

Opening Statement of Chairman Charles E. Schumer
Hearing on S. 219, Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act (E-Filing)
April 25, 2012

- The Rules Committee shall come to order. Good morning. I would like to thank my friend, Ranking Member Alexander, for joining me at this hearing to discuss the Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act, S.219, introduced by Senator Tester last year.
- The legislation we are going to discuss today, in my opinion, is a no-brainer. It is noncontroversial, will save taxpayers about half a million dollars a year **and** has wide bipartisan support. It has 24 co-sponsors from both parties, including our committee colleague, Senator Cochran, and 6 other Republicans.
- Senator Tester is here today and, without objection, I would like to welcome him here on the dais for the hearing.
- I strongly applaud my colleague from Montana, Senator Tester, for pushing this bill because it will cut government spending, strengthen campaign disclosure and make Senators comply with the same filing requirements as every other Federal candidate.

- The current paper-based filing procedure for Senate candidates is a relic from an earlier time. Senate candidates are required to submit their campaign reports on paper to the Secretary of the Senate who then has to scan that information and email it to the Federal Election Commission, which prints it out and mails it to a private contractor. Finally, upon receiving thousands of pages in the mail, the private contractor manually types the information into a searchable format and emails it back to the FEC, which posts it on their online database.
- Needless to say, the process is cumbersome, wasteful, and time-consuming.
- I strongly believe that timely disclosure of campaign finance reports is crucial to safeguard the integrity of our elections, and this bill helps do that.
- When the legislation passes, Senate candidates will finally join candidates for the House and for President in being required to file their campaign reports electronically and directly with the FEC, rather than indirectly and on paper with the Secretary of the Senate.

- Not only is e-filing more reliable and makes campaign data available sooner, it also creates significant savings, at a time when both parties are searching for ways to reduce our national debt.
- We'll save about \$100,000 per year –and probably even greater savings although not in a CBO way—and free up staffers to perform other functions.
- The FEC estimates that it would save them approximately \$430,000 a year. This savings would be a result of eliminating the need for outside contractors who convert the scanned files into the FEC's electronic database, freeing up 2 full-time agency positions and would help them with their supply situation.
- The FEC has included this policy change in its legislative recommendations to Congress for years.
- Currently, a handful of Senators from both parties already voluntarily e-file their campaign reports directly with the FEC. So we know it works, and as a sign of my own commitment to this legislation, I have recently begun e-filing my reports.

- Is there any good reason to oppose the legislation? I can't think of one. But in the past, when this bill was brought up for consideration in the Senate, it was sunk by controversial, completely unrelated amendments, or simply blocked. And Senator Alexander and I work to try to avoid that on bills like this, and as the two ranking members of the Rules Committee, I hope we can do that.
- It's time to work together to report out and pass a clean bill. Senator Tester's legislation is a commonsense, bipartisan solution that we can all agree on, so let's do it.
- Before we turn to our panel of experts, I want to ask Ranking Member Alexander and the other committee Members who are here, whether they would like to make opening statements. As is our usual practice, I ask that statements by Members and witnesses be limited to five minutes.