any of the cosponsors, attempt to seed into this legislation an advantage for one party or the other. We were fair, we were committed to genuine reform, and we were and are determined.

I have found the experience liberating, and I commend it to all of my colleagues. I urge all of my colleagues to join us in this necessary endeavor, to accept the public will and restore the public's respect for the institutions that are derived from their consent. Vote for cloture. Vote for reform.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 1 o'clock having arrived, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:02 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill is not a perfect bill. But it is a good bill. More important, it provides a good start on what ought to be one of our top priorities: loosening the grip of big-money special interests on politics.

I will vote for cloture not because I think this bill cannot be improved—it can—but because we must change the way campaigns are financed, and this is, for now, the only means we have to make that change.

There are those who say they oppose cloture because they want to be able to amend this bill and improve it. But let no one in this Chamber be fooled: a vote against cloture is a vote to kill campaign finance reform. We know that because the leading opponent of this bill has told us he intends to filibuster this bill and kill it if we give him the chance.

To block reform with calls for debate is more than cynical. It is dangerous.

A while back, the Kettering Institute conducted a survey of Americans' attitudes about the influence of money on politics. The survey found a widespread belief that ''campaign contributions determine more than voting, so why bother?'' It described ''a political system that is perceived of as so autonomous that the public is no longer able to control or direct it.''

''People talk about government,'' the study said, ''as if it has been taken over by alien beings.''

We will never restore faith in government if people believe the political system is rigged against them, if they believe it serves the wealthy, the powerful, and the politically connected at their expense.

The McCain-Feingold proposal, as I have said, is not perfect. For instance, I believe we should encourage participation in our political process by individuals who get together not because they have some narrow economic interest in a particular bill but because they have a broad interest in the direction of government. That is exactly the kind of grassroots participation that groups like EMILY'S List and, yes, WISH List, encourage. Yet this bill would ban such participation. In my opinion, that is a serious flaw.

But this bill does fix some of what is most broken about the current campaign finance system. It sets reasonable spending limits. It makes political campaigns more competitive for challengers. And it sets reasonable limits on the influence of PAC's.

This is not an attempt by one party to rewrite the rules to its own advantage. This is a bipartisan effort that will be good for both our parties, and for our Nation. I want to thank Senators MCCAIN and FEINGOLD for their leadership in getting us to this point against what must have seemed at times very long odds.

I will vote for cloture because I believe it is wrong if another Congress comes and goes and does nothing about campaign finance reform.

Talk may be cheap. But when endless talk is used to block action on campaign finance reform, it becomes terribly expensive because special interests are able to undermine efforts to solve the problems that matter most to America's families.

A while back, the Speaker of the House said, and I quote—''One of the big myths in modern politics is that campaigns are too expensive. The political process is not overfunded; it is underfunded.''

Mr. President, the American people do not agree. A poll conducted earlier this year by a Republican and a Democratic pollster asked people whether they agreed that ''those who make large campaign contributions get special favors from politicians.'' Sixty-eight percent said yes, they agreed, and they said they were deeply troubled by it.

So the need for campaign finance reform will not go away, even if, for some reason, campaign finance reform is not enacted in this Congress. Ultimately, we must change the rules. We must lessen the influence of money on politics. I urge my colleagues to join me in beginning that change by voting now to bring this reasonable, modest proposal forward for a vote.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may use leader time for a very brief statement.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, just very briefly, I want to commend the Senate for the quality of the debate on this campaign finance reform issue. I have been able to listen to several of the speeches that have been given. I think on both sides of the issue and on both sides of the aisle, it has been an outstanding debate.

I commend specifically Senator MCCAIN, Senator FEINGOLD, Senator THOMPSON, and others who have sponsored this legislation, and for the quality of their cooperation and debate.

I also commend the courage, once again, of the outstanding leader of the opposition to this campaign finance reform, Senator MCCONNELL. He has done a magnificent job. I think we should recognize that.

I think this is an important issue which we will address, I am sure, again in the future. But I think it is too important to address right at this point in the heat of the national election debate.

I do not think we have the solutions here. So I urge that cloture not be invoked.

I hope the Senate will not invoke cloture on the McCain-Feingold substitute amendment to S. 1219.

We all agree that campaign finance reform is an important issue. But it's become too important to deal with it during the heat of a national election.

It is already too late in the calendar year to make this bill's provisions apply to the elections of 1996. So we are not going to lose anything by waiting until early next year to get this job done.

When we do it, we have to do it right—the first time. We should not make the same mistake the Senate made back in 1974, when it hastily cobbled together a campaign reform bill that later came apart at the seams before the Supreme Court.

Since the Court's decision in Buckley versus Valeo in 1974, the Congress has been on notice that, when it comes to imposing rules and restrictions on the financing of political campaigns, we must be scrupulously careful of the first amendment.

In short, our good intentions must pass constitutional muster. My personal judgment is that this bill does not do so.

I recognize that others may disagree, but when it comes to the free speech protections of the first amendment, I prefer to err on the side of caution, rather than zeal.

I need not go into all the details already covered by other speakers, but I note that one of the key provisions in this legislation—concerning political action committees—has a fallback provision, in case the original provision is overturned by the Supreme Court as a violation of the first amendment.

What that means to me is that we know at least some parts of this bill are on shaky ground. I think we should craft campaign finance reforms that are rock solid.

Two of our colleagues from the Republican side of the aisle have played crucial roles with regard to this legislation. Both have acted out of conscience and principle, and have come to opposite conclusions.