

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



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DOLE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM:  
TIME TO DUMP PARTISANSHIP  
DOLE LISTS IDEAS  
COMMENTS ON PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS) TODAY MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON THE SENATE FLOOR:

AFTER WE FINISH ACTION ON THE CLEAN AIR BILL, THE SENATE WILL TAKE UP ANOTHER, PERHAPS EQUALLY, CONTENTIOUS ISSUE -- CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM.

NORMALLY, THE SIMPLE MENTION OF THESE THREE WORDS WOULD SEND SHIVERS DOWN OUR PARTISAN SPINES. CONGRESS HAS A TRACK RECORD ON THIS ISSUE, AND IT IS A RECORD STREWN WITH ACCUSATION, WITH BLUSTER, AND HIGH-PITCHED PARTISANSHIP.

LAST MONTH, SENATOR MITCHELL AND I TRIED TO IMPROVE THIS RECORD BY COMMISSIONING A SIX-MEMBER BIPARTISAN PANEL OF EXPERTS TO REVIEW OUR CURRENT SYSTEM OF CAMPAIGN FINANCING AND TO DEVELOP, IF POSSIBLE, SOME "NEW APPROACHES" THAT COULD SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR BREAKING THE PARTISAN DEADLOCK HERE IN THE SENATE. EARLIER THIS WEEK, THE PANEL FORMALLY TRANSMITTED ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO ME AND TO THE MAJORITY LEADER.

I HAVE CALLED THE PANEL'S REPORT A "POTENTIAL BREAKTHROUGH." SOME HAVE CHARACTERIZED MY DESCRIPTION OF THE REPORT AS GUARDED, AS CAUTIOUS, BUT A "POTENTIAL BREAKTHROUGH" ON AN ISSUE LIKE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IS VERY SIGNIFICANT AND SHOULD NOT BE DOWNPLAYED.

I AM PLEASED THAT THE PANEL HAS COMPLETELY REJECTED THE IDEA OF DIRECT PUBLIC FINANCING OF CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS.

I AM PLEASED THAT THE PANEL HAS RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE THE ROLE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

I AM PLEASED THAT THE PANEL RECOGNIZES THE SPECIAL IMPORTANCE OF IN-STATE CONTRIBUTIONS -- CONTRIBUTIONS, IN OTHER WORDS, FROM THE PEOPLE WHO ELECT US, THE PEOPLE WHO SEND US HERE TO CONGRESS.

AND I AM PLEASED THAT THE PANEL HAS SHIFTED THE REFORM DEBATE AWAY FROM THE FIXATION ON ARTIFICIAL -- ARBITRARILY DETERMINED -- SPENDING LIMITS AND TOWARDS THE REAL CULPRIT IN THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE DEBATE -- THE SOURCES OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS.

"FLEXIBLE" SPENDING LIMIT

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DISCUSSION OF THE PANEL'S PROPOSAL OF A "FLEXIBLE" SPENDING LIMIT. I MUST ADMIT THAT I AM INTRIGUED BY THE IDEA, AND I AM CONSIDERING IT.

BUT AS I HAVE SAID MANY, MANY TIMES BEFORE, AN ABSOLUTE -- FIXED -- CAP ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING IS NOTHING MORE THAN A PRESCRIPTION FOR INCUMBENCY PROTECTION. INCUMBENTS ALREADY ENJOY A NUMBER OF TANGIBLE BENEFITS NOT AVAILABLE TO CHALLENGERS -- PAID PROFESSIONAL STAFF, THE FRANKING PRIVILEGE, ACCESS TO FREE MEDIA COVERAGE -- AND THEY DO NOT NEED YET ANOTHER WEAPON IN THEIR ARSENAL AGAINST CHALLENGERS.

FORTUNATELY, THE PANEL REJECTED THE IDEA OF AN ABSOLUTE -- FIXED -- CAP ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING AND OPTED FOR A CONSIDERABLY MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH.

THE PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS: NOT FAR ENOUGH

LET ME JUST SAY THAT IN TWO KEY AREAS -- PAC MONEY AND "SOFT" MONEY -- THE PANEL DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH.

THE PANEL CALLS FOR A CAP ON AGGREGATE PAC CONTRIBUTIONS AND FOR A MODEST REDUCTION IN THE MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL PAC CONTRIBUTION. IT WOULD ALSO PROHIBIT UNION AND CORPORATE PACS FROM ENGAGING IN THE PRACTICE KNOWN AS "BUNDLING" AND FROM MAKING SO-CALLED "INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES."

(MORE)



THESE ARE ALL EXCELLENT RECOMMENDATIONS, AND I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PART OF THE REPUBLICAN APPROACH FROM THE BEGINNING.

BUT REPUBLICANS WOULD GO EVEN FURTHER. IF WE ARE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE CORRUPTING ROLE OF PAC MONEY IN THE CAMPAIGN PROCESS, THEN LET'S DO IT THE RIGHT WAY. LET'S CUT THE MAXIMUM PAC CONTRIBUTION FROM \$5,000 TO \$1,000, OR PERHAPS EVEN LOWER.

