

one of the first to use the public financing system, which he had helped craft 2 years prior when he ran for the Democratic nomination in 1976. My father was a big believer in running for office on behalf of his constituents instead of on behalf of big money. I believe strongly that ethos ought to apply to today's elected officials more than ever.

The public financing system funded candidates for 30 years and has enriched the political discourse for the country by ensuring that the American people have more say than connected insiders, special interests, or wealthy donors. Unfortunately, the current system's ability to keep up with the enormous spending required in Presidential campaigns has rendered it less effective. Thanks to Citizens United, public financing is no longer a viable option to compete against unlimited special interest dollars.

My legislation would strengthen the public financing system and incentivize candidates to obtain support from actual citizens, not special interest super PACs or secret financiers. It would ensure that our proven public financing system will be available for future elections, and that corporate and special-interest money doesn't drown out genuine ideas and debates in our Presidential elections.

For those of us who are committed to fixing our campaign finance system in the wake of Citizens United, there is a lot of challenging work ahead. I know Coloradans agree with me that reform could be the single most important issue to fix the way our democracy functions. As I have suggested, and as we know, unfortunately Federal elections are increasingly about who can secretly appeal more to wealthy and special interests instead of working to improve the lives of average and hard-working Americans. This sows corruption, dysfunction, and a government that is less responsive to the needs of the people.

Today we have an opportunity to start with a sensible requirement that we should all be able to agree on. Disclosure is nothing to be afraid of. I urge my colleagues to reconsider their vote and to allow the Senate to at least debate the DISCLOSE Act. We cannot afford to let another filibuster stand in the way of fair and open campaigns. Let's pass the DISCLOSE Act and take a big step toward turning the power of our government back over to the American people.

I note that the leader of this important effort, the DISCLOSE Act, Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, is on the floor. I thank the Senator for his leadership and his commitment to ensuring that it is the American people who determine our future, not special interests, super PACs, millionaires, billionaires, and financiers who leave no track and no trace of where their money is going and where it is coming from.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Colorado for his impassioned and eloquent support. I think we recognize that through the course of our country's history, men and women have shed their blood, have laid down their lives in order to protect this experiment in liberty that is the ongoing gift of our country to the rest of the world. When we take that experiment of liberty and turn it over to the special interests, it is a grave occasion.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### HELPING EXPEDITE AND ADVANCE RESPONSIBLE TRIBAL HOME OWNERSHIP ACT OF 2012

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Committee on Indian Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 205, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title. The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 205) to amend the Act titled "An Act to authorize the leasing of restricted Indian lands for public, religious, educational, recreational, residential, business, and other purposes requiring the grant of long-term leases", approved August 9, 1955, to provide for Indian tribes to enter into certain leases without prior express approval from the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 205) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### DISCLOSE ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I believe Chairman LEAHY will shortly be joining us to discuss the DISCLOSE Act.

I ask unanimous consent that an op-ed piece authored by former Senator Warren Rudman and former Senator Chuck Hagel—two former Republican Senators who distinguished themselves in this body and have gotten together to write an article about the DISCLOSE Act—be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, July 16, 2012]

#### FOR POLITICAL CLOSURE, WE NEED DISCLOSURE

(By Warren Rudman and Chuck Hagel)

Since the beginning of the current election cycle, extremely wealthy individuals, corporations and trade unions—all of them determined to influence who is in the White House next year—have spent more than \$160 million (excluding party expenditures). That's an incredible amount of money.

To put it in perspective, at this point in 2008, about \$36 million had been spent on independent expenditures (independent meaning independent of a candidate's campaign). In all of 2008, in fact, only \$156 million was spent this way. In other words, we've already surpassed 2008, and it's July.

In the near term, there's nothing we can do to reverse this dramatic increase in independent expenditures.

Yet what really alarms us about this situation is that we can't find out who is behind these blatant attempts to control the outcome of our elections. We are inundated with extraordinarily negative advertising on television every evening and have no way to know who is paying for it and what their agenda might be. In fact, it's conceivable that we have created such a glaring loophole in our election process that foreign interests could directly influence the outcome of our elections. And we might not even know it had happened until after the election, if at all.

This is because unions, corporations, "super PACs" and other organizations are able to make unlimited independent expenditures on our elections without readily and openly disclosing where the money they are spending is coming from. As a result, we are unable to get the information we need to decide who should represent us and take on our country's challenges.

Unlike the unlimited amount of campaign spending, the lack of transparency in campaign spending is something we can fix and fix right now—without opening the door to more scrutiny by the Supreme Court.

A bill being debated this week in the Senate, called the Disclose Act of 2012, is a well-researched, well-conceived solution to this insufferable situation. Unfortunately, on Monday, the Senate voted, mostly along party lines, to block the bill from going forward. But the Disclose Act is not dead. As of now, it is 9 short of the 60 votes it needs.

The bill was introduced by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Democrat of Rhode Island, who deserves tremendous credit for crafting such comprehensive legislation, listening to his critics and amending his bill to address their concerns in a bold display of compromise. At its core, Whitehouse's bill would require any "covered organization" which spends \$10,000 or more on a "campaign-related disbursement" to file a disclosure report with the Federal Election Commission within 24 hours of the expenditure, and to file a new report for each additional \$10,000 or more that is spent. The F.E.C. must post the report on its Web site within 24 hours of receiving it.

A "covered organization" includes any corporation, labor organization, section 501(c) organization, super PAC or section 527 organization.

This is a huge improvement over the status quo, where super PACS currently have months to disclose their donors (often withholding this information until after an election) and 501(c) organizations have no requirement to disclose their donors at all.

The report must include the name of the covered organization, the name of the candidate, the election to which the spending pertains, the amount of each disbursement of