

ANTI- CORRUPTION PLAN

 Carolyn
LONG
for
CONGRESS



Dear Southwest Washingtonians,

For far too long, our political system has been overwhelmed by big money and its corrosive influence on the policies that affect us here in Southwest Washington. This corruption has inhibited our ability to tackle the urgent issues we face in the near term – from ensuring affordable healthcare and prescription drugs to protecting consumers to preserving clean air and water – while preventing efforts to address our most important long-term challenges.

Today, as we face an unprecedented public health crisis that has cast millions out of work, claimed nearly 200,000 American lives, and devastated our economy, it is crucial that we engineer a response that brings forth a true recovery -- one where we get back on our feet *and* build a better world than our previous “normal.” One thing is clear: we won’t achieve this recovery with the same corrupt politics that got us here in the first place. To beat this crisis and build a better future for everyone in Southwest Washington, it is imperative that we break past broken, self-interested, divisive politics by addressing the corrosive special interest influence at the center of D.C. politics.

Unfortunately for Southwest Washington, for the past decade we’ve been represented in D.C. by a Congresswoman whose time in office epitomizes this broken system. Rep. Herrera Beutler is a career politician who has spent her decade in Congress taking corporate donations and cozying up to the special interests that have kept her in office, then voting their way. She has been funded by \$1.6 million from corporate PACs, and as a result, has consistently opposed efforts to clean up corruption. She has voted against regulating congressional lobbyists, against getting secret, dark money out of politics, and against cracking down on illegal foreign money influencing our elections.¹

I’m running for Congress because I am determined to be a different kind of representative – one who will put people ahead of special interests. That’s why one of my top priorities will be to pass reforms that will end the outsized influence of big money in politics, clean up the revolving door in D.C., and reduce corporate influence on our system – because it is the only way to make our government truly work for us.

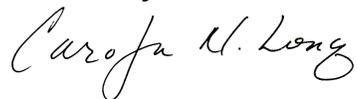
By working together, we’ll fight to ban corporate PACs from making political contributions so that our elected officials work for the people they serve, rather than the PAC arms of large multi-national companies that fund their campaigns. We’ll pass a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United and get rid of Super PACs and the millions in big dollar donations they siphon up to run negative ads that overwhelm the airwaves. We’re going to ensure corporations have to disclose the political spending they make, get rid of secret, dark money, and ensure we prevent illegal foreign money from influencing our elections.

We also must put a stop to the revolving door in D.C. That means banning members of Congress from lobbying for life, eliminating shadow lobbyists, and giving greater power to the entities that police our ethics rules. And it’s also time to put a stop to the current system that lets members of Congress trade individual stocks affected by the votes they take in D.C.

¹ [Vote #118, Passage of H.R. 1, 3/8/19](#)

Above all, we're going to return power to the voters so that D.C. works for families and small businesses in the communities they serve and not for the flood of special interest money that has taken over our political system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn M. Long". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Carolyn Long

Mission: End the undue influence of big money and large corporations so our government can work for the people it serves

In order to have a government and political system that puts people first, we need leaders who will tackle D.C. corruption. That's exactly what I intend to do from day one.

- 1) **We must start by ending the influence of big money in politics. If elected to Congress, I would work to:**
 - **Ban Corporate PACs from contributing to political candidates:** Corporate PACs are associated with specific large corporations and are used to push their profit-driven agendas — such as tax breaks and larger corporate profits. In total, these PACs pumped spent more than \$400 million to influence federal elections alone in the 2017-2018 election cycle, empowering corporations at the expense of people.¹ There should be no place for this profit motive-driven spending in our politics, and we must pass legislation to ban corporate PACs from contributing to political candidates at the federal level.
 - **Pass a Constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United and eliminate Super PACs:** The disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court decision opened the doors to billions of dollars in unlimited money pouring into our elections, allowing the very wealthy and large corporations to donate as much as they want, to ensure elected officials who vote their way in D.C. remain in office to continue to protect them. In the 2018 cycle alone, Super PACs raised more than \$1.5 billion and spent more than \$800 million backing candidates.² Overturning this ruling will be a critical step towards cleaning up our political system.
 - **Require public companies to disclose political spending:** Corporations spend hundreds of millions of dollars every single year to influence our elections. Yet, while some of this spending is publicly disclosed through campaign finance reports filed by candidates or political action committees, much of it is hidden from public view, such as contributions made to dark money 501(c)4 committees. If public companies are spending big money to influence our political system, this spending should be fully disclosed and transparent so that we know which politicians are beholden to which corporate interests, as well as shedding light on the values of those corporations. We must pass legislation that directs the Securities and Exchange Commission to require public companies to disclose such spending.
 - **Pass the DISCLOSE Act to crack down on dark money and make high-dollar donors to political advertisements publicly available:** Over the past decade, dark money groups organized under section 501(c)4 of the tax code have spent nearly \$1 billion to influence our elections.³ No one outside of those dark money groups knows

