

February 25, 2012

Honorable Julius Genachowski

Federal Communications Commission

445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW

Washington D.C. 20554

Statement for the Record: Matter of Disclosure Requirements TV Broadcasters (00-168)

As I have made clear in previous filings information is the lifeblood of our democracy. Thomas Jefferson once stated that if he had to choose a government without newspapers or newspapers without government he would prefer the latter. In the post Citizens United era unfortunately corporations are able to spend without limits to influence election outcomes. The Supreme Court's egregious decision in Citizens United at first glance seemed like it might benefit corporations and unions by letting them spend without limit. Now we are seeing attempts at union busting though and voter suppression tactics by Republicans supporting Citizens United. What's more TV broadcasters who have benefited financially from Citizens United

have started running more negative political ads on the air but have cut funding for real news and reporting leaving voters less able to separate fact from fiction.

Misinformation is growing and the Far Right is making attempts to not only suppress the vote but also break up labor unions, as I'll explain later.

I have to ask though with all the misinformation, voter suppression efforts and corporations spending unlimited sums of money on political ads, which may be untrue what is the point in even having elections? We might as well just ask the wealthiest 1% of Americans in the country and the multinational corporations to pick for us who they want to control our government. That way instead of having a Presidential election in November where the entire electorate comes out to vote the candidate who raises the most money from big donors automatically becomes our next President. In this scenario no elections would even take place. The corporate elite of this country and wealthy individuals would give money to whomever they want to hold office and whoever raises the most money from big donors automatically assumes public office.

However, the Founding Fathers did not intend for this country to become an oligarchy or plutocracy. They remembered all too well the systems of feudalism and nobility in Europe and did not want America to become a country of financial oligarchs or plutocrats. At the very least as Buddy Roemer (the former Louisiana Governor and Republican candidate for President in 2012 who is now seeking the Reform Party or Americans Elect nomination) has said we need transparency. At this time we have neither transparency nor spending limits on political advertising.

Congress should have the constitutional authority to pass campaign finance reform that either restores spending limits and/or requires disclosure of who is funding Super PACs in the country. They could address the lack of transparency by simply passing the DISCLOSE Act into law. In the event they choose to do so they should not carve out exemptions or special interest loopholes to the gun lobby that is the National Rifle Association (NRA) or any other industry lobbying organization. In order to restore spending limits in campaign finance law a Constitutional Amendment must be ratified overturning the Supreme Court of the United States Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission decision.

That being said the Economic Elite of the United States which already has a great deal of economic power has thanks to the ruling been able to acquire a great deal of political power as well. As I have made clear in a few previous filings since the Citizens United ruling was made we have begun to see attempts to roll back voting rights using fictitious voter fraud as an excuse to suppress the vote, union busting efforts and other dirty underhanded tactics by some in the Republican Party meant to disenfranchise likely Democratic voters and harm the Democratic Party. Their reasoning for going after the unions is labor unions tend to support Democrats so if they can strip collective bargaining rights of workers to bargain for better wages and benefits they can try to weaken the Democratic Party.

These are all politically calculated moves by Republicans to make it harder for Democrats to vote and make it easier for Republicans to not only win elections but also hold on to power. Not all Republicans are this corrupt and some like Senator John McCain of Arizona who lost the 2008 Presidential election to then Senator

Barack Obama have spoken out against Citizens United. However, others like Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell want unlimited spending by corporations in political elections, as they believe it can help them win an election even if they go about it in dirty and underhanded ways.

They don't mind giving special favors to their industry friends and to lobbyists in exchange for their financial support (bribes) come election time made out to Super PACs endorsing said candidates and smearing rivals. I believe at the very least we need transparency in some form at the very least and if Congress is unwilling or unable to act the Federal Communications Commission which already has standardized disclosure requirements that required TV broadcasters to maintain a printed public file and political file should update its disclosure requirements for the Internet. The Commission can replace its existing rule for standardized disclosure with a new rule mandating enhanced disclosure. I strongly urge the Commission to do so and for the reasons given request that they update their rule now for this political election season and future election cycles.

Sincerely,

Mr. Maneesh Pangasa

3562 South 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Yuma AZ 85365

Cc: [campaignlaw@fcc.gov](mailto:campaignlaw@fcc.gov), [fccinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:fccinfo@fcc.gov) [info@freepress.net](mailto:info@freepress.net)