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Statement on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation
February 26, 1998

I am disappointed that the Senate Republican leadership today killed campaign finance reform. Given a chance to strengthen our democracy, an obstructionist minority instead chose to preserve the system of soft money and unlimited backdoor campaign expenditures.

I am pleased that all 45 Democrats and a majority of the Senate supported the bipartisan McCain-Feingold legislation. I will support their attempts to bring this legislation up for a vote again this session. Just as the need for change has not gone away, campaign finance reform will not go away.

In the meantime, I will redouble my efforts to push campaign finance reform through other means. I ask the members of the Federal Election Commission to take the step supported by a majority of Members of the Senate and ban soft money. And I continue to call upon the Federal Communications Commission to act to provide free or discounted airtime to candidates, and I will strongly oppose any efforts by Congress to block this reform. I believe these petitions offer us the most realistic hope for real reform this year.

Statement on Proposed Child Care Legislation
February 26, 1998

Last month I unveiled my child care initiative to make child care better, safer, and more affordable. Today I am pleased that Congresswoman Kennelly has introduced comprehensive child care legislation that is also designed to meet the needs of America's children and families. Congresswoman Kennelly's bill is a strong package that, like mine, significantly increases child care subsidies for poor children, provides greater tax relief to help low- and middle-income families pay for child care, creates a tax credit for businesses that provide child care for their employees, increases after-school opportunities for children, promotes early learning, and improves child care quality.

This proposal is a testament to Congresswoman Kennelly's leadership on this issue and her commitment to the future of our Nation's children. I look forward to working with her and other Members of Congress to enact bipartisan child care legislation that helps Americans fulfill their responsibilities as workers and, even more important, as parents.

Statement Announcing Grants Under the Violence Against Women Program
February 27, 1998

Today the Justice Department is awarding more than $135 million in grants under the Violence Against Women program to help State and local authorities combat domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. This money will be used to train police, hire prosecutors, and provide assistance to victims. Since I signed the Crime Act in 1994, we have begun to transform the way law enforcement deals with domestic violence. We should be proud of the efforts underway in communities across our Nation to stop these serious crimes. These funds will help every State build and expand on the programs they have developed to ensure that abusers are captured, prosecuted, and punished.