

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2015

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Executive Order on Political Spending by Government Contractors

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to implement an executive order requiring disclosure of political spending by government contractors.

You have recognized that congressional gridlock has made advancing some of the nation's most important priorities impossible, which is why we applaud your willingness to take executive action on critical issues like climate change and immigration. In our view, campaign finance disclosure is another issue that demands immediate action to restore the public's faith in our democracy.

January 21, 2015 marked the fifth anniversary of the Supreme Court's fateful decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*. A premise of *Citizens United* was that unlimited corporate expenditures would not corrupt the political process because there would be a regime of "effective disclosure" that would "provide shareholders and citizens with the information needed to hold corporations and elected officials accountable for their positions and supporters."

That regime of "effective disclosure" has completely broken down. Special interests can spend tens and even hundreds of millions of dollars on elections with no public knowledge and no accountability. In the 2014 midterm elections, *The Washington Post* reported that at least 31 percent of all independent spending in the 2014 elections was spent by groups that are not required to disclose their donors. And that doesn't even include spending on so-called "issue ads," which are not reported.

Political spending by government contractors is a problem you can address without congressional authorization. You would be on solid legal ground if you were to issue an executive order requiring disclosure of political spending by entities that have been awarded government contracts and their senior leadership. The order could also take into account transfers to and from shell corporations and non-profits, to prevent evading disclosure requirements.

An executive order will not solve our campaign finance problems but it will at least be a step in the right direction, and will show your Administration's commitment to transparency and fairness.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. If you would like further information, please contact Senator Whitehouse or have your staff contact _____ on his staff.

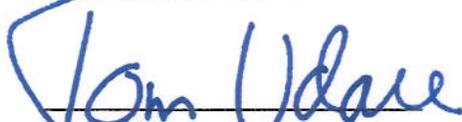
Sincerely,



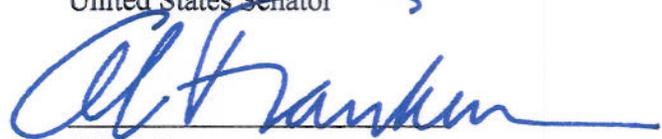
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



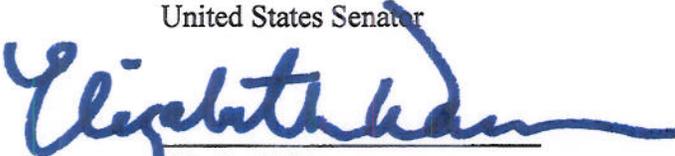
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



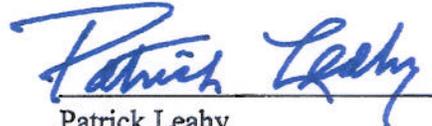
Tom Udall
United States Senator



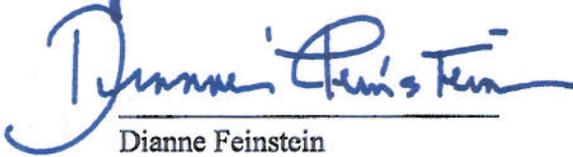
Al Franken
United States Senator



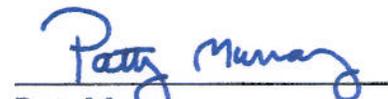
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



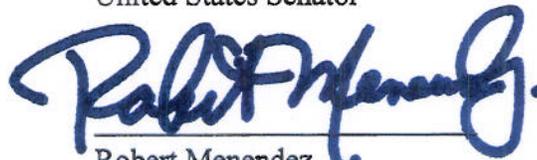
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.

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United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley

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United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet

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Kirsten Gillibrand

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Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Mazie Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono
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Cory Booker

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Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator