

The Federal criminal justice system should serve as a model for State criminal justice systems—where the majority of criminal cases are processed and the cycle of repeat drug-related offenders is most evident. Therefore, I am also directing you to take all appropriate steps to encourage States to adopt and implement the same policies that we are initiating at the Federal level.

You should report to me in writing by March 31, 1996, on the specific steps you will take to implement this policy.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Signing the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 and an Exchange With Reporters

December 19, 1995

The President. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today, after two decades of gridlock, I am very proud to be able to sign this legislation to bring lobbying in Washington into the sunlight of public scrutiny.

Last year when lobbying reform legislation was filibustered to death, there were lobbyists crowded outside the Senate Chamber who literally cheered. Today, I sign that bill into law. And that's something for the American people to cheer about.

I want to begin by thanking those whose efforts made this possible. And their efforts were constant, longstanding, and carried on, I might add, from time to time under great duress.

First, let me say I believe this new law to bring lobbying into the open would never have happened without the leadership of Senator Carl Levin. The first conversation that he and I had after I was elected President was about this legislation, and therefore in a very real sense this lobby reform law is a monument to the years and years of effort that Carl Levin has made. And I thank you, Senator, for that.

There are many, many other Members of Congress in both parties who played a pivotal role in enacting this needed reform. Many of them are here today, and I want to thank them. I want to thank Senator Cohen and Senator Wellstone. And I want to thank Congressman Bryant, Congressman Canady,

Congressman Frank, Congressman Fazio, Congressman McHale, Congressman Chris Shays, Congressman Goss, Congressman Doggett, and Congressman Barrett, who was not able to be here today.

On this matter, Democrats and Republicans acted together to put the public interest before partisanship. And they faced withering pressure to do otherwise. This law is also a testament to the thousands of citizens who were members of groups lobbying for this, members of Common Cause, Public Citizen, and many other groups, who have sought to make real the promise of our democracy. It is also, frankly, a testament to the efforts of thousands of citizens who belong to no particular group but who showed up at town meetings that these members and others had all across our country. They were Republicans and Democrats and independents, people who wanted this kind of change, real change, for a very, very long time.

Lobbying has its rightful place in our system. I believe every Member here and every Member who voted for this bill understands that and understands what a valuable role lobbying can play in the American system. At one time or another, just about every American citizen has wanted to be a lobbyist before the Congress on one issue or another.

But ordinary Americans also understand that organized interests too often can hold too much sway in the halls of power. They know that in Washington an influence industry too often operates in secret and gets special privileges not available to most Americans. Lobbyists in the back room secretly rewriting laws and looking for loopholes do not have a place in our democracy. All the people should know what is done by people who affect public decisions.

I ran for President in large measure to renew our democracy, to give ordinary Americans a greater stake in our Government. I strongly called for reform measures, including this bill, from the very beginning. Shortly after I took office, I implemented the toughest ethics code on executive officials in our history, barring senior appointees from lobbying their own agencies for 5 years after leaving office and from ever lobbying for foreign governments. We repealed the tax loophole that let lobbyists deduct the cost of their

activities and enacted the motor voter bill which will add millions of new voters to the rolls.

Until today, the rules governing lobbyists, virtually unchanged since 1946, have been more of a loophole than a law. For the first time this new law requires professional lobbyists to disclose publicly who they are, for whom they work, what they're spending, and what bills they're trying to pass, kill, or amend. The bill is tough. It will pull back the curtains from the world of Washington lobbying. It will help to restore the trust of the American people in their Government. It is a good bill for America.

At the outset of this year, I asked the Congress to take four major steps toward political reform. First, I asked them to apply to themselves the laws that they pass governing the rest of America. Congress took this step, thanks to the hard work of many lawmakers here today.

Second, I asked the Congress to give up gifts, meals, and trips from lobbyists. Earlier this year, Congress agreed to that, and I applaud them for that.

Thirdly, I asked Congress to enact strong lobbying disclosure. Shortly, I will sign that bill into law. And I think it is fair to say, thanks to the efforts of these gentlemen and others, that bill is much stronger than most people ever dreamed would pass the United States Congress.

Fourth, I asked the Congress to reduce the influence of money on elections. And though Congress still has not acted, there is sign of hope here as well. Truly bipartisan legislation is now moving forward in both the Senate and the House to limit spending, curb PACs and lobbyists, provide free TV time for candidates, and end the soft money system—proposals virtually identical to the ones I advocated in 1992. They are real reform. And I look forward to working with lawmakers from both parties in the months ahead to quickly enact campaign finance reform as well.

