

outrageous the Supreme Court's decision was.

Would the Chair now announce morning business.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business until 4 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time until 10 a.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees and the time from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. controlled in alternating blocks of time, with the majority controlling the first block and the Republicans controlling the next.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business, and the Senator is recognized.

THE DISCLOSE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, when I reflect on the current state of frustration most Americans feel about our political system, I know there are many reasons, not the least of which is the state of our economy. When people are uncertain about their economic future, they are certainly unhappy with political leaders because that is whom they look to first and foremost for some assurance that our economy is moving forward and creating opportunity for them in the future. Where there is uncertainty, it is understandable that it translates into frustration with politicians and our political process.

But I would tell you that as I reflect on the many years I have been involved in public life, there is one aspect of this which really needs to be addressed, honestly and openly discussed, and that is how we finance our political campaigns in America. I think this is at the heart of the current weakness of our political system and a real challenge to its future.

I can tell you that most every individual who sits down to make the decision about entering public life has that sobering moment when they reflect on the fact that this isn't just a matter of how hard you work or how good you are or what your ideas might be. It has a lot to do with how much money you can raise. And if you can't raise enough money to deliver your message through radio or TV or social networking and all the different varieties of reaching the voters, even the very best candidates don't stand a chance.

I came to the Senate succeeding my mentor and great friend Paul Simon, who was a Senator from Illinois. Paul Simon would have run successfully if he had tried for another term in the Senate, but Paul announced that he just didn't want to go through that arduous battle of raising money—literally sitting on the telephone hour after weary hour trying to get through to people to beg for money. That is the plight of most people who decide to be political candidates. So those who do engage in that process and accept that challenge know it is going to consume at least half of their waking moments as a candidate—raising money so that you will be on television in the important close of the campaign. You know as well that you are going to be calling a number of people, some of whom are very gracious and giving without any demand for return and some who just want to call you back at a later time when something important to them comes up. That item of importance may be at the highest level of principle, but it may not be as well. It may be something very personal to them about their business or their family that brings them to ask a favor. That is the nature of the political process.

Now insert into that process the new decision by the Supreme Court, which has decided that not only individuals have the power under our Constitution and Bill of Rights to express themselves through the expenditure of money but that now corporations do as well. This Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court—a Court which many had praised as being a conservative Court bound by precedent—broke precedent, established new standards, and basically allows corporations and special interests across America to spend unlimited amounts of money in political campaigns. Now the hardest working candidate of either political party, working night and day to raise money, can be overwhelmed and eclipsed overnight by a special interest group or corporation that decides to spend millions of dollars to tell their side of the story. And trust me, these corporations won't get up and say: We had a narrow amendment in our self-interest to try to maximize our profits, and the incumbent Senator voted against it. That isn't how they will tell the story. They will tell the story about how this politician had basically turned his back on the people who elected him or takes a position they do not appreciate. How does the average person—the average candidate—overcome that kind of attack? The Citizens United decision by this Supreme Court has turned our political system upside down.

Here is a quote that accurately describes what we are trying to achieve with the DISCLOSE Act, which we are going to call up for a vote. The DISCLOSE Act addresses the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court. We are going to be voting on this for the second time. The first time we

voted on it, not a single Republican would join us in an effort for disclosure—disclosure by these special interest groups and corporate groups that are buying these political ads. Let me quote from a Member of the Senate. This Member of the Senate said:

What we ought to have is disclosure. I think groups should have the right to run those ads, but they ought to be disclosed and they ought to be accurate.

Who said that? The Senator from Kentucky, who has just come to the floor. The minority leader said that in the context of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill in 2002.

The Senator from Kentucky, the Republican minority leader, is not the only Republican who would seem to support the principle behind the DISCLOSE Act. The Senator from Alabama, Mr. SESSIONS, the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said earlier this year:

I don't like it when a large source of money is out there funding ads and is not accountable. To the extent we can, I tend to favor disclosure.

The Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN, chairman of the Senate's Republican campaign committee, apparently agrees with that sentiment. Here is what he said earlier this year:

I think the system needs more transparency so people can more easily reach their own conclusions.

I agree. I agree with these statements by Senator MCCONNELL, Senator SESSIONS, and Senator CORNYN, and I think the statements they have made give them good reason to vote for the DISCLOSE Act, which they initially opposed and I hope, in reconsideration, might favor.

The DISCLOSE Act would bring greater transparency to the source of campaign ads flooding the airwaves before an election so that voters can make good decisions for themselves as to whether the ads are truthful.

As a voter, I would want to know who paid for the political ad, and I do not want foreign companies trying to buy our elections. Shouldn't we know if some foreign corporation is buying ads to defeat an American politician? Shouldn't we have that disclosure? That is what the DISCLOSE Act says, and those who oppose it oppose that kind of disclosure.

As a taxpayer, I don't want big companies with more than \$10 million in Federal contracts to be able to buy ads to curry favor with those Congressmen and Senators who happen to want to help them without disclosing who they are. Is it too much to ask that someone who has a vested interest in government contracts and buys ads to influence the outcome of an election to elect a Senator or Congressman who will vote their way at a minimum disclose who they are?

As a shareholder of a company, I want to know what political activities the management of that company is spending my company's money on. If the board of directors or one member

or the CEO decides to spend several million dollars defeating a candidate, should the people who own the company, the shareholders, at least know that and be in on the decision?

