

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3700

To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to permit interactive computer services to provide their facilities free of charge to candidates for Federal offices for the purpose of disseminating campaign information and enhancing public debate.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 20, 1996

Mr. WHITE (for himself, Mr. THOMAS, Ms. DUNN of Washington, Ms. PRYCE, and Mr. ROHRABACHER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Oversight

A BILL

To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to permit interactive computer services to provide their facilities free of charge to candidates for Federal offices for the purpose of disseminating campaign information and enhancing public debate.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Internet Election In-
5 formation Act of 1996”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) For the purposes of enhancing public debate
 2 and awareness, candidates for Federal office should
 3 be encouraged to provide voters with meaningful and
 4 substantive information about their candidacy and
 5 important public policy issues.

6 (2) The Internet and other interactive computer
 7 services did not exist when the laws that currently
 8 govern Federal elections were enacted, and these
 9 services represent a new medium where voters can
 10 obtain meaningful and substantive information about
 11 issues and candidates.

12 **SEC. 3. EXEMPTION OF DONATED INTERACTIVE COMPUTER**
 13 **SERVICES FROM COVERAGE UNDER FED-**
 14 **ERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN ACT OF 1971.**

15 (a) EXEMPTION FROM TREATMENT AS CONTRIBU-
 16 TION.—Section 301(8)(B) of the Federal Election Cam-
 17 paign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 431(8)(B)) is amended—

18 (1) by striking “and” at the end of clause (xiii);

19 (2) by striking the period at the end of clause
 20 (xiv) and inserting “; and”; and

21 (3) by adding at the end the following new
 22 clause:

23 “(xv) the value of services provided without
 24 charge to a candidate by an interactive computer
 25 service (as defined in section 230(e)(2) of the Com-

1 munications Act of 1934) in permitting the can-
2 didate to use its facilities for distributing election or
3 candidate information, posting position papers, re-
4 sponding to campaign related inquiries, soliciting
5 lawful contributions, convening electronic campaign
6 forums, or otherwise lawfully utilizing the resources
7 of the interactive computer service, if the service
8 permits its facilities to be used for such purposes
9 under the same terms and conditions by all other
10 candidates in the election for the same office.”.

11 (b) EXEMPTION FROM TREATMENT AS EXPENDI-
12 TURE.—Section 301(9)(B) of such Act (2 U.S.C.
13 431(9)(B)) is amended—

14 (1) by striking “and” at the end of clause (ix);

15 (2) by striking the period at the end of clause
16 (x) and inserting “; and”; and

17 (3) by adding at the end the following new
18 clause:

19 “(xi) any direct costs incurred by an interactive
20 computer service (as defined in section 230(e)(2) of
21 the Communications Act of 1934) in permitting a
22 candidate to use its facilities for distributing election
23 or candidate information, posting position papers,
24 responding to campaign related inquiries, soliciting
25 lawful contributions, convening electronic campaign

1 forums, or otherwise lawfully utilizing the resources
2 of the interactive computer service, if the service
3 permits its facilities to be used for such purposes
4 under the same terms and conditions by all other
5 candidates in the election for the same office.”.

6 **SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

7 The amendments shall take effect on the date of the
8 enactment of this Act.

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