

It's just wrong. Secret campaign cash should have no place in our American democracy. But now we are seeing huge sums of money from secret sources going into campaign advertising, much of it the negative advertising that poisons the airways.

Special interests are spending millions and millions of dollars in this election and it threatens to drown out the voices of individual voters. And because of changes in the law, there are no disclosure requirements – even foreign government corporations could be funding these ads.

The League of Women Voters has been calling attention to secret money being spent on political advertising for months, but the U.S. Senate has refused to act to require disclosure, even after the House of Representatives passed a strong disclosure bill.

Now we are seeing the largest campaign expenditures in history, even as organizations accept tens of thousands of dollars from both American and foreign corporations. Essentially, these organizations are functioning as Political Action Committees but without having to follow the laws requiring disclosure of their donors. It should come as no surprise that they lobbied against the DISCLOSE Act in Congress, which would have stopped manipulation of elections by fly-by-night anonymous hit groups, and prevented the infusion of undercover expenditures.

These activities are detrimental to our democracy. Voters deserve to know who is paying for election advertising. The League of Women Voters calls on all candidates to disavow secret advertising and asks our local media outlets not to accept ads unless the names of the true donors are made public.

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