

REFORM GROUPS URGE NO VOTE ON ROSKAM BILL, H.R. 5053 - VOTE AGAINST OPENING LOOPHOLE FOR FOREIGN MONEY

June 13, 2016

Dear Representative,

Our organizations strongly urge you to oppose H.R.5053, Representative Peter Roskam's bill that would eliminate the requirement for 501(c) groups to disclose their donors to the IRS.

Our organizations include the Brennan Center for Justice, Campaign Legal Center, Center for Responsive Politics, Common Cause, CREW, Democracy 21, Every Voice, Issue One, League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, Sunlight Foundation, The Rootstrickers Project at Demand Progress and Represent.Us.

The Roskam bill would open the door wide for secret money from foreign donors to be illegally laundered into federal elections through 501(c)(4) and other 501(c) groups. Foreign money cannot be legally spent in U.S. elections, but it can be given to 501(c) groups and they can spend money in our elections. These groups are not required to disclose their donors publicly, but they are required to make non-public disclosure of their donors to the IRS.

This disclosure to the IRS is the only protection citizens have to prevent 501(c)(4) and other 501(c) groups being used to illegally spend foreign money in our elections. The fact that 501(c) groups are required to disclose their donors to the IRS means the groups know that donor information is available as an accountability check against illegal conduct.

If donor disclosure to the IRS by 501(c) groups is eliminated, however, as the Roskam bill would do, no one will be in a position to determine if a 501(c) group illegally spent foreign money in our elections – other than the group and foreign donor involved. Any check will be gone and here will be no way to hold a group and foreign donor accountable for illegally spending foreign money in U.S. elections.

House members should vote against eliminating the existing check against foreign countries, foreign companies and foreign individuals spending money illegally to influence our elections.

We strongly urge you vote to protect the integrity of U.S. elections by voting against H.R. 5053.

Brennan Center for Justice
Campaign Legal Center
Center for Responsive Politics
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Democracy 21
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Issue One
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Represent.Us