

OpenTheGovernment.org

Americans for Less Secrecy, More Democracy

April 12, 2007

Sen. Ted Stevens
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Stevens,

The undersigned organizations, partners of OpenTheGovernment.org and others, are writing to you to ask you to support S.223, the "Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act." Earlier this year, a broadly bipartisan group of 34 Senators reintroduced legislation (S. 223 in the 110th Congress and S. 1508 in the 109th) to require Senators to file their campaign finance reports electronically.

On March 28, 2007, the Senate Rules Committee, by unanimous voice vote, passed S. 223, providing for electronic disclosure of campaign finance reports by Senate candidates and party committees.

Sen. Feingold is said to be planning to offer the bill on the Senate floor. I urge you to support the bill as it stands without amendment when he does so.

Currently, all federal candidates, party committees and federal PACs are required to file their campaign finance disclosure reports electronically - with the sole exception of Senate candidates who are still filing paper reports. This exception for Senate candidates has no rational basis, makes no sense and is not defensible.

The voters in every House race, however, had electronic filings available within 48 hours. There no justifiable reason for Senate disclosure not to be as good as the House's.

This proposal – unlike any of the others involving campaign finance – has no stated opposition. The breadth of the co-sponsors speaks volumes. The Federal Election Commission supports it. The Washington Post and New York Times have editorialized for it. Blogs on the left and right also came out in its favor last year, including Daily Kos, RedState, Huffington Post, Club for Growth, and many more.

The reason for this nearly universal support is simple: electronic filing would impose NO new disclosure requirements at all on the Senate. It would only change the manner of

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filing. Nor would it require Senate committees to change anything about how they now keep their records; Senate campaigns keep their contribution records electronically anyway.

In the name of transparency and accountability, we urge you to support S.223 without amendment.

Please contact Patrice McDermott, Director of OpenTheGovernment.org, at (202) 332-6736 if you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries
American Library Association
Center for Democracy and Technology
Electronic Frontier Foundation
EnviroJustice
Government Accountability Project
National Freedom of Information Coalition
OMB Watch
Society of Professional Journalists
U.S. PIRG
The Amarillo Independent
Virginia Coalition for Open Government