NO CONFUSING FORMULAS. NO CAVEATS. JUST A SIMPLE, SIGNIFICANT, CUT IN THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE PAC CONTRIBUTION.

I KNOW THAT COMMON CAUSE RARELY SIDES WITH US REPUBLICANS -- BUT ON THIS ISSUE, I BELIEVE, WE SHARE A COMMON AGENDA.

#### "SOFT" MONEY

ON ANOTHER ISSUE -- THE ISSUE OF "SOFT" MONEY -- THE PANEL RECOMMENDS FULL DISCLOSURE OF ALL "SOFT" MONEY EXPENDITURES. THE PANEL ALSO RECOMMENDS CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON THE EXPENDITURE OF "SOFT" MONEY BY NATIONAL AND STATE POLITICAL PARTIES.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT INCREASED PUBLIC DISCLOSURE LEADS TO INCREASED PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY. AND INCREASED PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE ENTIRE ELECTORAL SYSTEM. THERE'S NO DISPUTE ON THAT POINT.

BUT THE REAL PROBLEM -- THE REAL "SEWER" MONEY -- IS NOT THE MONEY THAT COMES FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES. IT'S THE MONEY THAT COMES FROM THE PRIVATE INTERESTS WHO FEEL THAT THEY CAN "GET SOMETHING FROM US" BY MAKING SOFT MONEY EXPENDITURES.

SO, IF WE ARE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT SOLVING THE "SOFT" MONEY PROBLEM, IF WE ARE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT CLEANING UP THE SEWER, THEN LET'S DO IT. LET'S PROHIBIT BANKS, SAVINGS AND LOANS, UNIONS, AND OTHER BUSINESSES FROM MAKING "SOFT" MONEY EXPENDITURES. PURE AND SIMPLE. AN OUTRIGHT PROHIBITION.

I KNOW THAT MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUE, SENATOR DOMENICI, INTRODUCED A BILL YESTERDAY THAT CONTAINS THIS VERY PROPOSAL. REPUBLICAN COMMITMENT TO REFORM

SO, DESPITE WHAT YOU READ ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE OF THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST, SENATE REPUBLICANS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED TO MEANINGFUL CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM. TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT S.7 -- MY BILL -- AND S. 1727 -- THE PRESIDENT'S BILL -- AND YOU WILL SEE THAT BOTH BILLS CONTAIN MANY OF THE PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED BY THE BIPARTISAN PANEL.

#### THE NEED FOR BIPARTISANSHIP

BUT LET'S FACE IT: IF CONGRESS IS TO PASS COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM LEGISLATION, IT MUST DO SO ON A BIPARTISAN BASIS. AND IF THE 8 CLOTURE VOTES ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM LEGISLATION DURING THE 100TH CONGRESS HAVE TAUGHT US ANYTHING, THEY HAVE TAUGHT US THAT PARTISANSHIP JUST WON'T WORK WHEN IT COMES TO CLEANING UP THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE MESS.

SO, I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE BIPARTISANSHIP EXEMPLIFIED BY THE PANEL WILL SPILL-OVER TO US IN CONGRESS. IT'S ABOUT TIME TO STOP PLAYING THE PARTISAN GAME AND GET DOWN TO SERIOUS BIPARTISAN NEGOTIATIONS -- PERHAPS USING THE FRAMEWORK OUTLINED IN THE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T CONTRAST THE PANEL'S BIPARTISANSHIP WITH THE PARTISAN PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN S. 137, THE BILL THAT WAS REPORTED OUT OF THE RULES COMMITTEE YESTERDAY ON A STRAIGHT PARTY-LINE VOTE. S. 137 IS LIKE A TIRED OLD DOG THAT JUST WON'T GIVE UP -- AND IT'S A PARTISAN DOG TO BOOT.

LET ME JUST ADD THAT THERE ARE MORE THAN ENOUGH VOTES ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE TO DEFEAT A CLOTURE MOTION ON S. 137 -- BUT, AGAIN, I HOPE THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO GO DOWN THAT WEARY ROAD YET ANOTHER TIME.

#### CONCLUSION

ALTHOUGH MORE REVIEW IS CERTAINLY NEEDED, THE BIPARTISAN PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE -- IN FACT, SHOULD BE -- THE STARTING POINT FOR REAL, BIPARTISAN REFORM.

AS A RESULT, I INTEND TO SPEND THE RECESS DISCUSSING THE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MY SENATE REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES. I AM, OBVIOUSLY, VERY INTERESTED IN HEARING THEIR VIEWS.

AND I ENCOURAGE MY COLLEAGUES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE AISLE TO TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE RECOMMENDATIONS AS WELL.

HOPEFULLY, IT WON'T BE TOO LONG BEFORE WE CAN ALL ROLL-DOWN OUR SLEEVES AND TAKE A SEAT AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.