money choice and the appearance of corruption and gifts. By the way, I am not arguing that there is individual corruption. I do not believe that. But the point is people want to have a political process that they believe in. They yearn for a political process that they believe in. All too often money is too important in campaigns.

When I first came here almost 6 years ago, I came to the floor of the Senate. I said that the whole question of the way in which money dominates politics has become the ethical issue of our time. I have given many, many speeches on the floor of the Senate about the need for campaign finance reform. I have introduced many amendments and many bills. I thought at the end of the last Congress we were going to pass a bill. But it was filibustered and blocked at the end.

But, Mr. President, let me just say that it just looks awful for the Congress to try to stonewall this issue. I do not think symbolic politics is going to work. On the House side they are talking about some committee or commission and another study. This has an Alice in Wonderland quality to it—appoint another study by another commission followed by the same recommendations, followed by the same inaction, followed by nothing happening.

We know what the problems are. The problems are clear. There is too much money in the political process. It is too important in determining the outcome of elections. It gives the appearance of corruption. We should have a more open political process, and we should make every effort possible to try to get a lot of this big money out of politics.

Mr. President, I do not have time to go into the features. But trying to get some agreed-upon limits makes all the sense in the world. Trying to have some accountability about where the money comes from makes all the sense in the world. Trying to move toward debates and have a political process more accountable to people makes all the sense in the world.

I do not agree with every provision. I think the $250,000 limit on what an individual can spend on his campaign is too high. A lot of us cannot afford that.

I also think there is a variable campaign limit that goes up if your opponent does not agree, and I would like to work on improving that.

We came together as a bipartisan working group because we decided the time is now. The idea of campaign finance reform is an idea, colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, whose time has come in America. The idea for campaign finance reform for politics, for campaigns and for elections that people can believe in, this is an idea whose time has come in America.

This is deja vu to me, I say to my colleague from Wisconsin. We tried to do it on gift ban and lobbying disclosure. We kept getting put off and put off and put off. In all due respect to my colleagues, it just looks to me as if some people are not listening. We are not out here for symbolic reactions. We just announced, all of us together, we will bring this to the floor in May as an amendment if we do not get a time certain for an up-or-down vote on this piece of legislation, and we intend for the Senate to go on record in May. It is important that all of us do it. It is important we do it in a bipartisan way.

Let me just say again this is all about trust. We want, Democrats and Republicans alike, people to trust this political process. We want people to trust their Congress. We want people to have trust in their public officials. I am just telling you that this system in which all of us have to operate is fundamentally flawed. It is a core problem. It is badly needing reform. There is enough time that has gone by, and we are not going to let this Congress stonewall it. We are going to make sure that action is taken by this Senate and that action will be taken this May.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of the Senator from Minnesota. I yield the remainder of my time to the junior Senator from Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. THOMPSON. I thank the Chair. I thank my colleague.

I join in the proposition that it is time we address the issue of campaign finance reform in this body. It is too bad that we are having to consider it in what may be considered the midst of a Presidential campaign year. It should not be a partisan matter. Senator JOHN MCCAIN, of course, has been the leader, along with Senator FEINGOLD, on the bill on which I am privileged to be one of the original cosponsors. So we are trying to take a bipartisan look at it.

We have spent entirely too much time in times past as parties trying to figure out what would be to our advantage and our disadvantage, and both parties have done that. Nobody really knows the result of reforms we might make in terms of the success of political parties. I continue to believe that the primary ingredient is the quality of the candidate and the quality of the message regardless of what rules we play under.

I have the simple belief that there is too much money in the system. I know that it is becoming currently in vogue to say there is not enough money in the system; we need to have more. I do not believe that. I have had the opportunity in very short order to run as a challenger. I am now running for reelection after 2 years. Because I had the unexpired term of Vice President GORE, I am now running as an incumbent. I have seen it from both sides. It

takes entirely too much time to raise the millions of dollars it takes to run for political office in this country, time that we ought to be spending on the Nation's business.

People are cynical of the system that we now have. After a brief rise in public opinion, it seems, after the last Congress, we are going right back to where Congress has always been in the view of the American people, and that is basically abysmally very low. People look at the huge amounts of money in the system that both parties raise, that all candidates raise if they have any hope of being successful, and they simply do not think there is no relationship between the huge amounts of money being paid out and the actions that are being taken.

That is one of the reasons why people have less and less faith in their Government. It is heavily weighted toward incumbents. As I have said, I have seen it from both sides now, as the old song goes, and incumbency brings the finances that a challenger cannot bring against a well-entrenched incumbent who has had the opportunity to spend the last several years raising money and putting it back. Someone must have the temerity to go out and challenge him and overcome that big advantage the incumbent has.

That is not a good system. It is not serving us well. We can look at the bottom line and tell it is not serving us well. It is not producing the results. Whether it is the fiscal policy or social policy or anything you want to look at in terms of the indicators as to what direction our country is going, it is not producing the results we want to see produced in this country.

