

that election came from groups not required to disclose their donors—dark money. That doesn't even count spending on so-called issue ads, which is also not reported.

In this 2016 election cycle, dark money spending has broken new records again. These dark money groups, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, "are more integrated into campaigns than we've seen in the past." The Koch brothers' political network alone has vowed to spend \$750 million this election cycle. They are through \$400 million already and climbing. And the \$750 million they have vowed to spend is more than the Bush and Kerry campaigns combined spent in 2004.

In our political debate, dark money dollars drown out the voices of average citizens with what has been aptly called "a tsunami of slime." All that money is not spent for nothing. As one secret corporate donor exulted, "We can fly under the radar screen. . . . There are no limits, no restrictions, and no disclosure." The result stinks, and it is polluting our public discourse.

The sad part is that it is working. Not one Republican Senator will stand up and address climate change in a meaningful way. I have a bill modeled on what conservative economists and the out-of-office Republican officials who are willing to address climate change all recommend as their solution. I did it their way—not a single co-sponsor.

In the Presidential primary, it is even worse. One leading candidate has actually declared that "the concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing noncompetitive." Tell that to NOAA, NASA, the U.S. Navy, and every single American National Laboratory. It is a preposterous statement offered by a person who presents himself as qualified to be President of the United States.

Another candidate—this one, I am sad to say, a Senate colleague—simply shrugs and says, "Climate is always changing." No, not like this. And if you don't believe me, ask NOAA, NASA, the U.S. Navy, and every single American National Laboratory.

Yet another candidate who is also a Senator dismissed the solid American scientific consensus on climate change as "partisan dogma and ideology." Tell that to the scientists at NOAA, NASA, the Navy, and every single one of our National Laboratories, that what they are doing is not legitimate science, but it is partisan dogma and ideology. Again, that is a preposterous remark, but they have to say those things because the big fossil fuel money is so powerful in that primary race that they don't dare cross them.

The powerful fossil fuel interests have created a beautiful situation. They no longer care which candidate wins the primary because they have schooled them all to climate denial. That is the achievement of dark

money, and it is an achievement that is disgracing our democracy and will darken our reputation for decades. Its effect is that we do nothing—exactly what the big polluters want, exactly what the big polluters paid for. It is just sickening what these secretive special interests and their dirty dark money are doing to our American democracy.

It is time to wake up, Mr. President. I thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WHOLE WOMAN'S HEALTH V. HELLERSTEDT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, tomorrow the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the case *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*. The central issue of this case is an attack by the State of Texas on women's health and the clinics that provide abortion services.

I wish to begin by stating clearly that in our country women have a constitutionally protected right to make their own choices about their bodies. That is the law of the land, as guaranteed to women in Oregon and nationwide by the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*.

The 2013 Texas law at the heart of this case, HB2, is a thinly veiled attempt to block women's choice by setting unjustifiable and burdensome requirements on the doctors and clinics that offer abortion care. Despite what HB2 supporters say, it doesn't have anything to do with protecting women's health. And the reality is, complications from abortion procedures are exceedingly rare. In fact, the numbers show that abortion care is far safer than colonoscopies. Yet Texas law doesn't go out of its way to impose comparable requirements on facilities providing colonoscopies. HB2 unfairly targets women's health clinics.

To make this point directly, I wish to briefly quote from an amicus brief filed by the trusted experts on these matters at the American Medical Association and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, among others. Their briefs said that the requirements imposed by the State of Texas "are contrary to accepted medical practice and are not based on scientific evidence." The brief continued: "They fail to enhance the quality or safety of abortion-related medical care and, in fact, impede women's access to such care by imposing unjustified and medically unnecessary burdens on abortion providers."

