

CO-SPONSOR H.R. 270, COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN REFORM BILL

March 24, 2014

Dear Representative,

The Empowering Citizens Act (H.R. 270), sponsored by Representatives David Price and Chris Van Hollen is the most comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation pending in Congress.

Our organizations urge you to support and co-sponsor H.R.270, in addition to any other campaign finance reform bills you may be supporting and co-sponsoring in this Congress.

Our organizations include: Americans for Campaign Reform, the Brennan Center for Justice, Campaign Legal Center, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), Common Cause, Democracy 21, League of Women Voters and People For the American Way.

H.R. 270 would end individual candidate Super PACs, repair the presidential public financing system, create a similar financing system for congressional races and strengthen the rules prohibiting coordination between outside spending groups and candidates.

The public financing provisions for federal candidates in H.R. 270 are closely modeled on the successful small donor, multiple matching funds system long used to finance New York City elections. The legislation would magnify the role and importance of ordinary Americans in financing elections and provides federal candidates with an alternative way to run for office without becoming indebted to their funders.

Editorials in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* have endorsed H.R. 270 as “vital” reform legislation.

H.R. 270 is the only legislation pending in Congress to repair the presidential public financing system and the only pending legislation that would shut down individual candidate Super PACs.

Individual candidate Super PACs are a dangerous new entity used by federal candidates and their big donors to ignore the limits on contributions to candidates enacted to prevent corruption.

The most recent [New York Times editorial endorsing Price-Van Hollen \(February 16, 2014\)](#) focused on its provisions to end individual candidate Super PACs. The *Times* editorial stated:

This election year will be the moment when individual candidate super PACs – a form of legalized bribery – become a truly toxic force in American politics.

Once again, Congress will have to step in to stop the corruption, and fortunately a good reform vehicle exists: [the Empowering Citizens Act](#), a bill introduced by two House Democrats, David Price and Chris Van Hollen, which would limit the spending of super PACs closely aligned to a campaign.

The *Times* editorial stated that the Price-Van Hollen bill:

[R]epresents the best chance for ridding politics of special-interest cash and preventing another era of scandal.

The presidential public financing system served the nation well for nearly three decades. During this period, almost every Democratic and Republican presidential candidate participated in the public financing system. Every president elected from 1976 through 2004 used public financing for their general election campaign.

[Washington Post](#) columnist E.J. Dionne wrote in 2006 about the presidential system:

[T]he public financing of presidential campaigns, instituted in response to the Watergate scandals of the early 1970s, was that rare reform that accomplished exactly what it was supposed to achieve.

The presidential public finance system is broken today because Congress failed to take any steps to update and modernize the system. H.R.270 would repair the presidential system.

Our organizations urge you to support and co-sponsor the comprehensive reform bill, H.R. 270, in addition to any other campaign finance reform bills you may be supporting and co-sponsoring in this Congress.

Americans for Campaign Reform
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Campaign Legal Center
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Common Cause
Democracy 21
League of Women Voters
People For the American Way