¹ ["Statistical Summary of 24-Month Campaign Activity of the 2017-2018 Cycle." Federal Election Commission](#)

² [Super PACs – 2018 Cycle, Center for Responsive Politics](#)

³ [Political Nonprofits \(Dark Money\), Center for Responsive Politics](#)

where this money came from, including what people or corporations contributed millions to back the candidates of their choice. This must end.

The DISCLOSE Act would require organizations that spend money on federal elections to disclose donors who give \$10,000 or more, increasing transparency around who is spending big money to influence an election. It also includes provisions to prevent foreign interference in our political system.⁴ In Congress, I'll fight to pass this bill so the American people can know exactly who is funding the political advertising they see.

- **Close loopholes to get foreign money out of our elections:** Foreign nationals and entities are expressly banned from making political contributions. However, a host of loopholes allows such foreign interests to pass money through limited liability corporations, multi-national companies, or dark money groups that can fund advertisements influencing American voters. In recent years, direct evidence of such illegal activity has repeatedly come to light, including a particularly brazen scheme in which a Super PAC backing Jeb Bush's 2016 presidential campaign solicited more than \$1 million from Chinese citizens.⁵

It's a central tenet of our Democracy that our elections must be decided on what is best for Americans, and not swayed by hostile foreign actors such as China or Russia. We must enact new protections immediately that close these loopholes and safeguard our national security and democracy, including passing new requirements to disclose foreign ownership when making political contributions and banning entities with foreign ownership thresholds above 5 percent for foreign government investment, 20 percent for non-governmental foreign investment, and 50 percent for total foreign ownership from spending money influencing the votes of Americans.⁶

- **Fix the broken Federal Elections Commission by adding a non-partisan member and ensuring political parties cannot deny it a quorum by refusing to confirm nominees, while allowing it to conduct audits once more:** The Federal Elections Commission is the primary electoral watchdog charged with policing rule breaking by politicians. Yet under its current structure, the organization is rendered toothless and unable to take action against clear instances of election lawbreaking when it fails to maintain at least a four-member quorum on its six-seat commission. As a result, D.C. politicians have gamed the system by refusing to nominate or confirm new commissioners and holding the FEC at only three members, as has been done for most of the past year.⁷

This is simply an absurd system that only D.C. would think makes any sense. Having election laws that politicians are free to break with no consequences puts our democracy at risk and the American people bear the brunt of this broken structure. We must fix the FEC by adding a non-partisan member so that neither party can inhibit the commission's ability to do its important work for political purposes.

⁴ [HR 2977 – DISCLOSE Act, 116th Congress](#)

⁵ ["Jeb Bush Super PAC fined for taking \\$1.3 million in illegal money." Tampa Bay Times, 3/12/19](#)

⁶ ["Ending Foreign-Influenced Corporate Spending in U.S. Elections." Center for American Progress, 11/21/19](#)

⁷ ["After Functioning for 28 Days, U.S. Election Regulator Will Be Powerless Again." New York Times, 6/26/20](#)

Additionally, we must restore the FEC's ability to conduct audits in all situations, which was ended in 1979, so that the commission can ensure politicians are following the law.

- 2) Equally critical is cleaning up the revolving door in D.C. that leaves too many of our elected officials and government leaders susceptible to corporate influence, rather than being focused on getting results for their constituents and American taxpayers.

