

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 975

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Americans have a right to fair representation and that America's democratic institutions are in urgent need of repair to provide greater responsiveness and accountability to the people through critical reforms that empower the American voter, strengthen our Nation's ethics laws, and fix our broken campaign finance system.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 28, 2018

Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. HOYER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BERA, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CRIST, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HECK, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. CLAY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RASKIN, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD,

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TITUS, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. DEFazio, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. VELA, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. BASS, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. PETERS, Ms. MENG, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. RUSH, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CARBAJAL, and Mr. FOSTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Americans have a right to fair representation and that America’s democratic institutions are in urgent need of repair to provide greater responsiveness and accountability to the people through critical reforms that empower the American voter, strengthen our Nation’s ethics laws, and fix our broken campaign finance system.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This resolution may be cited as the “By the People
4 Resolution”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 It is the purpose of this resolution to express the
3 sense of the House of Representatives that Congress
4 should advance a comprehensive set of political reforms
5 to restore trust in, and integrity to, our institutions of de-
6 mocracy. Such reforms will—

- 7 (1) empower the American voter;
8 (2) strengthen our Nation’s ethics laws; and
9 (3) fix our broken campaign finance system.

10 **TITLE I—EMPOWERING THE**
11 **AMERICAN VOTER**

12 **SEC. 101. EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE BALLOT BOX.**

13 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

14 (1) the right to vote for all Americans is sac-
15 rosanct and rules for voting and election administra-
16 tion should protect the right to vote and promote
17 voter participation;

18 (2) in recent years, we have witnessed unprece-
19 dented efforts to turn back the clock and erect bar-
20 riers to voting for disabled, minority, young, elderly,
21 and low-income Americans; and

22 (3) Congress should respond by modernizing
23 the electoral system to—

24 (A) improve access to the ballot;

25 (B) enhance the integrity and security of
26 our voting systems; and

1 (C) ensure greater accountability for the
2 administration of elections.

3 **SEC. 102. PROMOTING NATIONAL AUTOMATIC VOTER REG-**
4 **ISTRATION.**

5 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

6 (1) America is stronger when more Americans
7 participate in the political process;

8 (2) across the Nation, voter registration models
9 at best are outmoded, and present barriers for eligi-
10 ble Americans to have their voices heard at the bal-
11 lot box and, at worst, are under assault from at-
12 tempts to limit access; and

13 (3) Congress should advance reforms to auto-
14 mate the registration of millions of eligible voters,
15 thereby improving registration files and election se-
16 curity, all the while helping to build a more rep-
17 resentative electorate.

18 **SEC. 103. ENDING PARTISAN REDISTRICTING BY ESTAB-**
19 **LISHING STATE-BASED INDEPENDENT COM-**
20 **MISSIONS.**

21 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

22 (1) fair representation demands Congressional
23 districts be drawn without undue political influence
24 and gamesmanship;

1 (2) a partisan arms race has broken out, with
2 majority parties in the States crafting district lines
3 to maximize political advantage;

4 (3) the public has lost confidence in the way
5 that Congressional districts are drawn; and

6 (4) Congress should put an end to this partisan
7 arms race and require all States to establish inde-
8 pendent, multi-party citizen redistricting commis-
9 sions to draw open, transparent, and fair statewide
10 district maps after each decennial census.

11 **SEC. 104. RESTORING THE INTEGRITY OF THE VOTING**
12 **RIGHTS ACT.**

13 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

14 (1) we must remain vigilant in protecting every
15 American’s right to vote, regardless of race, color, or
16 creed;

17 (2) systemic voter discrimination and intimidati-
18 on still occurs in communities across the country;

19 (3) the Supreme Court, in *Shelby County v.*
20 *Holder*, struck down core provisions of the Voting
21 Rights Act, undermining decades-long protections
22 for communities of color that faced historic and con-
23 tinuing discrimination; and

24 (4) Congress should restore protections for vot-
25 ers in States with a recent history of discrimination

1 and bolster prophylactic protections for those com-
2 munities with a history of voter disenfranchisement.

3 **SEC. 105. PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTION**
4 **SYSTEM.**

5 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

6 (1) the security of election systems must be im-
7 proved;

8 (2) attacks from hostile actors, both foreign
9 and domestic, must never compromise the integrity
10 or security of our election system; and

11 (3) Congress must advance comprehensive re-
12 forms to protect and harden our election system,
13 providing the resources and tools to our State and
14 local partners to ensure attempts to undermine our
15 election system remain unsuccessful.

