



US Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
Committee Hearing on S. 2219, the “Democracy is Strengthened by
Casting Light on Spending in Elections Act of 2012” (DISCLOSE Act of 2012)

March 29, 2012

Statement for the record

Bob Edgar, president and CEO, Common Cause

During arguments for *Doe v. Reed* in April 2010, Justice Scalia eloquently if perhaps inadvertently summed up the case for the DISCLOSE Act.

“Running a democracy takes a certain amount of civic courage,” he observed. “And the First Amendment does not protect you from criticism or even nasty phone calls when you exercise your political rights to legislate or to take part in the legislative process.”

Civic courage is what the DISCLOSE Act is all about. It demands that those who seek to influence our votes – individuals, corporations, associations of all stripes – have courage and indeed the simple decency to let us know who they are. It recognizes that as voters evaluate political speech, we have a legitimate need and indeed a right to know who is paying for that speech.

This bill is different from its predecessors. It focuses solely on disclosure provisions and does not contain any special exceptions for any group. It fixes the problem of untimely disclosure of donors to Super PACs that surfaced during the 2012 presidential primaries. There is no good reason for further delay. I urge the committee to act favorably and I urge Sen. Reid to schedule DISCLOSE for prompt action by the full Senate.