There are a lot of problems with any particular piece of legislation. I am sure there are problems with the piece that we will be supporting. To me, it is a much broader and more basic question than whether you have a $1,000 limit or a $500 limit or $250 or $5,000 or even whether you have PAC's or not. Political action committees were touted as a great reform measure just a few years ago. Now they are out of favor. I do not think it makes any difference. Individuals can contribute around PAC's anyway. PAC's at least are fully disclosed and there are some limitations on them. The same people contributing to the PAC's can contribute individually. So that is all kind of a sideshow as far as I am concerned. I think if we can do something about the overall amounts we will be making real progress.

So I join with my colleague's statement, and I am looking forward to making some progress on this, this year.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, we have heard from several of my colleagues about the need to move forward on campaign finance reform. I wholeheartedly agree—but we must not move forward without reviewing, analyzing, and understanding what those reforms entail.

Campaign finance reform is indeed a very important issue and one that has received increasing publicity and discussion among the American people.

The Senate Rules Committee has taken a bipartisan lead in bringing the full spectrum of the issues surrounding campaign finance to this discussion, and there are many important and significant issues surrounding the reform efforts.

In a series of hearings specifically designed to permit the examination and full discussion of this very important subject, the Rules Committee has heard from Senators MCCAIN, FEINGOLD, THOMPSON, WELLSTONE, FEINSTEIN, and BRADLEY, about legislation they have proposed. We have also received testimony from Members of the House—Messrs. SHAYS and MEEHAN, and Mrs. SMITH—on legislation they introduced in the House.

We have benefited in our understanding of the scope of these proposals from several distinguished lawyers and scholars who have raised significant—and serious—concerns about the constitutionality of some of the proposed reforms. This should cause every Senator to tread slowly, and ensure we have the benefit of full analysis. It remains my greatest concern that many of the reform proposals carry a high risk of being held unconstitutional. The American people would be rendered a serious disservice if we were to knowingly pass legislation which would likely prove to be an empty solution to the problems associated with campaign financing. To this end I have asked—just this past Wednesday—that the chairmen of the Republican and Democratic National Committees provide us with their analysis of the constitutionality of several of the major reform proposals, including: The ban on political action committees; the limitations placed on independent expenditures; and the soft money restrictions placed on the political parties.

In addition to appreciating the constitutional problems with some of the reform proposals, we need to understand the effects of these proposals. We should not head into a darkened tunnel without benefit of a light.

To this end, we heard pros and cons for various aspects of campaign finance reform from prestigious policy institutes—CATO Institute, Brookings Institute, and Heritage Foundation, as well as general calls for significant reform by several advocate groups.

Our hearings have permitted organizations and individuals to provide us with their perspective of campaign finance reform proposals that would eliminate political action committees [PAC's] and the bundling of funds.

We have also learned about the costs and management problems associated with the proposals that candidates for election be given reduced-fee postage. There is no free lunch—reduced-fee postage ultimately means increased prices to the American postal user. This does not necessarily mean the idea is bad, but we should understand what the costs are and who we are asking to bear those costs.

The committee has also heard positive, thought-provoking testimony about new ideas for reform that should be considered in any campaign reform evaluation. Ideas such as increasing the spending limits to adjust for inflation and increasing the role of the political parties in supporting campaigns.

In our continuing effort to cover the issues in a complete and timely manner, our next hearing is scheduled for May 8. We will bring representatives of the broadcast industry to address the costs and mechanics of implementing the reduced-fee broadcast proposals. We also hope to have testimony on the broadcast industry's efforts to voluntarily provide free broadcast time for the Presidential election—and assess the applicability of this effort to Senate elections.

In addition, we will hear from a panel of experts on the issue of campaign financing and reform, who will hopefully present meaningful analysis of the proposals as well as provide us with concrete and clearly constitutional suggestions for meaningful reform.

These bipartisan hearings are providing the basis for intelligent and meaningful floor discussion and knowledgeable voting when the vote is taken.

We should not proceed without hearing from those who are directly affected; without understanding the constitutional concerns associated with some of the reform proposals; or without permitting those who have studied this matter to present their understanding of the consequences of the proposed reforms and their suggestions for improvement.

I assure my fellow Senators, the Rules Committee will continue to hold hearings at an aggressive pace to cover the remaining issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The 4 minutes yielded to the Senator from Tennessee have expired. The Senator from California is informed there are 10 minutes remaining.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair.

ALIEN SMUGGLING

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, last evening, I had a brief opportunity to indicate to the majority leader my view of the importance of the illegal immigration bill and my hope that it would be restored to the floor very shortly.

Yesterday, the Justice Department made a series of arrests on the west coast which I believe underscore the need for this bill to be rapidly considered by this Senate and hopefully passed.

Arrests were made yesterday in San Francisco of persons involved in large-scale alien smuggling. They capped a 3-year investigation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. attorney in the northern district of California. This operation was