Written by Mike Honda
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America deserves as pure a democracy as possible, which involves all citizens having equal influence over elections. I strongly believe that we cannot let corporate interests drown out the peoples' voices in the electoral process. This is why now more than ever authenticity and openness is needed in our electoral process, a critical tenet of the DISCLOSE Act.

Disclaimers and disclosure are the essence of the DISCLOSE Act, requiring corporations, organizations, and special interest groups stand by their political advertising just like a candidate for office does. It will stop Wall Street, Big Oil, and corporations, including those controlled by foreign – or even hostile – governments, from secretly manipulating elections by funneling money to fly-by-night front groups that run last minute attack ads and other anonymous election advertisements. CEOs will need to identify themselves in their advertisements, and corporations and organizations will be required to disclose their political expenditures. The bill also prohibits certain entities that receive taxpayer money – such as large government contractors and corporations receiving TARP funds – from turning around and spending that money to influence elections.

Unfortunately, the bill is not without some controversy due to an exemption given to longstanding national groups who have been in existence for over 10 years, with more than 500,000 members and who receive 15 percent or less of their funding from corporations. I understand that the exemption can be seen as unfair and makes the legislation seem somewhat flawed, but it is a necessary compromise to ensure that progress is made before the upcoming November elections.

Constitutionally, the Supreme Court reaffirmed in *Citizens United* that requirements for disclosure of those funding campaign ads are constitutional, along with disclaimers by the sponsor that he or she backed the ad.

As I've stated in the past, I strongly believe that the Supreme Court's decision runs against the core of our nation's principles and the ideals of a democracy by the people, for the people. This sentiment has been echoed by many of you over the past few months through the many letters, phone calls, Facebook comments and Tweets that I have received. It is my hope that the passage of the DISCLOSE Act moves us forward on this path.