

END CITIZENS UNITED PAC

DEMOCRATS FIGHTING FOR REFORM



2015 CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

12 Things Voters Deserve To Know

WWW.ENDCITIZENSUNITED.ORG

ABOUT END CITIZENS UNITED PAC

Established March 1st, 2015, End Citizens United is a Political Action Committee funded by grassroots donors. We are dedicated to countering the disastrous effects of *Citizens United* and reforming our campaign finance system. **Already, more than 500,000 supporters have joined our movement to fight the unprecedented rise of money polluting our democracy.**

Learn more about End Citizens United PAC at www.endcitizensunited.org.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Since the *Citizens United* decision became law, American elections have been inundated by spending, particularly from unregulated "dark" money. End Citizens United, a grassroots effort to reform our campaign finance system, will use this questionnaire and past actions on campaign finance issues to guide our process for selecting candidates to endorse.

There are many avenues to campaign finance reform. We encourage you to use the space provided to explain your answers or ask questions if you so choose. We are, however, unequivocal in our opposition to the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision and the opportunities for corruption that it created. We will not stand with any candidate who supports the decision as written.

Kindly return your completed questionnaire by June 23rd by sending an electronic copy to Jessica Adair at jessica@endcitizensunited.org. Your answers to this questionnaire as well as any endorsements made by End Citizens United PAC will be released to the public.

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I, Michael Bennet a candidate for office of U.S. Senate
in Colorado certify that the answers in this questionnaire
represent my own views.

SIGNATURE

DATE

STAFF NAME, PHONE, EMAIL:

1

Do you oppose the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United*?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

The Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision reversed decades of precedent and has been incredibly damaging. Thanks to that decision, our election process is dominated by anonymous special interests that have drowned out the voices of ordinary American citizens. The flood of attack ads, Super PAC spending, and dark money has had a chilling effect on our democracy. I have made it a priority in the Senate to try and reverse the effects of this decision, and to bring accountability and transparency to the political process.

2

Would you support a Constitutional Amendment that undoes *Citizens United* and grants Congress and the states the power to regulate campaign finance?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

I absolutely support a constitutional amendment that undoes *Citizens United* and grants Congress and the states the power to regulate campaign finance. In fact, together with Sen. Tom Udall, I introduced a constitutional amendment proposals that would do exactly that. This amendment would be a crucial and commonsense fix, and help bring stability to campaign finance law and allow state legislatures and Congress to regulate our campaign finance system. This amendment is something I have been a leader on and will continue to try and push for.

Please indicate if you've co-sponsored or support any of the following campaign finance reform bills:

- GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE ACT
- DISCLOSE ACT
- KEEPING OUR CAMPAIGNS HONEST (K.O.C.H) ACT
- FAIR ELECTIONS NOW ACT
- DEMOCRACY FOR ALL AMENDMENT

LIST ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION HERE:

I have cosponsored the DISCLOSE Act, the Fair Elections Now Act and the Democracy for All Amendment, which would undo Citizens United and grant Congress the authority to regulate the campaign finance system. The Government By the People Act and the Keeping Our Campaigns Honest Act have not been proposed in the Senate, but I am supportive of the concepts behind them.

Reforming our broken campaign finance system has long been a priority of mine. Just this month, June 2015, I introduced a bill that would prohibit members of Congress and candidates from soliciting campaign contributions from lobbyists while Congress is in session and bars lobbyists from bundling large contributions.

I also cosponsored the original Schumer-Van Hollen DISCLOSE Act. This legislation would also require CEOs to appear on camera to "approve" messages, just like politicians do. The bill would also explicitly ban contributions from companies with a 20% or greater foreign ownership stake. In addition, the bill would strengthen coordination rules, enhance requirements for disclosure of political expenditures, and increase disclosure requirements such as requiring disclosure of corporate and interest-group contributions to advocacy groups that buy political commercials.

REQUIRE FULL DISCLOSURE

Do you support legislation requiring dark money entities, such as 501(c)(4) groups to disclose their donors and spending when they engage in any political activity that mentions a candidate for federal office and/or is intended to influence a federal election?

- YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

I support comprehensive disclosure. I have called on the Federal Election Commission to use its rulemaking power to implement broad disclosure and disclaimer requirements, and have also raised concerns with them about the practice of political donors remaining anonymous by giving to 501(c)(4) non-profit corporations.

Would you support legislation requiring dark money groups to publicly disclose their top ten donors if they spend money on voter contact?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

Disclosure and transparency of donors is incredibly important in our election practices. If a dark money group is engaging in political activity, it only makes sense for their activities and funding to be transparent.

