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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Secret campaign cash should be disclosed

### By Dear Editor:

Campaign spending this year is up — a lot. Across the country, total campaign ad expenditures were expected to reach \$3 billion by Tuesday's elections, and of that, \$450 million from secret sources were spent on TV ads alone, according to TVB, a broadcast industry publication.

Secret campaign cash, like bribery, should have no place in our American democracy. We are seeing huge sums of money from secret sources going into campaign advertising, much of it negative and irresponsible advertising that twists the truth and poisons the airways.

This is not a partisan issue. Because of changes in the law, even foreign government corporations could be funding these ads. Anonymous funders can manipulate elections by funneling money through groups with names like "Moms for Apple Pie," evading the rules that apply to candidates and Political Action Committees.

The League of Women Voters has been calling attention to secret money being spent on political advertising for months, but the U.S. Senate has refused to act to require disclosure.

When the Supreme Court changed the law last January, allowing corporations, labor unions and other special interests to bankroll direct political advertising, it invited Congress to act. The Court stated that enhanced disclosure is important to providing voters with information about who is funding the ads, in order to evaluate the arguments. That's just common sense.

These activities are detrimental to our nation. Voters deserve to know who is paying for election advertising. The League of Women Voters calls on all candidates to disavow secret advertising and asks our Sens. DeMint and Graham to vote in favor of making the names of top donors to these ads public.

Free speech is a right, but anonymous is cowardly.

Sara B. Stewart  
President, League of Women Voters of the Florence area

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