

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

DOLE INTRODUCES BILL TO ESTABLISH EIGHT-MEMBER BIPARTISAN COMMISSION INSTRUCTED TO REPORT BACK TO CONGRESS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER "FAST-TRACK" PROCEDURE

As I prepare to leave an institution in which I have served for over 35 years, I am mindful that in many ways the public has lost confidence in the ability of legislators to represent their interests, not special interests.

We should not allow this to continue. Representative democracy, founded on fair and competitive elections, is at the core of what makes America great. Yet, concern over how we finance elections threatens to erode the trust the American people have in our elected officials.

As my colleagues know, Congress has tried repeatedly to grapple with this issue and largely failed. However, I continue to believe that the very nature of the problem makes it difficult to resolve in the normal give and take of the legislative process.

In 1990, for example, Senator Mitchell and I appointed a six-member commission of outside experts to look at this issue and report back to us, but the report was unfortunately ignored by Congress.

I suggested in 1994 and repeatedly since then that a similar commission be constituted to report back to Congress, but with an important difference. This time, the report should be in the form of recommended legislative language which provides a solution and Congress should have an opportunity for an up and down vote.

As my colleagues know, both President Clinton and Speaker Gingrich endorsed a similar concept last year when they met in New Hampshire.

I therefore send to the desk a bill that establishes an eight-member commission of outside experts. They would have the broadest possible mandate to think through this problem, come up with solutions and report back to Congress not more than 30 days after the convening of the 105th Congress.

The commission will send Congress legislative language for those recommendations on which seven members agree. Congress will consider those recommendations under expedited procedures that mirror the fast-track authorities in our trade laws.

I know my colleagues will be grappling with this issue soon. However, I believe that it would be better to take this issue out of what is already a super-heated partisan atmosphere, and allow a bi-partisan approach to be developed that Congress cannot ignore.

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