

direct spending in political campaigns. I was troubled at the time and remain troubled today that in that case, the Supreme Court extended to corporations the same First Amendment rights in the political process that are guaranteed by the Constitution to individual Americans.

Corporations are not the same as individual Americans. Corporations do not have the same rights, the same morals or the same interests. Corporations cannot vote in our democracy. They are artificial legal constructs meant to facilitate business. The Founders understood this. Americans across the country have long understood this. A narrow majority on the Supreme Court apparently did not.

When I cosponsored the first DISCLOSE Act after the Supreme Court's decision in 2010, I hoped Republicans would join with Democrats to mitigate the impact of the Citizens United decision. I hoped that Senate Republicans who had once championed the bipartisan McCain-Feingold campaign finance law would work with us to help ensure that corporations could not abuse their newfound constitutional rights.

Regrettably, Senate Republicans filibustered that DISCLOSE Act, preventing the Senate from even debating the measure, let alone having an up-or-down vote in the Senate. By preventing even debate on the DISCLOSE Act, Senate Republicans ensured the ability of wealthy corporations to dominate all mediums of advertising and to drown out the voices of individuals, as we have seen and will continue to see in our elections.

By blocking the DISCLOSE Act, Senate Republicans ensured that the flood of corporate money flowing into campaigns from undisclosed and unaccountable sources since the Citizens United decision would continue. The risks we feared at the time of the decision, the risks that drove Congress to pass bipartisan laws based on longstanding precedent, have been apparent in the elections since. The American people have seen the sudden and dramatic effects in the Republican primary elections this year and in the 2010 mid-term elections. Instead of hearing the voices of voters, we see a barrage of negative advertisements from so-called Super PAC's. This comes as no surprise to the many of us in Congress and around the country who worried at the time of the Citizens United decision that it turns the idea of government of, by and for the people on its head. We worried that the decision created new rights for Wall Street at the expense of the people on Main Street. We worried that powerful corporate megaphones would drown out the voices and interests of individual Americans. It is clear those concerns were justified.

By reintroducing the DISCLOSE Act, we continue to try to fight the effects of corporate influence unleashed by Citizens United. The DISCLOSE Act of 2012 is focused on restoring trans-

parency and accountability to campaign finance laws by ensuring that all Americans know who is paying for campaign ads. This is a critical step toward restoring the ability of American voters to be able to speak, be heard and to hear competing voices, and not be overwhelmed by corporate influence and driven out of the governing process. I hope that Republicans who have seen the impact of waves of unaccountable corporate campaign spending will not renew their obstruction of this important legislation. Even Senator MCCAIN, a lead co-author of the McCain-Feingold Act, has conceded that Super PAC's are "disgraceful."

Vermont is a small state. It is easy to imagine the wave of corporate money that has been spent on elections around the country lead to corporate interests flooding the airwaves with election ads, and transforming even local elections there or in other small States. It would not take more than a tiny fraction of corporate money to outspend all of our local candidates combined. If a local city council or zoning board is considering an issue of corporate interest, why would those corporate interests not try to drown out the views of Vermont's hard-working citizens? I know that the people of Vermont, like all Americans, take seriously their civic duty to choose wisely on Election Day. Like all Vermonters, I cherish the voters' role in the democratic process and am a staunch believer in the First Amendment. Vermont refused to ratify the Constitution until the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1791. The rights of Vermonters and all Americans to speak to each other and to be heard should not be undercut by corporate spending. I hope all Senators, Republican or Democratic, will support the DISCLOSE Act of 2012 and help us take an important step to ensure the ability of every American to be heard and participate in free and fair elections.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 401—EX-PRESSING APPRECIATION FOR FOREIGN SERVICE AND CIVIL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS WHO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES AROUND THE GLOBE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. KERRY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 401

Whereas the United States Foreign Service was established by Congress in 1924 to professionalize the country's diplomatic and consular services and advance freedom, democracy, and security for the benefit of the people of the United States and the international community;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development was established in 1961 to support the foreign policy goals of the United States through economic, development, and humanitarian assistance;

Whereas the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development together employ more than 27,000 United States nationals in the Foreign Service and Civil Service dedicated to promoting United States interests around the world;

Whereas Foreign Service personnel deploy to Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia on a permanent, rotating basis to defend and promote United States priorities abroad;

Whereas many Foreign Service employees spend months or years away from families and loved ones on assignment to dangerous or inhospitable posts where family members are not permitted;

Whereas numerous Department of State and United States Agency for International Development employees have lost their lives while serving abroad;

Whereas strong and purposeful United States diplomacy and development, carried out by a diverse, professionally educated, and well-trained force of Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals, are the most cost-effective means to protect and advance United States interests abroad;

Whereas the promotion of commercial engagement by United States businesses in foreign markets and targeted international development projects support economic prosperity, job creation, and opportunities for United States business and industry;

Whereas United States diplomats are often the first line of defense against international conflict and transnational security threats;

Whereas Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals have worked to support the members of the United States Armed Forces involved in critical national security missions and military engagements in dangerous and unstable regions;

Whereas Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals administer emergency assistance in crisis situations; and

Whereas the contributions of Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals to the global advancement of international understanding, American ideals, and the promotion of freedom and democracy around the world should be commended: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and gives special appreciation to the Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel of the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and other United States Government agencies that promote and protect United States priorities abroad; and

(2) owes a debt of gratitude to these individuals, and their families, who put public service and pride in their country ahead of comfort, convenience, and even safety in service to the United States and the global community.

SENATE RESOLUTION 402—CON-DEMNING JOSEPH KONY AND THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY FOR COMMITTING CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND MASS ATROCITIES, AND SUPPORTING ONGOING EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENTS IN CENTRAL AFRICA TO REMOVE JOSEPH KONY AND LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY COMMANDERS FROM THE BATTLEFIELD

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. HATCH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. AKAKA, Mrs. MURRAY,