HB2 tells clinics, "comply with these new requirements, or close." So in the months since the law passed, the number of clinics that provides such services has, in fact, plummeted across the

State. According to reports, if HB2 is upheld, the total will drop by more than three-quarters. Texas, obviously, is a big State, and under HB2 many women are going to have to travel for hours on end to exercise a right guaranteed to them by the U.S. Constitution. The fact is, a lot of working women don't have the luxury of taking a day off or cannot afford a long and expensive trip to a faraway clinic. In effect, women are going to be denied care.

You are going to hear people on both sides of the aisle say again and again how vital it is that Americans have access to medical treatment and advice from doctors they know and trust. But HB2 flatly denies many women that protection.

I personally find it very troubling that HB2 has become a blueprint for similar restrictive laws around the Nation, bills that masquerade as women's health safety measures. For example, the State of Louisiana now has a nearly identical law on its books.

In January, 162 of my congressional colleagues and I wrote the following in an amicus brief filed with the Supreme Court: "A woman's right to decide whether to carry a pregnancy to term or to seek critical medical services, including abortion, should be insulated from the shifting political rhetoric and interest groups whose sole purpose is to erode the right to choose to bring a pregnancy to term afforded to women under *Roe*."

So here is my bottom line: A limit on the exercise of a woman's right is a limit on the right itself. It is wrong and it is un-American to restrict a person's right because it conflicts with your own views. Texas HB2 should be struck down. The rights guaranteed to women following *Roe v. Wade* ought to be protected, just as all the others that are guaranteed by the Constitution. My hope is that this ongoing crusade against women's health care, which I have spoken about repeatedly on the floor of this Senate, ought to end here, and it ought to end now.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION, 2016—TAIWAN

Mrs. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, on January 16, 2016, the people of Taiwan went to the polls and elected Dr. Tsai Ing-wen as the next President of Taiwan, with 56.2 percent of the vote. The 2016 Presidential election marked the sixth direct election of the President and Vice President of Taiwan, and the first time a woman has been elected as head of Taiwan's Government. Dr. Tsai's party, the Democratic Progressive Party, also won 68 seats of the 113-member Legislative Yuan for an outright majority in that body. I congratulate Dr. Tsai and her party for their victories and new responsibilities.

This election represents a significant change in Taiwan's political landscape, with important implications for the U.S.-Taiwan relationship. I urge the administration to express its clear support for Taiwan and its vibrant democracy.

As part of the 2016 Taiwan Presidential and legislative elections, an international election observation mission made up of 18 observers from 10 countries visited Taiwan at the invitation of the Taiwan Nation Alliance and the International Committee for a Democratic Taiwan. After the elections, the mission submitted its final report on the elections, concluding that they were free and fair. I ask unanimous consent that the summary of that report be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OBSERVATIONS BY THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION, 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

From January 12-17, 2016, a group of eighteen observers from 10 countries (see the attached list of members) visited Taiwan at the invitation of the Taiwan Nation Alliance (TNA) and the International Committee for a Democratic Taiwan (ICDT). They formed an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to observe the election campaign for the January 16th 2016 Presidential and Legislative elections in Taiwan.

At the completion of their mission on the day after the elections, the members of the IEOM expressed appreciation to the organizers of the visit, and encouraged them to continue in their efforts to strengthen Taiwan's democracy, so that it can be shared with other countries in the region and around the world. In addition, as the IEOM conducted their mission, it greatly appreciated the willingness of candidates, party representatives, and government representatives to meet with them.

During the IEOM, the group visited locations in Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Taichung, meeting with various representatives of the two main political parties: Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), as well as of two smaller parties—the People's First Party (PFP) and New Power Party (NPP). They also observed political rallies, street campaigns, and activities at several polling stations and the Central Election Commission counting center on Election Day.

2. THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE IEOM WERE AS FOLLOWS:

It congratulated the people of Taiwan and its newly-elected president Dr. Tsai Ing-wen on the achievement of this major milestone in Taiwan's history, the consolidation of many decades of hard work and dedication by the Taiwanese people.