The DISCLOSE Act would help with all these goals. It would make CEOs and other leaders take personal responsibility for their ads. It would require companies and groups to disclose to the FEC within 24 hours of conducting any campaign-related activity or transferring money to other campaign groups. It would prevent foreign companies from contributing to the outcome of our election. It would mandate that corporations, unions, and other groups disclose their campaign activities to shareholders and members in their annual and periodic reports. It would bar large government contractors from receiving taxpayer funds and then using that money to buy campaign ads. It would restrict companies from sponsoring a candidate. It is all common sense.

Let me be clear. I personally think we should go further to change the way we finance campaigns. I am the author and lead sponsor of the Fair Elections Now Act, which would allow viable candidates who qualify for the fair elections program to raise a maximum of \$100 from any donor. These candidates would receive matching funds and grants in order to compete with those high-rolling candidates who have personal wealth. That would change the system fundamentally, to move toward a system of public financing. Those who criticize it should take heart from the States that have brought it to a referendum, which have said repeatedly that they would much rather have public financing and take the special interests out of politics even if it meant imposing a tax—as we do, for example, with corporations doing business with the Federal Government—a tiny tax, which would generate enough money for the campaigns across the Congress and get us out of this money chase we are currently in. It would change the system of politics fundamentally. It would put the average citizen back in the picture, and I think it would begin to restore confidence.

Until we change the way we finance campaigns, I do not believe we can restore confidence in our political system to a level that it should be. But in the wake of the Citizens United decision, we are moving in the opposite direction. Allowing companies to spend freely and directly on political campaigns—we should at least have the transparency that is being asked in the DISCLOSE bill. Is it asking too much to require a group or company to at least mention who is sponsoring an ad so the American people know who is paying for it? I don't think it is. Once upon a time, many Republicans agreed with me.

I will close with one more quote from the Senator from Kentucky, the minority leader, from an interview years ago

on “Meet the Press.” Here is what he said: “Republicans are in favor of disclosure.” We hope they will be in favor of the DISCLOSE Act, which calls for disclosure. You can't state a position much more clearly than the Senator did. I hope they still feel that way. I hope Senate Republicans will join us in a meaningful disclosure method for campaign finance reform that will move us in the direction of giving the voters more information so they can decide which candidates they want to support and know who is supporting different causes and candidates.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I am not sure what the parliamentary situation is, but I am going to proceed under my leader time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

THE DISCLOSE ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, here we go again, back to the DISCLOSE Act. Americans are speaking out. They want us to focus on the economy, on preventing tax hikes, on creating jobs. What do Democrats do? They turn to the so-called DISCLOSE Act, a bill they say is about transparency in elections but which was drafted behind closed doors, without hearings, without testimony, and without any markups; a bill which is supposed to be about free speech but which picks and chooses who gets the right to engage in political speech and who does not; a bill that is back on the floor for no other reason than the fact that our friends on the other side have decided this week is politics-only week in the Senate. Let's be clear from the outset. That is all this is—pure politics.

Over the past couple of elections, our friends on the other side have gotten a lot of help from their union allies and other outside groups—so much so, in fact, that they were able to outspend their opponents 2 to 1 in 2006 and 3 to 1 in 2008. That is our friends on the other side of the aisle. But now, after spending the last year and a half enacting policies Americans don't like, they want to prevent their opponents from being able to criticize what they have done. They hear Americans speaking out, they see some energy on the other side, and they don't want to take the kind of criticism they have leveled at Republicans for the past 4 years, so they are trying to rig the system to their advantage. That is it. It is quite simple—just to rig the system to their advantage.

The only question here is why our friends on the other side would want to propose something like this when Americans are screaming at them to focus on the economy instead. Just look at the surveys. What are Ameri-

cans most concerned about? It is no secret that Americans want Congress to focus on jobs and the economy. Yet, over the last 2 months, in the midst of what Democrats are remarkably calling “recovery summer,” the President has devoted two of his weekly radio addresses to the Nation to making a personal pitch for this bill.

Today in the Senate, in the middle of the worst recession in memory, the Democratic leadership has decided to spend the next 2 days on the same failed partisan campaign spending bill aimed at giving Democrats a political edge. It is truly astonishing. It seems as if the more Americans say they want Democrats to focus on jobs, the more determined they are to press ahead with some piece of legislation aimed either at killing private sector jobs or, in the case of this bill, preserving their own jobs.

Here we are, in the middle of a recession, with 27 States yesterday reporting increases in unemployment, 14 million Americans looking for work, and a national debt that is putting the very future of the American dream in jeopardy, here we are voting on a bill that amounts to little more than an incumbency protection act for Democrats in Congress. If Americans are looking for one final piece of evidence in this Congress that Democrats have lost perspective and lost touch with Americans, then this is it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

HONORING CONLEY INGRAM

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise for a moment to pause and pay tribute to the life and accomplishments of a citizen of my home community, Judge Conley Ingram. In fact, in a few days a number of members of our community, his friends and associates over his career in law and community service, will join to celebrate his life and achievements and his birthday. He is a remarkable person whom I admire greatly because he has been a mentor to me and the example I have tried to follow. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend that particular program, but today on the floor of the Senate, I wanted to memorialize a true storied jurist of the State of Georgia, probably amongst the top three or four from our State in the history of our State. He is a man who stands shoulder to shoulder with men such as Griffin Bell, the former Attorney General of the United States, and former Assistant Attorney General Larry Thompson.

Conley Ingram has done about everything you can do as an attorney and a lawyer. When he graduated from Emory University 59 years ago and went into the service, he taught at the Judge Advocate School in Charlottesville, VA. From there, he went on to be city attorney, special assistant attorney general, juvenile court judge of the County of Cobb, and went on to become