

# Members of Congress Ask SEC to Divulge Corporate Political Spending

*Corporate Counsel*

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October 28, 2015

Some 58 members of the House of Representatives this week [sent a letter](#) to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission supporting a mandate for corporations to disclose their political spending to investors, hoping to get the agency to reconsider a rule-making petition.

“Unlimited and unchecked corporate spending on political communication and campaign advertisements ... poses a fundamental threat to our democracy, which is hobbled by unaccountable corporate special interests drowning out the voices of everyday citizens,” the letter states.

Only 2.2 percent of all public companies in the U.S. voluntarily disclose their political contributions, according to the letter.

Disclosure of political spending was on the SEC’s rule-making agenda at the beginning of 2013, but under pressure chairwoman Mary Jo White removed it from consideration despite receiving a record number of public comments—[more than 1 million](#)--in support of the [rule-making petition](#). The letter urges White to reconsider her decision.

The representatives join 44 U.S. senators who sent White [a similar letter](#) in August supporting the rule-making petition submitted by a committee chaired by law professors Lucian Bebchuk of Harvard and Robert Jackson Jr. of Columbia.

The professors [posted the news](#) about the latest letter this week on the Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation.

Previously, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, former SEC chairmen Arthur Levitt and William Donaldson, and former commissioner Bevis Longstreth have supported the petition and [urged the agency to act on it](#).

Still the petition faces stiff opposition, primarily from Republican lawmakers and corporate lobbies.