

Holding Power Accountable

June 6, 2023

Chairman Bryan Steil
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515Ranking Member Joe Morelle
Committee on House Administration
1216 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle:

Common Cause supports legislation that empowers people to make their voices heard in the political process; ensures all campaign spending is transparent; reduces the undue influence of money in elections; and makes our government representative, reflective, and responsive.

The “ACE Act,” as introduced last Congress by then-Representative Rodney Davis (R-IL), undermines these principles. Common Cause opposes the ACE Act as introduced in the last Congress and as it has been previewed in the press and in a series of House Administration Committee hearings this year in preparation for its reintroduction.

The bill has many provisions that restrict access to the freedom to vote. For example, the bill would overturn the President’s Executive Order to promote access to voting. It goes out of its way to undermine and prohibit strong election administration practices in the District of Columbia by banning same-day voter registration, severely restricting access to drop-boxes, and prohibiting the mailing of ballots to all registered voters — all common sense solutions that red, blue, and purple states use to expand access to voting.

The ACE Act, as introduced in the last Congress, has other fundamental flaws that undermine Americans’ right to know who is influencing elections. It would pave the way for more secret, dark money in our elections. For example, the ACE Act would prohibit the Securities and Exchange Commission from finalizing, issuing, or implementing rules requiring the disclosure of political contributions. This undermines the Supreme Court’s holding in *Citizens United* that disclosure vindicates shareholders’ right to hold corporations accountable for their campaign spending. The bill would also repeal existing law to require groups making independent expenditures to influence elections from reporting the identification of certain donors. These provisions make it harder for voters to follow-the-money and hold elected officials accountable.

As our country approaches the tenth anniversary of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby County*, which gutted the preclearance formula of the Voting Rights Act, and more than thirteen years after it decided *Citizens United* that unleashed a torrent of special interest money in our elections, we should be doing more to empower people to participate in our democracy and advance a more inclusive and equitable democracy.

In short, the ACE Act, as written last Congress, would silence the voices of everyday Americans by making it harder for people to vote and by allowing millions of dollars more in secret money to infiltrate our political system. We oppose this misguided legislation.

We stand ready to assist the House in passing comprehensive democracy legislation such as the Freedom to Vote Act, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and other pro-voter bills that improve our democracy’s resilience.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Carpintero
Interim Co-President
Common Cause