For now, let us recognize and appreciate the significant step being taken today. This law says the days of secret lobbying are over. Throughout our history, the people of our country have fought to make the Government heed their voice. This new law is in

the best tradition of America—one articulated by President Andrew Jackson a long time ago, "Equal opportunity for all; special privileges for none."

Thank you very much, all of you.

[At this point, the President signed the legislation.]

Budget Impasse

Q. Do you think you're going to get a CR before Christmas?

The President. I certainly hope so. We're going to have a meeting this afternoon, and I'm looking forward to it. The Speaker and Senator Dole are coming over, and then we'll have some more meetings. And I hope we can work it out.

If you look at this legislation, this is an example of what we can do if we focus on one goal and determine to achieve that goal and bridge our other differences. And I believe that about 80 percent of both Houses in Congress, maybe even more, would like to pass a 7-year balanced budget that has real credibility with the financial markets, that would keep interest rates coming down, keep home mortgages being refinanced, keep investment flowing into the country to keep this economy going.

Q. They won't agree to your conditions.

The President. Well, you don't know that. We'll see. We're going to keep talking. We've worked hard. I've worked hard. I worked all last weekend on this budget to do everything I can to pass a budget that is consistent. I even got—I gave this to all our folks today to make sure that they would read and reread this—the actual language of the last continuing resolution. And so we're working on it very hard.

Q. You said that in this bill the Democrats and Republicans put partisan considerations aside and worked for the public interest. Do you feel that the White House and the Republicans can do that now on the budget?

The President. Yes. It's more difficult because there are 80 or 90 issues—policy issues that we have some differences on. But if we say what our goal is, our goal is to pass a credible balanced budget plan, recognizing that no one can foresee what will happen in every year of the next 7 years but that a plan that is passed, that is credible, that is ulti-

mately certified by the Congressional Budget Office, that the financial markets and the business community, the ultimate judge of this say, this is a good plan, this is going to work. That would be a very good thing for America. I think we can do it.

The Economy

Q. You sound concerned, Mr. President, about the financial markets; you brought it up twice this morning. Are you worried about the hit it took yesterday?

The President. Not especially. I don't like to comment on short-term changes in the market. You know, when I ran for President, I said I thought if we could pass a credible deficit reduction plan in 1993, we could create over 8 million jobs and we'd get a stock market of 4,000. I never dreamed it would go to 5. [Laughter] So the American economy is very strong, very vibrant. And in an economy with a free market system with this much activity, there's going to be changes in the market—you know there are, always have been, always will be. I don't think we should comment on that or read too much into it one way or the other.

Securities Litigation Reform

Q. Are you going to sign the securities litigation reform, Mr. President?

The President. For the last week, I have spent several hours on that. I believe that some legislative activity there is warranted, and I'm going to have a final review today. Yesterday I had a long meeting, and I asked one particular question and asked it to be researched at some length. I'll have a meeting later this afternoon; I'll have an announcement sometime today about it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:09 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. S. 1060, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 104-65.

Statement on Signing the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995

December 19, 1995

Today I am pleased to approve S. 1060, the "Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995." I

have strongly supported the purposes and principles embodied in this legislation since the beginning of my Administration. During my first days in office, I barred all top executive branch officials from lobbying their agencies for 5 years after leaving office and from ever lobbying for foreign governments. During the 103rd Congress, my Administration lent its strong support to congressional backers of legislation that served as the model for the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.

As a general matter, S. 1060 provides for the disclosure of efforts by paid lobbyists to influence the decision-making process and actions of Federal legislative and executive branch officials. It replaces the existing patchwork of lobbying disclosure laws with a single, uniform statute that covers the activities of all professional lobbyists. Among other things, the bill streamlines lobbyist disclosure requirements and requires that professional lobbyists register and file regular reports identifying their clients, the issues on which they lobby, and the amount of their compensation. These are important steps in the right direction.

The Department of Justice has identified certain provisions in the Act that raise constitutional concerns—in particular, the role given to the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the specific manner in which the legislation seeks to protect the exercise of religion. I shall instruct the Attorney General to apply and enforce the Act in a constitutional manner. This will ensure that the Act survives any challenge in court and thereby guarantee that the Act is fully effective in accomplishing its objectives, including the protection of religious expression.

In addition, section 21(b) of the Act would forbid the appointment as United States Trade Representative or Deputy United States Trade Representative, of anyone who had ever "directly represented, aided, or advised a foreign [government or political party] . . . in any trade negotiation, or trade dispute with the United States." The Congress may not, of course, impose broad restrictions on the President's constitutional prerogative to nominate persons of his choosing to the highest executive branch positions,