

amount of money being spent by candidates themselves is dwarfed by the amount of soft money spent by others in their own races.

The ban on soft money that the McCain-Feingold bill demands is an essential step to diminish the tremendous amount of money pouring into campaigns. Some opponents of the bill claim that banning soft money is unconstitutional. Senators MCCAIN and FEINGOLD have taken extra measures to ensure that the provisions in this bill comply with the Supreme Court's 1976 decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*. The court ruled that the Constitution permits the Government to regulate the flow of money in politics to prevent corruption or the appearance of corruption.

Political service remains a worthy calling, but anyone who enters it these days encounters a campaign fundraising system that is debilitating and demeaning and distasteful. The fact that we so clearly have ineffective checks on the spiraling cost of campaigns and on the way campaigns are financed has tarnished our institutions of Government as well as the people we elect to those institutions.

It is important to bring our election process and Government back to the time when elected officials felt accountable to all of the people they represent, not disproportionately to the wealthy few. Our present system gives the wealthy a huge megaphone for expressing their views, while other Americans—the “financially inarticulate”—are left without an effective voice. That is why I have felt it important to take steps on my own to increase Vermonters trust in how I conduct my campaigns. Though not required by law I have disclosed every nickel in contributions I have ever received since I first ran for the Senate in 1974, and I used no political action committee money in my last two election campaigns. Passing the McCain-Feingold bill—without any amendments designed to weaken it or destroy it—is a fundamental step all of us can take to fix a system that is in dire need of repair. Vermonters and all Americans want to have faith in the campaign and election process. They want to believe that their Government is working in the public's interest, not on behalf of the special interests. Eliminating unregulated soft money will help to give elections and the Government back to the people.

I hope the Senate will not let this opportunity for reform slip away. I hope the Senate will approve this important and long-awaited bill and will refrain from adding any amendments that would jeopardize or kill this important effort.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 4

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, pursuant to the agreement of February 7 with respect to S.J. Res. 4, I ask

unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the resolution on Monday, March 26, at 2 p.m. and the time between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. be equally divided between Senators HOLLINGS and HATCH. I further ask unanimous consent that at 6 p.m. on Monday, the resolution be advanced to third reading and a vote occur on passage without any intervening action or debate, notwithstanding paragraph 4 of rule XII.

This is the Hollings constitutional amendment.

Mr. DODD. Reserving the right to object, this is on Monday?

Mr. McCONNELL. Right. It is my understanding this had been cleared. This is a vote on the Hollings constitutional amendment. The debate would occur from 2 to 6 on Monday.

Mr. DODD. With a vote at 6 p.m.

Mr. McCONNELL. At 6 p.m.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it also the understanding that there will be debate on the amendment starting at noon?

Mr. McCONNELL. Correct. There would probably be more than one vote at 6 o'clock. It would be a vote on the Hollings amendment and other votes—vote or votes, as well.

Mr. DODD. That is not part of the unanimous consent request.

Mr. McCONNELL. No. It is the intention of the managers to have more than one vote at 6 o'clock.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, the Senator from Wisconsin had a question.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, is the Hollings amendment being handled as an amendment to this legislation or as a separate piece of legislation?

Mr. McCONNELL. A separate piece of legislation.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. An issue upon which the Senator from Wisconsin and I are in agreement.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

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

BUDGET COMMITTEE MARKUP OF
BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I am a product of the West Virginia coal fields. I remember my heritage, and I am proud that it has served me well throughout my political career. I remember the legendary president of the United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis, who was a great student of Shakespeare, as I recall him in those days. And he once advised union coal miners of the adage:

when ye be an anvil,

lie very still,
when ye be a hammer,
strike with all thy will.

Mr. President, I am not an anvil—not an anvil—which explains, in part, why I joined the Senate Budget Committee this year. First, I am very concerned about Congress approving permanent tax cuts based on highly uncertain surplus estimates, which threaten to put us back in the deficit ditch. Second, I strenuously oppose the use of the reconciliation process—now, Mr. President, that is the way I have pronounced that word for years. I was called to order a little earlier today because I did not pronounce it “reconciliation,” which is all right with me, just so it is understood what we are talking about—to ram a \$2 trillion tax-cut package through the Senate. Such a misuse of the reconciliation process abuses the rights of every Senator to debate this significant legislation. That is an important thing. Third, in recent years, I have become increasingly concerned about the unrealistically low spending levels established by the annual budget resolutions for programs under the jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee, on which I serve as the ranking member and which is chaired by the most able and distinguished Senator from Alaska, Mr. STEVENS, who recently won the award “Alaskan of the Century.” And I would say at this point, I think he is the Alaskan of the Century. He deserves that award.

These unrealistically low funding levels in recent budget resolutions have forced the Appropriations Committee to resort to all manner of gimmicks and creative bookkeeping to ensure that we could adequately fund the 13 annual appropriations bills, despite not having sufficient resources to address the ongoing infrastructure needs of the Nation, much less begin to address the funding backlog in those funding needs in many critical areas.

So as a member of the Budget Committee, my hope was that this year I would be able to assist in crafting a budget resolution that would more accurately determine the spending levels that will be necessary to produce the FY 2002 appropriations bills. I wanted to actively participate in that committee in a markup of the budgetary blueprint that will guide the Nation's fiscal policy, not only for FY 2002, but for the next decade. This year's budget resolution will address not only the discretionary funding needs to which I have alluded, but also will involve efforts to allow for perhaps a massive tax cut of \$2 trillion or more, over the next 10 years. That is a big—\$2 trillion is just something that is beyond my comprehension, and probably that of most Members of this body.

I might say to the distinguished Senator who presently presides over the Senate that, much to his surprise, perhaps, it would take 32,000 years to count \$1 trillion at the rate of \$1 per second. At the rate of \$1 per second, it