And it stated that:

a. The vibrancy of the sixth direct presidential election further confirms that Taiwan has left its authoritarian past behind it, and has grown into a fully democratic society featuring the institutionalization of fundamental freedoms, comprehensive electoral procedures, and sound democratic practices.

b. In our view, these elections were free and fair, though there were media reports of irregularities such as vote buying in locations such as Hsinchu, Chiayi and Taitung. However, these have not affected the overall outcome of the elections.

c. After such elections it is key that all sides of the political spectrum in the country respect the democratic choice of the people, and work together to make Taiwan a better place for all.

d. It is also essential that other nations respect the results of the elections as the free choice of the people of Taiwan, and work with the newly-elected leadership to establish a sustainable, long-term peace and stability in the region.

e. The impending third transfer of executive power, as well as the first parliamentary majority for the opposition, are opportunities for further deepening and consolidation of Taiwan's democracy.

MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

Head of Mission: Frank Murkowski, former Senator and Governor of Alaska

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Julian Baum, former correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review and the Christian Science Monitor

Stephen Bryen, former Deputy Undersecretary of Defense

June Teufel Dreyer, Professor of Political Science, University of Miami

William A. Stanton, former Director of the American Institute in Taiwan, Taipei

Stephen M. Young, former Director of the American Institute in Taiwan, Taipei

Charles Burton, Professor at Brock University, Canada

Michael Stainton, President, Taiwanese Human Rights Association of Canada

EUROPE

Stéphane Corcuff, Professor of Political Science, University of Lyon, France

Jens Damm, Professor of Political Science, University of Tubingen, Germany

Michael Danielsen, Chairman, Taiwan Corner, Denmark

Bruno Kauffman, President, Initiative and Referendum Institute, Europe

Vincent Rollet, French Centre for Research on Contemporary China, Taiwan

Gerrit van der Wees, editor, Taiwan Communiqué, the Netherlands

ASIA & AUSTRALIA

Bruce Jacobs, Retired Professor of Political Science, Monash University, Australia

Akihisa Nagashima, Member House of Representatives (Diet), Japan

Tadae Takubo, Vice President, Japan Institute for National Fundamentals, Japan

Sim Tze Tzin, Member of Parliament, Malaysia

NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, today I wish to honor March 2016 as National

Eye Donor Month, an event first celebrated by President Reagan in 1983 and one I am proud to commemorate now.

For over 50 years, corneal transplants have restored the vision of those with corneal diseases. Today these procedures are overwhelmingly safe and successful and help reduce the impact of eye disorders on our economy. As a result of higher medical expenses and reduced workforce productivity, eye disorders are the fifth costliest disease type in the United States.

In total, over 70,000 people receive corneal transplants each year. The largest eye bank in the United States, Eversight, operates two locations in Illinois. These institutions, one in Chicago and one in Bloomington, facilitated over 3,000 transplants in 2015 and provided nearly 1,500 corneas for research and training purposes. Thanks to the 2,700 eye donors in Illinois in 2014 and the thousands of other donors across the country each year, scientists are closer to finding treatments and cures for corneal blindness and many patients no longer suffer from impairment or loss of vision.

On this special occasion, I commend the Eye Bank Association of America and the eye banks across this country for their great work, encourage my colleagues to promote eye donation, and urge all Americans to register to become eye donors.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1471. An act to reauthorize the programs and activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

H.R. 4084. An act to enable civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies by private and public institutions and to expand theoretical and practical knowledge of nuclear physics, chemistry, and materials science.

H.R. 4238. An act to amend the Department of Energy Organization Act and the Local Public Works Capital Development and Investment Act of 1976 to modernize terms relating to minorities.

H.R. 4401. An act to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide countering violent extremism training to Department of Homeland Security representatives at State and local fusion centers, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4444. An act to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices designed to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination from energy conservation standards for external power supplies, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4583. An act to promote a 21st century energy and manufacturing workforce.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, each with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 1172. An act to improve the process of presidential transition.