

January 21, 2015

Reform Groups Commend Congressional Leaders on Reintroduction of Money in Politics Legislation

The undersigned organizations commend today's reintroduction by key Congressional sponsors of the "Defending Democracy" legislative package, a suite of proposed solutions to the problem of big money domination of our elections (full list below). We congratulate these members of Congress for moving forward on critical reform measures, from the disclosure of political spending to small donor public financing to a constitutional amendment to overturn decisions like *Citizens United v. FEC*. Millions of Americans are calling for change, and we applaud the Congressional leaders who are heeding that call through needed legislation.

Signed:

African American Ministers In Action
Alliance for a Just Society
American Association of University Women
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America
Courage Campaign
Daily Kos
Democracy 21
Democracy Matters
Demos
Endangered Species Coalition
Every Voice
Franciscan Action Network
Food and Water Watch
Free Speech For People
Friends of the Earth
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Main Street Alliance
Money Out Voters In
MoveOn.org
New Progressive Alliance
OurTime.org
People For the American Way
Public Campaign
Public Citizen
Responsible Endowments Coalition
Say No To Big Money
US PIRG
Voices for Progress

"Defend Democracy" Legislative Package:

1. **Democracy for All Amendment:** Provides Congress and the states with the authority to determine reasonable regulations on campaign financing and distinguish between natural persons and other artificial entities under campaign finance laws. Key sponsors: Sens. Udall, Sanders, Tester/Reps. Deutch, Edwards, McGovern.
2. **DISCLOSE Act:** Establishes a system of disclosure of campaign spending and the sources of those funds for all entities that make independent expenditures (at any time) and electioneering communications (in calendar year of an election for Congress; 120 days before the primary for presidential elections). Key

sponsors: Sen. Whitehouse/Rep. Van Hollen.

3. Empowering small donors and increasing political participation: Matching public funds for small dollar contributions, and various other provisions. "Government by the People Act" (congressional elections), key sponsor: Rep. Sarbanes. "Empowering Citizens Act" (congressional and presidential elections), key sponsor: Rep. Price. "Fair Elections Now Act" (congressional elections), key sponsor: Sen. Durbin.

4. Prohibit campaign coordination: Clarifies the definition of "coordination" to include the close relationships and ties between a candidate and outside group or super PAC. Key sponsors: Sen. Tester/Rep. Price.

5. Real Time Transparency Act: Requires all political committees, including joint fundraising committees, to disclose electronically within 48 hours all cumulative contributions of \$1,000 or more in a calendar year. Key sponsors: Sen. King/Rep. O'Rourke.

6. Sunlight for Unaccountable Nonprofits Act (SUN Act): Makes public the donors who give more than \$5000 to tax-exempt groups that engage in election activities. Key sponsor: Sen. Tester.

7. Shareholder Protection Act: Requires corporations to disclose to shareholders and the public spending of funds for independent expenditures and electioneering communications, even if such spending is indirectly done through a third party. Key sponsors: Sen. Menendez/Rep. Capuano.

A growing coalition of organizations has recognized that there is no silver bullet in the fight to get big money out of politics. Rather, there are many solutions which work together toward the same end goal: a democracy in which everyone participates, everyone's voice is heard, everyone knows who is trying to buy influence, and everyone plays by common-sense rules and is held accountable to those rules. More than 130 organizations have signed on to a [Unity Statement of Principles](#) in support of those values.

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