



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 347

Ohio Senate
Government Oversight and Reform Committee
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Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee,

I am Brandi Slaughter, Policy Director for the Ohio Council of Churches. The Ohio Council of Churches is a partnership of 17 Christian denominations in 23 different organizational configurations throughout the state of Ohio. With over a 100 years of service, the Ohio Council of Churches is one of the oldest state ecumenical councils in the United States. The collaborative represents the largest and most diverse group of Christians in Ohio, encompassing 4,000 congregations and nearly two-million members.

Please accept this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 347 because we are committed to accountable government and an informed electorate. Transparency is key to a healthy and strong democracy.

Secret money in elections has eroded voter confidence and the dark money surrounding House Bill 6 has highlighted how easily political advertising dollars can be misused without transparency and accountability.

It's been ten years since *Citizens United v. FEC*. Voters should not have to wait any longer. We have a problem and we have a clear solution-- closing the dark money loophole.

Justice Louis Brandeis famously said, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant." Ohioans deserve a government that works for them and shining a light on dark money is essential to rooting out corruption.

We know that those who want to influence elections and public policy go to extraordinary lengths to avoid disclosure. FirstEnergy's recent activities make that clear. This bill is a major step forward but could be improved by requiring the disclosure of the original source of funding of independent expenditures. Otherwise, wealthy interests will attempt to avoid disclosure by creating pop-up shell groups.

I urge you pass Senate Bill 347 and shine a light on the funding of all political advertisements.

Thank you!