

Holding Power Accountable

Common Cause Urges Senate to Pass the DISCLOSE Act

September 20, 2022

Dear Senator:

Americans deserve to know who is trying to influence their voices and their votes. On behalf of Common Cause's more than 1.5 million members, we urge you to vote to advance the DISCLOSE Act ([S. 4822](#)) when it is expected to be considered by the Senate later this week. We strongly support this common-sense legislation, which will go a long way toward bringing more much-needed sunlight and transparency to our federal elections.

Disclosure allows voters to evaluate the strength, content and agenda of political messages, and is a crucial tool for holding people accountable to the voters. In *Citizens United v FEC*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the importance of disclosure of political spending, ruling 8-1 that transparency in political spending empowers the electorate with the tools needed to make informed decisions about speakers and messages.

Congress must act, though, to close newly-opened loopholes in federal disclosure rules. Powerful secret money groups have spent more than \$1 billion in federal elections without adequate transparency. Simply put, federal law has not kept pace with the new jurisprudence that unleashed new avenues of special interest spending, despite the Court's reasoning that disclosure provides an important anti-corruption check on the influence of money in politics.

Shadowy political operatives leading Super PACs, anonymous LLCs, and some non-profit groups should not be able to circumvent the constitutionally-sound bedrock policy of disclosure. To protect voters' right to make informed decisions in elections, we need better disclosure laws that improve transparency as to which wealthy special interests are spending big money to influence voters. Disclosure is also important to enforce existing campaign finance laws, including spending by prohibited sources or to circumvent contribution limits.

Since *Citizens United*, Common Cause has led successful campaigns to pass money in politics transparency laws in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Montana, Rhode Island, and many other states and localities. However, we need strong federal disclosure laws to ensure the integrity of our elections including by protecting them from any foreign influence. Legislation to eliminate secret money is broadly popular with the American people; just last year, a poll showed that 74% of voters—including strong majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats—favor legislative provisions to provide new disclosure requirements like the DISCLOSE Act.

We urge you to pass the DISCLOSE Act. The first step will be ending any silent filibuster on the question of opening a debate on the bill. We urge you to vote for cloture so that all Americans can see who in Congress is trying to shine a light on secret, special interest money. Anonymous political spending is harmful to our democracy, and you have the legislative tools to end it.

Sincerely,



Karen Hobert Flynn
President
Common Cause

