

April 23, 2012

## **Civic Organizations and Investor Groups Call Upon Congress to Approve the DISCLOSE Act**

Dear Representative,

The undersigned organizations support H.R. 4010, the DISCLOSE 2012 Act, sponsored by Representative Chris Van Hollen.

H.R. 4010 would provide the public with basic information about campaign expenditures made by outside groups to influence federal elections and the donors financing these expenditures. The legislation would also provide for timely disclosure by Super PACs, would require outside groups which make campaign expenditures to take responsibility for their campaign ads and would require corporations to inform their shareholders about their campaign expenditures.

It is a cardinal rule of campaign finance laws that citizens are entitled to know the donors financing campaign expenditures to influence their votes, and the amounts they gave. This basic right to know has long been recognized by disclosure laws enacted by Congress and by Supreme Court decisions which upheld the constitutionality of these laws.

In the *Citizens United* decision, the Supreme Court by an 8 to 1 vote upheld the constitutionality of disclosure requirements for outside groups making campaign expenditures. The Court stated:

The First Amendment protects political speech; and disclosure permits citizens and shareholders to react to the speech of corporate entities in a proper way. This transparency enables the electorate to make informed decisions and give proper weight to different speakers and messages.

Polls show citizens strongly support disclosure by outside spenders. According to a *New York Times* article on a *New York Times/CBS News* poll released on October 28, 2010, Americans overwhelmingly, "favor full disclosure of spending by both campaigns and outside groups."

The DISCLOSE 2012 Act contains only disclosure requirements and does not contain special exceptions for any groups. Congress should enact the bill and provide citizens with information they have a right to know about who is giving and spending money to influence their votes.

We urge you to support and co-sponsor H.R. 4010 and to take all steps necessary for its passage.

Alliance for a Just Society  
Americans for Campaign Reform  
Brennan Center for Justice  
Campaign Legal Center  
Center for Media and Democracy  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington  
Citizen Works

Coalition for Accountability in Political Spending  
Coffee Party USA  
Common Cause  
Corporate Ethics International/Business Ethics Network  
Credo Action Network  
Democracy 21  
Democracy for America  
Dēmos  
Free Speech for People  
Greenpeace  
Harrington Investments, Inc.  
Heartland Democracy  
League of Women Voters  
Main Street Alliance  
MapLight  
Michigan Campaign Finance Network  
National People's Action  
New Progressive Alliance  
NC Center for Voter Education  
Ohio Citizen's Action Money & Politics Project  
People For the American Way  
Public Citizen  
Sunlight Foundation  
Trillium Asset Management, LLC  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
United Republic  
Walden Asset Management, a division of Boston Trust  
& Investment Management  
WV Citizen Action Group  
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign  
Wolf-PAC  
Zevin Asset Management, LLC