



Campaign Finance Reform

What if the United States held an election season and no Super PAC money or other hard to trace or totally hidden special interest money showed up on our television or radio, or in print ads? Would voters think they were better off without that money in local, state, and federal elections? Do they think this money is unduly influencing our democratic process, and are they right? The answer to these questions is a resounding yes, and citizens want politicians to clean this mess up now.

We need to get the money out of politics. I don't accept any corporate PAC or DC lobbyist money because corporate interests and lobbyists have too much influence in Congress. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court's disastrous 2010 *Citizens United* decision has unleashed unlimited money from wealthy individuals and Super PACs and other special interest organizations who keep campaigns alive that the people do not support, and try to buy their chosen candidates. The *Citizens United* decision is outrageous, and I hope that the Supreme Court reviews and overturns its decision. But until the Court acts, there are steps citizens and politicians can take to fight back against this decision.

First, Congress can pass a law requiring full disclosure. I was a cosponsor of the DISCLOSE Act, which requires donors to disclose who they are and banned foreign-controlled corporations from putting money in US elections. Second, require companies to give shareholders a vote on political spending. Shareholders do not have the freedom of speech to say "no" to the corporate managers right now. Third, adopt public financing. The Fair Elections Now Act, which I also cosponsored, would give candidates public money if they demonstrated voter support for their candidacies. This would free the candidates from dialing for private dollars all the time, reduce donor influence on members of Congress, and give the people the same voice in choosing a candidate as the wealthy and powerful. The Government by the People Act would allow small contributions from everyday Americans to make a real difference in elections. I cosponsored the Voter Empowerment Act of 2013 and support universal voter registration and oppose all barriers to universal registration.

Finally, I favor re-imposing reasonable limits on campaign spending and contributions by amending the Constitution and empowering Congress and the states to regulate money in elections, and also to clarify the authority of Congress and the States to regulate corporations. Congress must be able to regulate corporate donations to candidates, and spending and political advertising in elections.

Polls show that the majority of voters want campaign finance reform, but there is only one Republican congressman in the House who has signed onto campaign finance reform legislation. Stemming the money in politics is the key to retaining our democracy. The people need to have the same voice in choosing a candidate as the wealthy and powerful.

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