

Transparency and openness are essential to a fair and working government. Our democracy is strengthened when Americans are able to see exactly what their elected officials are doing and see that they are doing it in a fair and honest manner.

STOCK Act

When I first came to Congress, I was astounded and outraged to learn there were no clear laws prohibiting Members of Congress from using non-public information gleaned through their jobs to profit on Wall Street. It isn't right that Members of Congress and their staff were not always held to the same standards as everyone else. Public service is a privilege and the American people deserve better from their elected officials. That is why I championed the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act, which was signed into law on April 4, 2012.

The STOCK Act explicitly prohibits Members of Congress and their staff from buying or selling securities, swaps, or commodity futures based on congressional and executive branch nonpublic information.

It also increases transparency by requiring elected officials to file financial disclosure forms in a more timely fashion and establishes an e-filing database that enables the public to search, sort, and download these disclosures. You can access these financial disclosure forms by clicking here: http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial-search.aspx

After years of fighting for this commonsense and important reform, I'm pleased that it is now the law of the land. I believe the STOCK Act is a good first step towards restoring the American people's faith in government and the work of democracy, but the fight does not end here. I will continue to make government reform central in my mission.

Transparency and Oversight

One of the first things I did as a Member of Congress to improve openness and transparency was to post my appropriations requests on my website. This way constituents could see the projects I was requesting money for and why I felt they were important to southern Minnesota. I also pushed for reform to require all Members of Congress to post this information on their website and I am proud to say that this was required for all Fiscal Year 2010 requests. For more on the appropriations requests I have submitted, please [click here](#) .

I also believe we need to increase transparency and decrease the influence of money in our electoral system. This is why I have joined many of my colleagues in supporting the DISCLOSE Act. This bill works to restore accountability and transparency in our democracy by putting an end to secret money in politics. The DISCLOSE Act will require corporations, unions, Super PACs and other outside groups to report donations within 24 hours. In addition, it will require corporations and groups to stand by their campaign ads and disclose their campaign-related spending to shareholders. Finally, the DISCLOSE Act will require lobbyists to disclose campaign-related expenditures in conjunction with their lobbying activities.

What's next?

I believe the time is now for all Americans to come together and participate in finding common

sense solutions to the challenges we face. Many of the projects I work on here in Congress have been brought to my attention by southern Minnesotans. For this reason, it is important to me to hear from you. I want to hear your ideas and opinions about restoring faith in government.

[E-mail](#) me and send me your ideas for reforming the way Washington works.