



May 19, 2022

To: Members of the US Senate

From: Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO

Re: DISCLOSE Act of 2021

On behalf of our 500,000 members and supporters, the League of Women Voters strongly urges the US Senate to bring the DISCLOSE Act of 2021 to the floor for debate and final passage.

Voters have a right to know who is making large campaign contributions to influence elections. The DISCLOSE Act (S. 443) requires organizations and politicians to disclose donations over \$10,000 during an election cycle. The League supports the DISCLOSE Act of 2021 because we believe that Americans deserve complete information about candidates and who supports those candidates financially before they vote.

Secret campaign money has no place in America's democracy. It undermines the role of the voter and corrupts the election process. Political spending and, most concerningly, undisclosed political spending has exploded in recent elections, with the Center for Responsive Politics calculating nearly \$3.3 billion spent in 2020 Federal elections- Presidential and Congressional combined, by groups outside of the candidates' campaigns. This represents massive growth over the last few decades, with many recent federal elections setting records for the most outside political spending.

Outside groups, like PACs and especially those who choose not to disclose the sources of all of their funding – so called dark money groups, have an outsized influence on elections all without voters knowing their identity. Transparency is a baseline requirement for a healthy democracy. The DISCLOSE Act does not limit the volume of political contributions that Americans can make, rather it focuses on curbing foreign-national participation in campaign spending, disclosure of large expenditures by corporations, labor organizations, and political organizations, and disclosure of large donors at the end of television ads requiring them to “stand by their ads.”

The importance of transparency is not a partisan issue and should be the minimum expectation from a healthy democracy that it seeks to provide voters with complete, truthful information. Without transparency, donors and their priorities are valued above the needs of voters, which is antithetical to democracy- a government belonging to the people.

We must preserve the integrity of our electoral process by increasing transparency in our elections. Disclosure of all spending in elections- whether by corporations, unions, individuals, or any other groups, is vital to allowing voters to make informed decisions. The DISCLOSE Act accomplishes this fundamental purpose. The League of Women Voters strongly urges you to assist in its passage.