FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

STATEMENT OF SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE
AT THE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

MR. CHAIRMAN, SENATOR, THANK YOU AND GOOD MORNING.
YOU KNOW, WE'VE BEEN AROUND THE CAMPAIGN-FINANCE REFORM
TRACK SO MANY TIMES, IT SEEMS THE DUST NEVER SETTLES. BUT WHAT
IS SETTLED IS THAT CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM SHOULD BE A TOP
PRIORITY, AND WE MUST PASS REFORM LEGISLATION THIS YEAR.

REPUBLICANS STAND FOR REFORM
FROM DAY ONE, SENATE REPUBLICANS HAVE BEEN LEADING THE
CHARGE TO MAKE POLITICS MORE COMPETITIVE AND MORE RESPONSIVE TO
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. OUR REFORM PLAN WOULD:
* BAN POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES OUTRIGHT;
* BAN THE PRACTICE OF BUNDLING CONTRIBUTIONS;
* PROHIBIT FRANKED MASS MAILINGS IN AN ELECTION YEAR;
* RESTRICT ALL SOFT MONEY, NOT JUST PARTY SOFT MONEY;
* PUT A PREMIUM ON IN-STATE FINANCING BY LOWERING THE OUT-
OF-STATE CONTRIBUTION LIMIT TO $500; AND
* IMPROVE POLITICAL COMPETITION BY ALLOWING THE PARTIES TO
GIVE EARLY SEED MONEY TO Viable CHALLENGERS.

REPUBLICANS ARE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ALL OF THESE REFORM GOALS
WITHOUT ASKING THE TAXPAYERS TO CONTRIBUTE A SINGLE DIME.

STILL PLENTY OF COMMON GROUND
BY NOW, WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES
SEPARATING THE TWO PARTIES. DEMOCRATS SUPPORT INFLEXIBLE
SPENDING LIMITS. REPUBLICANS VIEW THESE LIMITS AS AN OBSTACLE TO
POLITICAL COMPETITION. DEMOCRATS SUPPORT USING TAX DOLLARS TO
FINANCE CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS. REPUBLICANS ARGUE THAT THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT TO CUT FEDERAL SPENDING, NOT CREATE AN
ENTITLEMENT PROGRAM FOR POLITICIANS. DEMOCRATS SAY THEY WANT TO
BAN SOFT MONEY. REPUBLICANS WANT TO BAN SOFT MONEY TOO, BUT WANT
TO MAKE SURE THE BAN APPLIES ACROSS-THE-BORDER, COVERING BOTH
PARTY AND NON-PARTY CONTRIBUTIONS.

THESE DIFFERENCES ARE REAL, AND CONTINUE TO DIVIDE US. BUT
THESE DIFFERENCES SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE COMMON GROUND SHARED BY
BOTH PARTIES.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS IN THE SENATE
COULD COME TOGETHER AND PASS A REFORM BILL IN A FEW DAYS....IF WE
COULD ONLY MUSTER THE POLITICAL WILL, AND YES, CHECK OUR EGOS AT
THE DOOR. THIS BILL COULD RESTRICT PACS, BAN BUNDLING, STOP THE
FLOOD OF FRANKED MASS MAILINGS DURING AN ELECTION YEAR, CLAMP
DOWN ON SOFT MONEY, PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL BROADCAST DISCOUNT TO
MAKE CAMPAIGNS MORE AFFORDABLE, AND PERHAPS INCORPORATE SOME NEW
IDEAS THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN PUT ON THE TABLE.

THESE REFORMS WOULD ALTER THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. THEY
WOULD MAKE POLITICS MORE COMPETITIVE. AND THEY WOULD HELP
RESTORE THE CREDIBILITY OF CONGRESS WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

NO ILLUSIONS, BUT HOPEFUL
ALTHOUGH I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT A BIPARTISAN COMPROMISE
CAN BE FASHIONED, I STILL REMAIN HOPEFUL. MY DEMOCRAT COLLEAGUES
SHOULD KNOW BY NOW THAT IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO IF THE DEMOCRATS
WANT TO GO IT ALONE, THAT’S FINE WITH ME, BUT THEY SHOULD KNOW
THAT REPUBLICANS ARE PREPARED TO STAND BY THEIR PRINCIPLES.

THESE PRINCIPLES WERE WELL ARTICULATED IN A RECENT LETTER BY FIVE
OF MY REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES--SENATORS CHAFEE, COHEN, DURENBERGER,
JEFFORDS, AND McCAIN. I URGE MY COLLEAGUES ON THE COMMITTEE TO
READ THIS LETTER WITH CARE.

LET’S FACE IT: WHEN IT COMES TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM,
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON’T WANT A PARTISAN DOCUMENT.

(MORE)
THEY WANT A DOCUMENT THEY CAN TRUST--ONE THAT ENJOYS BIPARTISAN, AND NON-PARTISAN, SUPPORT.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I SEE NO NEED TO RUSH THIS BILL TO THE FLOOR. ALTHOUGH THE REFORM CLOCK IS TICKING, IT HAS NOT RUN OUT. THE ADMINISTRATION TOOK MORE THAN THREE MONTHS TO UNVEIL ITS OWN REFORM PACKAGE, SO I DON'T SEE WHY WE SHOULD RUSH TO ACTION--IF A SMALL DELAY WILL GIVE US THE TIME TO HAMMER OUT A COMPROMISE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH PARTIES. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE EXPECT US TO SEEK OUT THE COMMON GROUND.

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