

# Is DISCLOSE dead on arrival?

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With the American public, especially the long unemployed, clamoring for ever-more campaign finance regulations, you'd think that passage of the Democrat's DISCLOSE Act would be a piece of cake. Yet the party that perfected the politics of special interests is coming up short in its effort to pass a measure they claim will protect us from special interest politics. The ironies are endless.

Take the most obvious: Notwithstanding its purported purpose, this bill is replete with carve-outs for special interests, from the NRA to the Sierra Club and far beyond. The special treatment of unions is of course a dead giveaway about the real motives behind the bill. Then there's the bill's failure to preserve the anonymity of small donors -- nominally the constituency of Democrats, and the people campaign finance "reform" purports to protect through its myriad "leveling" provisions -- the chilling effects of which have contributed to the ACLU's opposition to the bill. And speaking of chilling effects, disclosure aside, the onerous reporting requirements alone will chill the speech of many.

But perhaps the greatest irony of all concerns the conflict of interest that pervades such legislation. Here we have a party that will assiduously sniff out any conceivable conflict of interest that a business might have calling for more regulations, the effect of which will make it harder for opponents to challenge their incumbency. Talk about a conflict of interest -- incumbents writing the rules under which challengers and their supporters may speak in upcoming elections. The First Amendment -- "Congress shall make no law ..." -- was written to prohibit that kind of self-dealing.