To restore principled leadership to our government, we must:

- **Ban members of Congress from lobbying for life:** It's simply common sense – those elected to represent our communities should go to D.C. with the exclusive goal of working to make life better for those back home. Yet after a cooling off period of only a single year, members of Congress are permitted to become paid lobbyists shilling for the same corporate interests who likely funded their campaigns and kept them in office. That leaves them beholden to big business, and not us.

I won't hide where I stand on this issue – I will never become a registered lobbyist. Period. And neither should any other member of Congress. We need to ban Representatives and Senators from lobbying for life.

- **Ban members of Congress from trading individual stocks:** Those representing us in Congress should be there to fight for positive change and serve their communities – not to get rich. Yet just this year alone, we've seen multiple examples of Members of Congress appearing to trade on their position and access to sensitive information to make a quick buck through buying and selling individual stocks.^{8 9} Using insider information for stock transactions is not only unethical and illegal – it puts our policymaking process at risk.

It's time to end this practices and prohibit members of Congress from trading individual stocks so there is no question about whom they are working for.

- **End the revolving door between the executive branch and lobbying industry:** Every government worker – whether an elected official or not – must work exclusively for the people they serve and who pay their salary. Yet the revolving door between government service and lobbying remains wide open. Alarming, the current administration hired at least 281 lobbyists into government jobs in its first two years alone – many of which had a hand in crafting regulations for the very industries that used to pay them.¹⁰ And while cooling off periods banning registering as a lobbyist of varying lengths do exist for those leaving government work, they are patchwork and not strenuous enough to eliminate conflicts of interest.¹¹

This interplay gives corporate industry – including those polluting our air and water, taking advantage of Americans on Wall Street, or selling unsafe products that

⁸ ["Sen. Burr faces Justice Department probe as criticism of his stock sales intensifies." Charlotte Observer, 3/31/20](#)

⁹ ["Plagued by stock trades, Loeffler vows she won't drop out." Politico, 5/22/20](#)

¹⁰ ["We Found a "Staggering" 281 Lobbyists Who've Worked in the Trump Administration." Pro Publica, 10/15/19](#)

¹¹ ["Executive Branch Service and the "Revolving Door" in Cabinet Departments: Background and Issues for Congress." Congressional Research Service, 10/7/19](#)

put children at risk – pernicious influence aimed at halting policies that keep protect our communities and families. It must end. We need to pass legislation codifying a four-year cooling off period between those entering or leaving government service and lobbying.

- **Eliminate “shadow lobbyists”:** Federal lobbying disclosure rules are fraught with loopholes that allow D.C. influence brokers to easily get around requirements intended to bring their activities to light. Individuals advocating for corporate interests don’t even have to register as a lobbyist unless they make multiple contacts with government officials, are paid to lobby for a specific client, and spent at least 20 percent of their work time on defined lobbying activities – a narrow standard that allows many to dodge ever becoming an official “lobbyist.”¹² As a result, the practice of “shadow lobbyists” has run rampant in D.C., allowing influence brokers including former members of Congress to work on behalf of corporate special interests and affect our lawmaking process without the public ever finding out about those activities.

It’s long past time to modernize reporting requirements, expand lobbying disclosure, and eliminate these loopholes so we can ensure all who lobby are required to register as lobbyists.

- **Empower and protect ethics oversight entities that root out lawbreaking:** Our ethics rules – and indeed our democracy itself – are only as strong as the institutions put in place to protect them. Yet the oversight entity that serves as a watchdog over members of Congress – the office of Congressional Ethics – is vulnerable to attempts to weaken its power by the very politicians it is tasked with policing. Just three years ago, D.C. politicians attempted to gut this critical office and make it harder to conduct independent investigations.¹³ That can’t happen. We need to codify the independence of the Office of Congressional Ethics in law and put measures in place to insulate it from pressures by politicians to weaken its enforcement powers so those elected to serve the public can’t get away with wrongdoing.

¹² [“Shadow lobbying’ in Trump’s Washington.” Center for Responsive Politic, 10/3/19](#)

¹³ [“With No Warning, House Republicans Vote to Gut Independent Ethics Office.” New York Times, 1/2/17](#)