

June 11, 2013

Dear Senator,

Our organizations strongly support S. 375, the “Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act,” bipartisan legislation introduced by Senator Jon Tester and cosponsored by 33 Senators.

The organizations include Americans for Campaign Reform, Campaign Finance Institute, the Campaign Legal Center, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Common Cause, Democracy 21, Demos, the League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, Sunlight Foundation and U.S. PIRG.

We urge you to support efforts to move this bill through the Senate as expeditiously as possible.

S. 375 would require electronic filing of campaign finance disclosure reports by Senate candidates under federal campaign finance laws. Currently, all federal candidates, party committees and federal PACs are required to file their campaign finance disclosure reports electronically -- with the sole exception of Senate candidates, who still are filing paper reports.

The exception from filing electronic reports provided for Senate candidates makes no sense, has no legitimate basis and is indefensible. Yet despite the fact that there are no credible arguments against this legislation, efforts to pass the bill have been blocked for years through the threat of filibusters, “poison pill” amendments and other obstructionist tactics.

The only purpose served by the unjustifiable exception from electronic filing for Senate candidates is to deprive the American people of timely and meaningful public information to which they are entitled about the campaign finance activities of Senate candidates.

The problem is particularly acute during the critical time close to an election because the paper reports filed by Senate candidates require a long period to be transferred and then entered by the FEC into a searchable electronic database that can be used by the public and the media. The absence of electronic filing for Senate candidates is a formula for continuing to keep the American people in the dark about the campaign finance activities of Senate candidates.

Our organizations strongly urge you to support S. 375 and help ensure that citizens have the same access to campaign finance information about Senate candidates that they currently have regarding all other federal candidates, political parties and federal PACs.

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