



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCLOSURE FOR POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

“It helps neither voters nor democracy when special interests are allowed to keep under wraps their financial sponsorship of political advertisements in our media.

“In the most recent election cycle last year, way over \$2 billion was funneled into political ads, a record high for a midterm campaign. We, the People have a right to know who is bank-rolling these ads. This is not a partisan issue, but rather it is a transparency issue with a substantial impact on the health of our civic discourse.

“The law of the land issued in the Citizens United decision by the U.S. Supreme Court allows corporations and unions to buy political advertisements, but it does not mean that citizens should be left in the dark as to who is making an argument to voters. In fact, Section 317 of the Communication Act dictates that ‘listeners are entitled to know by whom they are being persuaded.’

“If some group called ‘Citizens for Spacious Skies and Amber Waves of Grain’ is actually under-written by a chemical company that doesn’t want to clean up a toxic dump, viewers, listeners and voters should know this.

“I welcome the petition received today from Media Access Project urging the Commission to exercise the authority I believe it already possesses to require full and complete disclosure of political ad sponsorship. We can work out the details promptly if we get this moving right away. I urge the Commission to begin working on this important issue today.

“Anonymous ads sidetrack our civic dialogue. I think it’s better to put faces on them and let informed voters decide their merit.”