

10DD

Dear 1-:

We have an opportunity to make historic change in the way that Washington works and the government does the people's business.

This week, the Congress has begun to take important and positive steps to change its operations for the better. Reducing staff, shrinking the number of committees and other measures are valuable, and long overdue. The passage of legislation that would apply to Congress the laws that apply to the public is only fair, and simple common sense. I congratulate you on these steps.

But true congressional reform must reduce the power of lobbyists and special interests. The power of organized money in Washington hurts the middle class, bloats spending and the deficit, and blocks needed change. Today, some 90,000 people in Washington are associated with lobbying Congress on behalf of narrow interests. These interests are too often able to manipulate the congressional process to insert spending projects or tax provisions in legislation. And the ever-escalating cost of campaigns, which has risen fourfold over the past two decades, gives wealthy interests and wealthy candidates disproportionate influence.

These are not partisan concerns; they are American concerns. I urge you, as you undertake the task of reforming Congress, to take on these real political reform issues.

First, as you enact legislation to apply general laws to Congress, it is vital that professional lobbyists be barred from giving gifts, meals and entertainment to members of Congress -- just as they are now barred from giving these benefits to executive branch officials.

Second, Congress should also quickly enact legislation to bring professional lobbyists into the sunlight of public scrutiny. The current lobby disclosure statute is cumbersome and antiquated. Lobbyists should disclose who their clients are, what bills they seek to pass or block, and how much they are paid.

Third, I am pleased that the Congress wants to pass a line

item veto authority for the President, something that I have consistently supported during the 1992 campaign and since. The line item veto authority will help us slash unnecessary spending and therefore helps reduce the budget deficit. It is a powerful tool for fighting special interests, who too often are able to win approval of wasteful projects through manipulation of the congressional process, and bury them in massive bills where they are protected from Presidential vetoes. It will increase the accountability of government. I want a strong version of the line item veto, one that enables the President to take direct steps to curb wasteful spending. This is clearly an area where both parties can come together in the national interest, and I look forward to working with the Congress to quickly enact this measure.

Finally, we must clean up political campaigns, reduce the role of special interests, and increase the role of ordinary citizens. Real campaign finance reform would set voluntary spending limits, dramatically limit PAC contributions to the level that individuals can now give, bar contributions from lobbyists to the lawmakers they contact, and end the use of "soft money" in Presidential campaigns.

And we should make the airwaves instruments of education, not weapons of assassination, by requiring broadcasters to provide time to bona fide candidates. This would cut the cost of campaigning and ensure that all candidates have access to the voters, regardless of their wealth. Strong proposals for free TV time have been introduced in previous years by Senator Dole and by the new chair of the House Commerce Committee, Rep. Thomas Bliley; these proposals should be the basis of bipartisan agreement on reform.

I look forward to working with the Congress to achieve results that are bipartisan, bold, and give the government back to the people.

Sincerely,

The Honorable 2-
Washington, D.C. 3-