

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to place reasonable limits on contributions to Super PACs which make independent expenditures, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. SANDERS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to place reasonable limits on contributions to Super PACs which make independent expenditures, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Abolish Super PACs  
5       Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

7       (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

1           (1) Contribution limits to political action com-  
2           mittees (PACs), including those that make inde-  
3           pendent expenditures, help secure elections by lim-  
4           iting both the risk of corruption and the risk that  
5           significant contributions will create the appearance  
6           of corruption.

7           (2) Since contribution limits on super PACs  
8           were lifted in 2010, the number, influence, and  
9           wealth of super PACs have exploded. Obtaining mil-  
10          lions or billions of dollars in contributions to super  
11          PACs is now critical to the success of Federal can-  
12          didates' campaigns.

13          (3) As the influence of super PACs grows, so  
14          does the likelihood that they will serve as a conduit  
15          for corrupt agreements between contributor and can-  
16          didate, whose communications are not subject to co-  
17          ordination limitations.

18          (4) Between 2008 and 2020, the amount of  
19          independent expenditures increased more than 700  
20          percent, and in 2024, more than \$4.48 billion in  
21          independent expenditures were spent on United  
22          States elections. The money for these expenditures  
23          largely came from contributions to 2,459 registered  
24          super PACs.

1           (5) In 2012, the first modern elections for Fed-  
2           eral office held without contribution limits to super  
3           PACs, the top 1 percent of all individual super PAC  
4           contributors contributed 76.76 percent of all indi-  
5           vidual super PAC contributions, and that percentage  
6           rose to 96.94 percent in 2024. Recent elections have  
7           been influenced by individual contributors who gave  
8           more than \$100 million to super PACs.

9           (6) As bribery laws have long recognized, un-  
10          lawful quid pro quo exchanges can occur where the  
11          bribe is funneled into a third party, such as a super  
12          PAC. See, e.g., section 201 of title 18, United States  
13          Code; *U.S. v. Menendez*, 291 F. Supp. 606, 621–23  
14          (D. N.J. 2018). Law enforcement in several States  
15          have prosecuted cases that involve bribes directed to  
16          super PACs. However, bribery is notoriously difficult  
17          to prosecute, and these laws do not adequately pro-  
18          tect American voters from corruption.

19          (7) Without reasonable limitations on contribu-  
20          tions, super PACs create an appearance of corrup-  
21          tion. A bipartisan majority of Americans believe that  
22          large super PAC contributions are made in exchange  
23          for political favors, and that corruption is pervasive  
24          in the Federal Government. This is, as the Supreme  
25          Court recognized in *Buckley v. Valeo*, “disastrous”

1 to “confidence in the system of representative gov-  
2 ernment” 424 U.S. 1, 27 (1976).

3 (8) Placing limits on super PAC contributions  
4 will also lessen the risk of foreign interference in  
5 United States elections, making it more difficult for  
6 foreign entities to funnel contributions to super  
7 PACs via third-party contributors.

8 (9) *SpeechNow.org v. FEC*, 599 F.3d 686  
9 (D.C. Cir. 2010), the appellate court case that void-  
10 ed existing contribution limits to super PACs,  
11 wrongly treated contributions as expenditures and  
12 wrongly assumed that because uncoordinated inde-  
13 pendent expenditures cannot give rise to quid pro  
14 quo corruption, that contributions to independent  
15 expenditure committees similarly cannot give rise to  
16 corruption. But they can and do.

17 (10) In the 14 years since *SpeechNow* un-  
18 leashed billions of dollars in unregulated contribu-  
19 tions, super PACs have obtained unprecedented  
20 wealth and value to candidate campaigns and can fa-  
21 cilitate vast, nearly untraceable corrupt transactions.

22 (11) Because Super PACs have become unique-  
23 ly important to candidate campaigns and can accept  
24 millions and even hundreds of millions of dollars  
25 from single entities, candidates and contributors

1 have reason and opportunity to guide corrupt con-  
2 tributions into super PACs, establishing a significant  
3 risk of corruption and creating an appearance of  
4 corruption that undermines the public's faith in  
5 their representatives and our political system.

6 (12) Reasonable limits on contributions to  
7 super PACs are lawful and necessary to protect  
8 American democracy and American voters.

9 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act—

10 (1) to limit the risk of corrupt agreements be-  
11 tween candidates and contributors by placing rea-  
12 sonable limits on contributions to political action  
13 committees that make independent expenditures;

14 (2) to limit the appearance of corruption cre-  
15 ated by uncapped contributions to political action  
16 committees that make independent expenditures;  
17 and

18 (3) to restore the public's faith in our elections.

19 **SEC. 3. LIMITATION ON CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDEPENDENT**  
20 **EXPENDITURE COMMITTEES.**

21 (a) LIMITATIONS.—Section 315(a)(1)(C) of the Fed-  
22 eral Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C.  
23 30116(a)(1)(C)) is amended by striking “to any other po-  
24 litical committee” and inserting “to an independent ex-  
25 penditure committee or any other political committee”.

1 (b) DEFINITION.—Section 301 of such Act (52  
2 U.S.C. 30101) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
3 lowing:

4 “(27) INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE COM-  
5 MITTEE.—

6 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘inde-  
7 pendent expenditure committee’ means a polit-  
8 ical committee which—

9 “(i) makes independent expenditures  
10 aggregating \$5,000 or more during a cal-  
11 endar year; or

12 “(ii) makes contributions to other  
13 independent expenditure committees aggre-  
14 gating \$5,000 or more during a calendar  
15 year.

16 “(B) TREATMENT OF SEPARATE AC-  
17 COUNTS.—The term ‘independent expenditure  
18 committee’ includes an account of a political  
19 committee which is established for the purpose  
20 of making independent expenditures or con-  
21 tributions to other committees making inde-  
22 pendent expenditures.”.

23 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
24 this section shall apply with respect to contributions and  
25 independent expenditures made during the first calendar

- 1 year which begins after the date of the enactment of this
- 2 Act and each succeeding calendar year.