

Feb. 27 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Letter to the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission on
Campaign Finance Reform
February 27, 1998

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Yesterday's defeat of comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation in the Senate makes it even more imperative that the Federal Communications Commission act to provide free and reduced rate airtime to candidates and take any other steps that would reform political debate over the public airwaves.

I applaud your previous decision to take the next steps toward providing such free and reduced rate time. The issues surrounding such a proposal are complex; there are a variety of ways to proceed, and the views of all interested parties should be considered. But I continue to believe that providing such airtime is the critical next step to strengthen our democracy,

improve our political system, and give voters the loudest voice.

I strongly oppose any effort in the Congress to block your ability to take the next important steps for reform. Yesterday's defeat means that it will be virtually impossible for the Congress to move forward on campaign finance reform. The Congress should not make matters worse by actively blocking your progress.

The most realistic next steps for reform will come from the actions of regulatory agencies, acting within their legal authority, to renew our democracy. I thank you for your leadership and pledge to work with you as you move forward.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Letter to Members of the Federal Election Commission on Campaign
Finance Reform
February 27, 1998

To the Members of the Federal Election Commission:

Yesterday's defeat of comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation in the Senate makes it even more imperative that the Federal Election Commission (FEC) act to end the soft money system.

On June 4, 1997, I petitioned the FEC to act within its current statutory authority to end the soft money system. Your General Counsel, Lawrence Noble, has concluded that the FEC does, in fact, have the legal authority to act. This would be a major breakthrough for reform. I understand you have asked the General Counsel to explore other options—but the inability of the Congress to act on this vital public matter underscores how urgent it is that the FEC proceed without delay.

The rules governing soft money are principally the legacy of decades of decisions by the FEC. You have it in your power to act now to end this system. If no action is taken, then in coming years the fundraising arms race that has consumed both parties will only worsen.

The Senate's failure to pass campaign finance reform legislation means the most realistic next steps for reform will come from the actions of regulatory agencies, acting within their legal authority, to renew our democracy. I thank the FEC for the steps it has taken thus far and urge you to press forward to end the soft money system.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON