

DISCLOSE Act will counter corporate influence on elections

Rep. Peter Welch on Thursday joined a bipartisan group in introducing legislation meant to counter a recent Supreme Court decision allowing corporations to spend freely on political campaigns.

The DISCLOSE Act, which was authored by Reps. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Mike Castle (R-Del.), responds to the Citizens United decision by enhancing corporate disclaimer and disclosure requirements, preventing government contractors and foreign entities from influencing U.S. elections, and banning coordination between candidates and outside groups.

"The Supreme Court's decision to reverse a century of practice and precedent opened the door to a flood of corporate cash. If we don't act soon to reduce the impact of this misguided decision, the voices of ordinary Americans will be drowned out by special interests," Welch said. "This bipartisan bill will counter the influence of corporations in elections and begin to roll back the Citizens United case."

Welch called for a legislative remedy to the Supreme Court decision on the eve of Town Meeting Day during a press conference at the South Burlington city offices. Joined at the March event by representatives of the Vermont League of Women Voters, Vermont Public Interest Research Group and Green Mountain Coffee, Welch called on Congress to act quickly on a legislative response while working in the long-term to pass a constitutional amendment clarifying Congress' authority to limit corporate campaign contributions.

The DISCLOSE Act:

- Requires CEOs to appear in campaign advertisements to "approve this message," as candidates are currently required to do. It requires the top five contributors to an organization to be listed on-screen.

- Enhances disclosure by requiring organizations to report campaign-related activity to the Federal Election Commission within 24 hours.
- Prevents foreign influence by banning foreign-controlled corporations from spending on U.S. elections.
- Requires corporations, unions and other groups to disclose contributions to shareholders and membership.
- Prevents corporations with more than \$50,000 in government contracts and those that have not paid back TARP funds from spending on elections.
- Tightens coordination rules so that candidates and outside groups cannot coordinate on campaign activities within 90 days of primary and general elections.

[Click here](#) for video of Rep. Welch's March press conference calling for a response to Citizens United.