

It does this by shining a very bright spotlight on the entire process and by strengthening the overall disclosure requirements on groups who are attempting to sway our elections.

Too often corporations and special interest groups are able to hide their spending behind a mask of front organizations because they know voters would be less likely to believe ads if they knew the motives behind their sponsors. For instance, an indication of who is funding many of these shell organizations can be seen in the delayed disclosures of the so-called super PACs. In fact, a *Forbes* article recently reported that 30 billionaires now are backing Romney's super PAC. It is unknown how much these same billionaires or their corporate interests are already providing to other organizations with even less scrutiny.

The DISCLOSE Act ends all that. Specifically, the act requires any of these front organizations who spend \$10,000 or more on a campaign to file a disclosure report with the Federal Election Commission within 24 hours and file a new report for each additional \$10,000 or more that is spent. This is a major step in pulling back the curtain on the outlandish and unfair spending practices that are corrupting our Nation's political process. It is a major step toward the kind of open and honest government the American people demand and deserve.

The DISCLOSE Act brings transparency to these shady spending practices and makes sure voters have the information they need so they know who they can trust. It is a common-sense bill. It should not be controversial, and anyone who thinks voters should have a louder voice than special interest groups should be supporting our bill.

This bill aims to protect the very core of our Federal election process. It protects the process by which our citizens fairly assess the people they believe will best come here and be their voice and represent their communities. It exposes the hidden hand of special interests, and it creates an open process for who gets to stand before them as representatives.

I am proud to support this bill and proud of the efforts by Senator WHITEHOUSE and so many others in the Senate. I urge all our colleagues to vote for this bill. Let's move it forward. Let's do what is right for America.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. FRANKEN).

DISCLOSE ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 3

p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I believe we have a number of speakers who are coming over from the caucus lunch to discuss the upcoming vote on the DISCLOSE Act. I wanted to take the time that is available until a speaker shows up to continue to report the previous support for disclosure from our colleagues and from other Republican officeholders and officials.

I think where I left off in my previous listing was Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, who wants Citizens United reversed and has said:

Super PACs have expanded their role in financing the 2012 campaigns, in large part due to the Citizens United decision that allowed unlimited contributions to the political advocacy organizations.

She said:

However, it is only appropriate that Alaskans and Americans know where the money comes from.

My friend Senator JEFF SESSIONS, a ranking member on the Judiciary Committee, at one point said:

I don't like it when a large source of money is out there funding ads and is unaccountable. . . . To the extent we can, I tend to favor disclosure.

Senator CORNYN said:

I think the system needs more transparency, so people can more easily reach their own conclusions.

Senator COLLINS has been quoted:

Sen. Collins . . . believes that it is important that any future campaign finance laws include strong transparency provisions so the American public knows who is contributing to a candidate's campaign, as well as who is funding communications in support of or in opposition to a political candidate or issue.

That is from the Hill.

Senator SCOTT BROWN has said:

A genuine campaign finance reform effort would include increased transparency, accountability and would provide a level playing field to everyone.

Senator TOM COBURN has said:

So I would not disagree there ought to be transparency in who contributes to the super PACs and it ought to be public knowledge. . . . We ought to have transparency. . . . If legislators were required to disclose all contributions to their campaigns, the public knowledge would naturally restrain legislators from acting out of the current quid pro quo mindset. If you have transparency, you will have accountability.

As I reported earlier today, the Republican Senate support goes to people who have left the Senate as well. I would remark again on the extraordinary editorial written in the *New York Times* by Senators Hagel and Rudman.

House Speaker Representative BOEHNER has said:

I think what we ought to do is we ought to have full disclosure, full disclosure of all the money we raised and how it is spent. And I think sunlight is the best disinfectant.

Representative ERIC CANTOR, the majority whip, I believe, has said:

Anything that moves us back towards that notion of transparency and real-time reporting of donations and contributions I think would be a helpful move towards restoring the confidence of voters.

Newt Gingrich has called for reporting every single night on the Internet when people make political donations.

Mitt Romney has said that it is "an enormous, gaping loophole . . . if you form a 527 or 501(c)(4) you don't have to disclose who the donors are."

Well, this is a chance for our colleagues to close that enormous, gaping loophole their Presidential nominee has pointed out.

One of my favorite comments is by Mike Huckabee. Mike Huckabee said:

I wish that every person who gives any money [to fund an ad] that mentions any candidate by name would have to put their name on it and be held responsible and accountable for it. And it's killing any sense of civility in politics because of the cheap shots that can be made from the trees by snipers that you never can identify.

The cheap shots that can be made from the trees by snipers that you never can identify. Let me give an example of that.

I am going to read parts of an article from this morning's *New York Times*.

In early 2010, a new organization called the Commission on Hope, Growth and Opportunity—

With a name like that, you know it has to be bad in this environment—

filed for nonprofit, tax-exempt status, telling the Internal Revenue Service it was not going to spend any money on campaigns.

Weeks later, tax-exempt status in hand as well as a single \$4 million donation from an anonymous benefactor, the group kicked off a multimillion-dollar campaign against 11 Democratic candidates, declining to report any of its political spending to the Federal Election Commission, maintaining to the I.R.S. that it did not do any political spending at all, and failing to register as a political committee required to disclose the names of its donors. Then, faced with multiple election commission and I.R.S. complaints, the group went out of business.

The editorial continues:

"C.H.G.O.'s story is a tutorial on how to break campaign finance law, impact elections, and disappear—the political equivalent of a hit and run," Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics . . . wrote in a new report.

A cheap shot from the trees by a sniper you can never identify, and to this day no one has ever identified the \$4 million donor.

I see the Senator from New Jersey. I am delighted to yield to him so he can make his remarks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, yesterday we witnessed quite a sight. Not a single Republican was willing to stand up to oppose secret money and elections. Today they will have another chance to announce their support and tell their constituents whether they would prefer that secret money buys the politicians or does it take their constituents' votes to get people in place who care about where this country is going.