As of July 1st, 2014 the FCC has required that TV stations post their public file (which details political spending) online. Currently this database isn't searchable and doesn't extend to cable providers. Will you support legislation requiring a searchable database and extending coverage to include cable TV spending?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

In 2012, when the FCC proposed the rule to require broadcast stations to make political files available online, I wrote to the FCC to urge swift implementation of the rule and urged them to make the information available in a searchable database. The public deserves to know and to easily find information about who is funding the ads they see on TV and who is behind them.

STOP COORDINATION

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Currently a campaign staffer can quit the campaign and work for a SuperPAC supporting the candidate that employed the staffer after just a 120 day cooling off period. Would you support a cycle long cooling off period, preventing that staffer from working for a SuperPAC or 501(C)4 supporting his or her former employer until the next campaign cycle?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

I would support such a cooling-off period, in order to avoid questions of possible coordination and inside information.

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Currently the FEC holds that coordination only flows one way. This means that while a campaign is forbidden from sharing its plans, methods, and strategies with a SuperPAC, the SuperPAC can share its plans, methods, and strategies with the campaign. Do you support legislation to end this loophole?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

I would support efforts to lessen coordination between Super PACs and campaigns.

REDUCE PAY TO PLAY

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29 states currently ban lobbyists from donating during legislative sessions.¹ Do you support legislation to extend this ban to Congress?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

I would need to study any particular legislative language that would ban lobbyist contributions outright. But I have repeatedly introduced legislation that would prohibit Members of Congress and House and Senate candidates from soliciting campaign contributions from lobbyists when their respective bodies are in session. My bill would also ban lobbyist bundling of contributions. Legislators should be focused on the people's business, not asking lobbyists to fill their campaign coffers. I most recently introduced this bill in June 2015, and it was endorsed by Democracy 21, the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, the League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, Sunlight Foundation, and U.S. PIRG.

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A 2012 study found that "the more companies give in campaign contributions, the more they get in contracts, on average."² In fact, the study found that \$200,000 in donations leads to an average addition of 107 government contracts. Would you support legislation that prohibits the executives, lobbyist, and company PAC from donating to federal candidates if the company has or is seeking federal contracts?

YES NO

OPTIONAL EXPLANATION:

This sort of legislative language has not yet been proposed in Congress and therefore I have not had an opportunity to study it, but I'm certainly willing to consider any proposal that will increase transparency and accountability in our campaign finance system.

Please share any additional ways you support meaningful campaign finance reform.

EXPLANATION:

Reforming our campaign finance system is of the utmost importance. The longer we allow special interests and dark money to corrode our elections process, the more we disable the voices of ordinary Americans. I have repeatedly cosponsored the DISCLOSE Act and constitutional amendments that would undo Citizens United because I believe these are strong, commonsense solutions for getting our democracy back on track. But there are other things we can do.

I helped lead a Senate task force to craft a legislative response to Citizens United, the goal of which was to pursue all available legislative and administrative avenues to bring transparency to the elections process and help stop secretive spending. Together, we pushed for passage of the DISCLOSE Act and worked to craft a constitutional amendment to undo Citizens United and give Congress and states the authority to regulate campaign finance.

I led members of the Citizens United task force in calling on the IRS to investigate whether organizations claiming tax-exempt status were engaging in a substantial amount of campaign activity. As we stated in our letter: "It is contrary to the letter and the spirit of the statute for political organizations formed primarily to advocate for a political candidate or to run attack ads against other candidates to take advantage of section 501(c)(4)."

My Lobbying and Campaign Finance Reform Act, which would prohibit solicitation of campaign contributions from lobbyists while Congress was in session, would also eliminate lobbyist bundling of large contributions, in order to stop lobbyists from gaining outsized favor with Members of Congress.

I also cosponsored the original Schumer-Van Hollen DISCLOSE Act. This legislation would also require CEOs to appear on camera to "approve" messages, just like politicians do. The bill would also explicitly ban contributions from companies with a 20% or greater foreign ownership stake. In addition, the bill would strengthen coordination rules, enhance requirements for disclosure of political expenditures, and increase disclosure requirements such as requiring disclosure of corporate and interest-group contributions to advocacy groups that buy political commercials.

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1. "Limits on Campaign Contributions During the Legislative Session," NCSL, 12/6/2011
 2. "Campaign contributions help companies get more federal contracts, study finds," Drutman, Sunlight Foundation, 6/21/2012