

Remarks on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

October 4, 1997

For 5 years now we have watched the bipartisan effort to reform our campaign finance laws die at the hands of a filibuster in the United States Senate. I hope this year will be different. Republican Senator John McCain and Democratic Senator Russ Feingold have a strong bill that would curb the power of special interests and increase the confidence of the American people in our campaign finance system.

But this Tuesday, their opponents will try once again to kill this bipartisan bill, which has

the support of every Democratic Senator and a number of Republicans. They'll try it by using a "poison pill" amendment that will guarantee that reform dies one more time.

Make no mistake, a vote for this killer amendment is a vote to block meaningful reform.

NOTE: These remarks were recorded at 11:10 a.m. on October 4 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast.

Remarks at a Dinner for Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate Don Beyer in Arlington, Virginia

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Thank you. Well, Don, I can say yes to almost everything you asked for. [Laughter] I don't know about the car deal. We'll have to negotiate that. [Laughter] Everything else, put me down for a "yes." [Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome, and thank you for being here for Don and Megan. Thank you for inviting me. I want to begin by expressing my enormous admiration and gratitude for the friendships of two people in this audience with whom I served as Governor, Chuck Robb and Gerry Baliles, two of the greatest Governors Virginia ever saw.

In addition to everything Don said, I also would be remiss if I did not thank Gerry for his leadership of the special commission I established on the future of the airline industry. When we started, every airline company in America but one was losing money. We were in terrible shape. But it is a very different situation today, thanks in no small measure to the recommendations that Gerry Baliles made several years ago that we have implemented. And the country is in your debt, and we thank you, sir.

And I also want you to know from my point of view, I'm not sure there is a person in the United States Senate, given his background, his constituency, the battles he's been through, that when he was really needed, showed more con-

sistent personal courage as a public figure than Chuck Robb has these last 5 years. And I am very grateful to him for that.

I think the most battle-hardened veterans of war would tell you that there are many different ways of displaying courage and very few people can display them in every way you should in life. Everyone knew what a great battlefield record Chuck Robb had, but I have seen him stand up under withering personal attacks. I have seen him take votes that people in much safer constituencies than his would not take. I have seen him honorably and in a friendly manner disagree with his President when he thought I was wrong, and every time I knew he was doing exactly what he thought was right. And you should be very, very proud of that.

I want to compliment your whole Democratic team. I was glad to see Bill Dolan out there, and I miss L.F. Payne in Congress, but it will be nice seeing him in State office in Virginia. And thank you both for running, and thank you for being a part of this.

Let me say that I have been especially enthusiastic about Don Beyer's campaign for Governor, for what I think are good reasons. But I think the stakes are also very high. Everybody knows that in general Virginia has been a Republican State that able Democrats have been able to beat the odds in on occasion in the