16 **TITLE II—STRENGTHENING OUR**
17 **NATION’S ETHICS LAWS**

18 **SEC. 201. ENDING THE REVOLVING DOOR OF SPECIAL IN-**
19 **TERESTS INTO AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT.**

20 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

21 (1) the line between public service and private
22 interests is too often blurred, because government
23 positions are regularly filled with industry insiders
24 who work to secure undue access and influence for
25 their former employers, and that this preferential

1 treatment is later used to secure for those same in-
2 dividuals future employment and profit, fueling a
3 cycle of exploitative government service;

4 (2) the public is rightly disgusted by this “re-
5 volving door” into and out of government, and as
6 stewards of the public trust, government officials
7 should be—

8 (A) required to submit to a stringent set of
9 ethical guidelines that restrict their engagement
10 on matters directly related to past employment;
11 and

12 (B) prohibited from seeking immediate em-
13 ployment after their government tenure with
14 private interests with business related to their
15 government service.

16 **SEC. 202. EXPANDING ETHICS LAWS TO APPLY TO THE**
17 **PRESIDENT AND TO PROMOTE GREATER AC-**
18 **COUNTABILITY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE.**

19 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

20 (1) government officials at every level, including
21 the Office of the President and Vice President,
22 should be held to the highest ethical standards;

23 (2) government service should not be a means
24 to personal profit, nor should conflicts of interest
25 cloud the judgment of our Nation’s leaders;

1 (3) all existing and applicable ethics laws and
2 protocols to prevent conflicts of interest should apply
3 to the Office of President and Vice President; and

4 (4) candidates for President and Vice-President
5 should be required to disclose their tax returns as a
6 condition of their candidacy, as the electorate de-
7 serves to be provided with the necessary information
8 to determine if an individual can pursue the public
9 interest unencumbered by private conflicts of inter-
10 est.

11 **SEC. 203. REFORMING THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETH-**
12 **ICS.**

13 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

14 (1) the entirety of the Federal Government, and
15 the public servants who comprise it, must comply
16 with all relevant ethics laws and regulations;

17 (2) it has become apparent that—

18 (A) there are significant differences in the
19 ways that certain agencies, government employ-
20 ees, and political appointees abide by the rel-
21 evant ethics statutes; and

22 (B) the existing enforcement tools are defi-
23 cient;

24 (3) Americans are right to expect their public
25 servants to be free from conflicts of interest; and

1 (4) Congress should bolster compliance across
2 the Federal Government and ensure those charged
3 with overseeing the law have the necessary tools of
4 enforcement.

5 **SEC. 204. UPDATING THE LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT AND**
6 **PROHIBITING BUNDLED CAMPAIGN CON-**
7 **TRIBUTIONS FROM LOBBYISTS.**

8 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

9 (1) all Americans have the right to petition
10 their government, as granted by the First Amend-
11 ment;

12 (2) the modern-day lobbying industry has
13 abused this right, deploying sophisticated tactics to
14 maximize their influence and to minimize trans-
15 parency and public scrutiny of their actions;

16 (3) the American people deserve to know who is
17 influencing their representatives in Congress;

18 (4) professional lobbyists should not be able to
19 circumvent campaign finance contribution limits to
20 gain improper access and influence Congress to ad-
21 vance the positions of their clients; and

22 (5) Congress should act to impose stronger lob-
23 bying rules and prohibitions.

1 **SEC. 205. STRENGTHENING BRIBERY LAWS TO GUARD**
 2 **AGAINST PUBLIC OFFICIALS PROFITING**
 3 **FROM PUBLIC SERVICE.**

4 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

5 (1) public servants, both elected and unelected,
 6 should not use public office for personal profit;

7 (2) recent court cases have narrowed the scope
 8 of existing bribery laws, inviting unscrupulous public
 9 officials to test the outer bounds of the law; and

10 (3) Congress must act to ensure public servants
 11 do not use their public power for private gain or to
 12 enrich themselves, either directly or indirectly.

