

better to be complete than quick because we want to make sure, when the request comes in, that it involves everybody, that it involves all the claims, that they are properly documented. That has been our experience before. So that is my report to the people of middle Tennessee. I want them to know I care about it, that I am on the phone about it, we have staff members on site, and I believe the Governor and the mayor and the Federal and State emergency agencies are doing all they can and we can hope for the best as the Cumberland River crests, we hope sooner rather than later.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO GENERAL SCOTT THOELE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise to congratulate Scott Thoele ("Taylee") of the Illinois Army National Guard on his promotion to brigadier general.

General Thoele, as a colonel, led the Illinois Army National Guard during its deployment last year to Afghanistan.

He commanded the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, whose soldiers served in that country from August 2008 to September 2009. The mobilization of his soldiers was the Illinois Guard's largest since World War Two.

Most of these men and women are civilian-soldiers from cities and towns across Illinois. They have their own lives separate from service in our Armed Forces.

Most do not serve full time in the Guard. In the midst of living their lives—working at their jobs, spending time with their families, and participating in their communities—they have made a patriotic commitment to their country.

They have said, if my Nation needs me to serve and to fight abroad, I will answer the call.

And last year, 3,000 soldiers from Illinois left their jobs, their families, and their communities to serve at the call of their Nation.

General Thoele is one of those soldiers. He lives in Quincy, IL, with his wife and four children. In his civilian life, he works at First Bankers Trust Company in the bank's audit department.

This was a difficult deployment for the Illinois Army National Guard. They spent the year in Afghanistan in austere conditions. Their main task was to train and mentor the Afghan National Security Forces, in an effort

to help the Afghans take responsibility for their own safety and security. They also provided security to the provincial reconstruction teams across Afghanistan. Eighteen Illinois soldiers lost their lives in service to their country. Dozens more were badly injured.

A long time ago, before he became President, there was a young captain from Illinois who answered the call when his State needed men to fight in the Black-Hawk war of 1832. He gathered 400 volunteers from the Sangamon County State militia and traveled north to Prophetstown, IL, marching through miles of what author Carl Sandburg described as "swamp muck and wilderness brush . . . pushing and pulling when horses and wagons bogged."

It was also a difficult war—as all wars are. Sandburg wrote that to the men under the young captain, "it didn't seem the kind of war they had expected and they wrote home about it." But ultimately they did come home, while young Abraham Lincoln went on to reenlist—and to serve his Nation in many ways.

I offer my thanks to General Thoele, who also continues to serve his Nation, now as the Deputy Commanding General for the Army National Guard at the Army's Combined Arms Center in Kansas. Thank you for your work in Afghanistan and for bringing our soldiers home safely. And congratulations again on your promotion to brigadier general.

#### DISCLOSE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last Friday, I introduced S. 3295, the DISCLOSE Act, because Democracy Is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections. I am joined by 40 of my Senate colleagues as cosponsors.

Decades ago, Justice Louis Brandeis boldly said, "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants." That is exactly what this bill will do—shine a light on the flood of spending unleashed by the Citizens United decision.

The DISCLOSE Act will drill down and give the public the information they have a right to know. No longer will groups be able to live and spend in the shadows.

The Court spoke in the Citizens United decision. And while there is disagreement with its ruling, there is room to maneuver. This legislation does not circumvent the Court by reimposing a backdoor ban on corporate spending. Instead, the DISCLOSE Act closes certain loopholes and relies on enhanced disclosure, an idea endorsed by the Court. This legislation meets the test of constitutionality.

The aim of the DISCLOSE Act is simply to level the political playing field so that special interests do not drown out the voice of the average voter. It applies to corporations and advocacy organizations the same rules that candidates already have to abide by. And

it applies these rules equally across the board. It covers corporations and labor unions alike, as well as 527s, social welfare organizations, and trade associations.

The DISCLOSE Act will do the following:

First, new disclaimers on all television advertisements funded by special interests will be required in order to uncover who is really behind the ad. If a corporation is running the ad, the CEO will have to appear to at the end to say that he or she approved the message, just like a candidate must do today. If an advocacy organization is running the ad, both the head of the organization running the ad, and the top outside funder of the ad, will have to appear on camera. Additionally, a list of the top five funders to that organization will be displayed on the screen. This will stop the funneling of big money through shadow groups in order to fund ads that are virtually anonymous. For the first time, the money can be followed back to its origin and the source of the money will be public.

Second, an unprecedented level of disclosure is mandated, not only of an organization's spending, but also of its donors. In disclosing their donors, organizations will have a choice—they can either disclose all of their donors that have given in excess \$1,000, or they can disclose only those donors who contribute to the group's campaign-related activity account, if they solely use that account for their spending. All spending intended to influence an election—be it on television, radio, print, mailers, robocalls, and billboards—would flow through this account. And every donor who contributes more than \$1,000 would have to be disclosed. Organizations must not only disclose these donors to the FEC, but also to the public on their Web sites and to their shareholders and members through their annual and quarterly reports.

Third, loopholes created by the Court's decision are closed. The first loophole is closed by preventing foreign-controlled entities from spending unlimited sums in our elections through their U.S.-based subsidiaries. This was a loophole specifically mentioned by Justice Stevens in his dissent. Foreign leaders who don't have American interests in mind shouldn't have the ability to influence our elections. The second loophole is closed by banning companies with government contracts in excess of \$50,000 from making unlimited expenditures. The third loophole is closed by banning expenditures by companies that receive government assistance such as TARP. Taxpayer money should not be used to help corporations influence elections.

Finally, in an attempt to allow all candidates and parties to respond to ads funded by special interests, the current law granting lowest unit rate to candidates is expanded by giving those same rights to the parties on a limited geographic basis.