

**NLWJC - Kagan**

**DPC - Box 035 - Folder 026**

**Political Reform - Talking  
Points**

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## ENDING BUSINESS AS USUAL IN WASHINGTON A Strong Record of Reform

*"The fact is, organized interests have too much power in the halls of government. These influence groups too often promote their own interest at the expense of the public interest. Too often they operate in secret. Too often they have special privileges ordinary Americans don't even know exist.... We have an historic opportunity to renew our democracy and strengthen our country. If we truly believe in a government that puts ordinary Americans ahead of the powerful and privileged, then we must act and act now."*

President Bill Clinton  
February 17, 1996

### A Record of Accomplishment:

Time and again, President Clinton has exhibited his commitment to curbing the influence of special interests and money in our political system. Since entering office President Clinton has pursued a far-reaching agenda of political reform. The President is committed to reforming the way Washington works and ending business as usual. Among his accomplishments, he has:

- Made voting easier for more than 11 million Americans by creating more accessible voter registration locations by enacting the **National Voter Registration Act** ("Motor-Voter"). The Motor-Voter law has already created the greatest expansion in the voter registration rolls since the 19th century.
- Fought for and signed into law the **Lobbying Disclosure Act**. The Act is the first overhaul of lobbying rules in 50 years and requires lobbyists to disclose who they work for and eliminates loopholes that allow lobbying organizations to avoid
- **Gift ban.** In the 1995 State-of-the-Union Address, President Clinton challenged the Congress to ban gifts, meals, travel and entertainment from lobbyists. The Congress subsequently passed the ban on November 16th, 1995.
- Enacted the **Congressional Accountability Act** to ensure that the same laws apply to Congress as to the rest of America.

- **Closing the "lobbyist loophole."** In 1993, President Clinton proposed, and Congress passed, legislation ending the tax-deductibility of lobbying expenses, which had allowed corporations and others to deduct the cost of their lobbying.
- Imposed the **strictest Administration ethics guidelines** ever, including a five-year ban on top officials lobbying their former agencies and a lifetime ban against lobbying for foreign governments.
- Enacted **line-item veto** legislation which significantly enhances the presidential authority to eliminate wasteful spending by allowing the President to cancel wasteful special interest projects and targeted tax breaks that benefit special interests. The line-item veto can help the President close the door on business as usual in Washington by ending breaks for special interests and cutting pet spending projects that sneak into the budget year after year. With this line-item veto, the President will have a valuable new tool to ensure that our public resources are being put to the best possible uses.
- Enacted the **Unfunded Mandates Reform Act** to restrict Congress from passing on new mandates to state and local governments without paying for them.
- **Special Interests.** President Clinton has stood up to special interests, such as the National Rifle Association and the tobacco industry, loosening their tight hold on our legislative process. The President broke six years of congressional gridlock and defeated the gun lobby by enacting a **ban on assault weapons** and the **Brady Law**.

### **A History Of Fighting For Real Campaign Finance Reform**

- 1992 Campaign Finance Reform Proposal.** In the 1992 campaign, Governor Clinton proposed spending limits, free TV time, PAC limits and a ban on soft money. The current McCain-Feingold and Shays-Meehan legislation mirrors this proposal.
- 1993-1994 Campaign Finance Reform Plan.** The President and the congressional Democratic leadership proposed a reform plan that also included partial public funding for congressional candidates. Reform groups praised the President for his support of the plan. Unfortunately, the legislation was filibustered, despite passage in both chambers.
- 1995 Bipartisan CFR Commission.** In June of 1995, the President agreed

with Speaker Gingrich to create a bipartisan political reform commission. The President named John Gardner and Doris Kearns Goodwin to launch the commission, but they were rebuffed by the Speaker.

**1996 - 1997 McCain-Feingold/Shays-Meehan.** In the 1996 State-of-the-Union, the President announced his support of the bipartisan bill. He repeated his support throughout 1996. In the 1997 State-of-the-Union Address the President challenged Congress to pass this legislation by July 4th, 1997. On January 11, 1997 the President met with the bipartisan co-sponsors of the House legislation (Shays-Meehan), reiterating his belief that delay will mean the death of reform.

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A Strong Record Of Reform**

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- Fought for and signed into law the **Lobbying Disclosure Act**. The Act is the first overhaul of lobbying rules in 50 years and requires lobbyists to disclose who they work for and eliminates loopholes that allow lobbying organizations to avoid disclosure.
- Enacted the **Congressional Accountability Act** to ensure that the same laws apply to Congress as to the rest of America.
- Eliminated the **tax deductibility of the cost of lobbying expenses** for corporations.
- Imposed the **strictest Administration ethics guidelines** ever, including a five-year ban on top officials lobbying their former agencies and a lifetime ban against lobbying for

foreign governments.

- Enacted the **Unfunded Mandates Reform Act** to restrict Congress from passing on new mandates to state and local governments without paying for them.
- Broke six years of congressional gridlock and defeated the gun lobby by passing a **ban on assault weapons** and the **Brady Law**.