13 **TITLE III—FIXING OUR BROKEN**
 14 **CAMPAIGN FINANCE SYSTEM**

15 **SEC. 301. EMPOWERING SMALL DONORS AND DIMINISHING**
 16 **THE INFLUENCE OF BIG MONEY CAMPAIGN**
 17 **DONORS.**

18 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

19 (1) concentrated money in politics has corroded
 20 the public's trust in their representatives and their
 21 ability to provide fair representation, and is under-
 22 mining faith in the institutions of democracy;

23 (2) to reduce corruption or the appearance of
 24 corruption from the undue influence of the wealthy
 25 and well-connected donors in our politics, Congress
 26 should enact bold reforms to our campaign finance

1 system that increase and multiply the power of small
2 dollar donors in our democracy; and

3 (3) these reforms can provide everyday Ameri-
4 cans, and the candidates they support, with the tools
5 they need to compete with big money, enabling a
6 new generation of candidates to run and win office,
7 ultimately building a Congress that is more respon-
8 sive to the public interest, not the special interests.

9 **SEC. 302. DISCLOSING “SECRET MONEY” AND PROMOTING**
10 **TRANSPARENCY OF POLITICAL SPENDING.**

11 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

12 (1) undisclosed “secret money” is a scourge on
13 our democracy and denies voters the information
14 they need to make informed political decisions;

15 (2) when individuals or organizations enter the
16 political town-square to voice their opinions, they
17 should do so openly, honestly, and with the full ben-
18 efit of transparency;

19 (3) in recent years hundreds of millions of dol-
20 lars have poured into our political system from un-
21 disclosed sources due to a series of ill-advised court
22 decisions, lax enforcement, and a failure to update
23 donor disclosure laws; and

24 (4) Congress should strengthen our campaign
25 finance disclosure laws to shine a bright light on this

1 shadowy political spending and on the sponsors of
2 campaign advertisements, thereby giving Americans
3 the information they need to make informed political
4 decisions.

5 **SEC. 303. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION TO REASSERT**
6 **CONGRESS' AUTHORITY TO REGULATE PO-**
7 **LITICAL SPENDING AND TO OVERTURN THE**
8 **CITIZENS UNITED RULING.**

9 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

10 (1) Congress and the States should be able to
11 regulate and set reasonable limits on the raising and
12 spending of political money;

13 (2) the Citizens United court case violated this
14 principle by permitting unlimited political spending
15 by nominally independent outside organizations;

16 (3) in practice, this has created a new wild west
17 of outside political spending, empowering the
18 wealthiest few to exert even more control over our
19 democracy; and

20 (4) Congress should move to restore its author-
21 ity to regulate the raising and spending of political
22 money by passing a constitutional amendment to
23 overturn Citizens United and other related rulings.

1 **SEC. 304. PREVENTING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN OUR**
2 **ELECTIONS.**

3 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

4 (1) elections in the United States should be the
5 sole province of the American people;

6 (2) recent efforts by hostile foreign actors to
7 disrupt our elections, and thereby our democracy,
8 must be met with resolve; and

9 (3) Congress should—

10 (A) institute a robust set of reforms to cre-
11 ate real-time transparency of political advertise-
12 ments on all advertising platforms, ensuring all
13 Americans have the information they need to
14 judge the source and content of a given political
15 advertisement; and

16 (B) enact new, stronger prohibitions on po-
17 litical spending by foreign actors and on spend-
18 ing by domestic subsidiaries of foreign-owned
19 corporations.

20 **SEC. 305. RESTORING FUNCTION TO THE FEDERAL ELEC-**
21 **TION COMMISSION.**

22 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

23 (1) the Federal Election Commission needs ur-
24 gent repair;

1 (2) hamstrung by its partisan composition, the
2 Commission has failed in recent years to live up to
3 its mandate of enforcing Federal election law; and

4 (3) Congress should enact sensible reform
5 measures to restore the Commission’s ability to po-
6 lice campaign finance violations.

7 **SEC. 306. STRENGTHENING COORDINATION LAW TO PRE-**
8 **VENT CANDIDATE-AFFILIATED SUPER PACS.**

9 It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

10 (1) independent political spending must remain
11 independent or else it renders contribution limits to
12 candidates ineffectual;

13 (2) the efforts by some to evade or skirt exist-
14 ing campaign finance anticoordination law exposes
15 the nominal independence of supposedly “inde-
16 pendent” political spenders who are clearly affiliated
17 with particular candidates; and

18 (3) Congress should strengthen the antioordi-
19 nation statute to—

20 (A) shut down candidate-specific super
21 PACs; and

22 (B) effectively prohibit direct and indirect
23 coordination between other outside spenders
24 and candidates and parties.

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