

countries, I remember that the cockroaches would come out at night. When you would go into the kitchen to get a drink, you would hit the light switch, the lights would flicker on, and you would see and hear the cockroaches scuttling for the protection of the shadows, fleeing the light.

Well, we need a little bit of that light in our democracy. So, with my Democratic colleagues, I am reintroducing my legislation to bring about the so-called “effective disclosure,” which even the Supreme Court that decided *Citizens United* acknowledged is necessary for the American people to have full faith in our political system.

The DISCLOSE Act of 2018 offers a commonsense solution to restore transparency and accountability in our political system. The DISCLOSE Act would rein in what has been called a “tsunami of slime” by requiring organizations spending money in American elections—including super PACs, unions, tax-exempt 501(c)(4) groups, all of them—to promptly disclose donors who give \$10,000 or more during an election cycle. Big, sneaky donors will try to hide behind shell corporations that disguise who they are, so the bill includes robust transfer provisions to prevent dark-money operatives from using complex webs of phony front groups to hide real donor identities.

The DISCLOSE Act also strengthens the ban forbidding election spending by foreign nationals. One of the problems of our present dark-money infestation is that foreign actors can hide their political influence activities in the exact same dark-money channels used by the big special interests. Once you tolerate dark-money channels of influence in American elections, you can’t police who uses those dark-money channels. Anonymity is anonymity; anyone could be hiding in the dark. Vladimir Putin could be hiding in the dark. We don’t know until we turn on the lights.

Last, the bill requires people spending money on election advertising to “stand by your ad” so that the ad itself identifies who is behind the advertising.

Can we get this done? The public certainly wants us to, and it wasn’t too long ago that Republicans supported disclosure. They were right back then, but now Republicans, who once extolled the principles of openness and accountability in our elections, have changed their tune. Gone is their distaste for secretive election spending; indeed, a new appetite for secret spending has emerged.

This is how the special interest rot of our democracy occurs: The big special interests not only want to win in Congress, they want to change the rules of democracy to make it so they can always win in Congress, and they use those changed rules to make sure their party goes along with it.

Back in 2014, the Rules Committee actually held a hearing on DISCLOSE. I hope we can get another hearing because since that time, the problem of

dark money has only gotten worse. President Trump promised to drain the swamp and then turned his administration over to the biggest dark-money swamp monsters that exist. For example, nearly two dozen dark-money organizations fronting for God knows who—but one can guess—backed the nomination of Scott Pruitt to be the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator. Indeed, Administrator Pruitt himself raised millions of dollars in dark money while serving as Oklahoma’s attorney general, and he has never disclosed what business those interests that funded him now have before the EPA.

Americans correctly feel that the tsunami of anonymous dark money drowns out their voices in Washington and washes them to the margins of our political arena. The DISCLOSE Act of 2018 offers a commonsense solution to restore transparency and accountability into our political system. With the Senate now in session through most of the summer, there is ample time for this body to examine the merits of clearing dark money out of our political system. The problem of dark-money spending and threats is too big to ignore.

This is why we are failing at addressing climate change. The corruption and fear *Citizens United* set loose in our politics in 2010 sickeningly empowered big special interests, and to the lasting shame of our Nation, it allowed the fossil fuel industry to purchase veto power over our national policymaking on climate change. We have allowed the biggest interest with the biggest conflict of interest to acquire veto power over what the Congress of the United States does on this vital issue.

This has been a double evil: It has been poisonous to the American democracy we cherish, and by preventing action to address climate change, it is poisonous to our entire planet.

By introducing this legislation, we are giving our Republican colleagues a chance to show the American people where they stand—with the individual voters we were all sent here to represent, who massively want there to be climate action, or with the billionaires and corporate interests pursuing a quiet, hostile takeover of American democracy using dark money and threats.

The cockroaches are everywhere. I say, let’s turn on the lights.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

● Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 127 on the motion to waive a budget point of order with respect to H.R. 5515, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. On vote No. 127, had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was also necessarily absent for vote No. 128 on passage of H.R. 5515, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, as amended. On vote No. 128, had I been present, I would have voted yea on passage of H.R. 5515, as amended.

Mr. President, I was also necessarily absent for vote No. 129 on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 5895, the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2019. On vote No. 129, had I been present, I would have voted yea.●

(At the request of Ms. HARRIS, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY

● Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I would like to recognize today, June 19, as Juneteenth Independence Day. We are celebrating the 153rd anniversary of the date on which slavery legally came to an end in the United States. On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to end slavery in the United States, but it still took 2 and a half years for this news to spread throughout all the Southern States. Today, we honor the faith and strength demonstrated by former slaves and the descendants of these individuals, who remain an example for all people of the United States, no matter their background, religion, or race. It is my hope that Juneteenth and the Emancipation Proclamation serve as a reminder of the progress the United States has made towards equality and the ways in which we can still improve.●

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Juneteenth Independence Day, a day that commemorates June 19, 1865, as the date on which slavery came to an end in the United States. On this day, over 150 years ago, and over 2 and half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Texas became the final State where the abolishment of slavery took effect.

On this day, we must confront the ugly parts of our history and honor the slaves who suffered and died under a repressive regime. We must also pay tribute to all those who had the strength