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Senator Feinstein Urges Senate Passage
of Campaign Electronic Filing Bill

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, today spoke on the Senate Floor to urge passage of legislation that would require Senate campaign finance reports to be filed electronically.

Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) joined Senator Feinstein today in urging the Senate to pass the legislation by unanimous consent. However, passage was blocked by the opposition of one Republican Senator.

"I am urging the Senate to refrain from holding this bill hostage over other campaign finance battles that have been going on for years," Senator Feinstein said. **"This is exactly the type of good government law that the Senate could adopt as a stand alone measure. And I hope we can move the legislation without burdening it with extraneous items that will hold up passage. It's long past time to bring the Senate into the modern era."**

S.223, sponsored by Senators Feingold and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), would require Senate campaign finance reports to be filed electronically, rather than in paper format.

Currently, House candidates, Presidential candidates, political action committees and party committees are all required to file electronically. But Senators, Senate candidates and party committees are exempt.

The Senate campaign filing system in place today requires paper copies of disclosure reports to be filed with the Senate Office of Public Records, which scans them to make a digital copy and sends the copy to the Federal Elections Committee (FEC) on a dedicated communications line. The FEC then prints the report and sends it to a vendor in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where the information is keyed in by hand and then transferred back to the FEC database – at cost of approximately $250,000 annually to taxpayers.

The Rules Committee approved the legislation on March 28.

__The following is the prepared text of Senator Feinstein remarks delivered today on the floor of the United States Senate:__

"Mr. President. I rise today to ask unanimous consent that the Senate take up and adopt S.223, which was reported by the Rules Committee on March 28.

This bill titled, "Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act." is sponsored by Senators Feingold and Cochran and 32 other Senators. It would require that Senate campaign finance reports be filed electronically, rather than in paper format.

Currently, House candidates, Presidential candidates, political action committees and party committees are all required to file electronically. But Senators, Senate candidates, authorized campaign committees and the Democratic and Republican Senatorial Campaign Committees are exempt.

As a result, we have a cumbersome system in which paper copies of disclosure reports are filed with the Senate Office of Public Records, which scans them to make an electronic copy and sends the copy to the FEC on a dedicated communications line.

The FEC then prints the report and sends it to a vendor in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where the information is keyed in by hand and then transferred back to the FEC database – at cost of approximately $250,000 annually to taxpayers.

Frankly, this makes no sense to me.

At our hearing on February 14, it was clear that there is no public opposition to this proposal. Nevertheless, it has been very difficult to get it enacted into law.

That's why I am urging the Senate to refrain from holding this bill hostage over other campaign finance battles that have been going on for years.

This is exactly the type of good government law that the Senate could adopt as a stand alone measure. And I hope we can move the legislation without burdening it with extraneous items that will hold up passage.

It's long past time to bring the Senate into the modern era.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in ensuring timely access and disclosure of campaign finance activities to the public. I strongly urge the Senate to take up and adopt S. 223 today."

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