

## Additional Price Legislation Would Ensure All Votes are Counted

**Washington, D.C.** - In response to voter discontent over the increasing number of negative campaign ads flooding the airwaves, Congressmen Christopher Shays (R-CT) and David Price (D-NC) have introduced legislation that will allow candidates to request - without risk of violating campaign finance law - that their national party committees not pay for advertising in their races.

Price also reintroduced separate legislation to allow additional time to conduct a ballot recount in the event of a disputed presidential election.

The Shays-Price bill, known as the Independent Expenditure Opt-Out Act, would address a problem that has become evident over the last few election cycles, in which we have seen a significant increase in the number of negative ads being run by national parties. Under current law, the arm of party committees that makes independent expenditures to pay for such ads is prohibited from coordinating its activities with the candidate who the ads are intended to benefit. The law even prohibits candidates from asking their party committee not to run advertisements in their race. The Independent Expenditure Opt-Out Act would empower candidates to act if they feel that party-sponsored advertisements run counter to the values they espouse.

"Negative advertising makes Americans less interested in the political process and raises distrust of elected officials," stated Shays, a long time advocate for campaign finance reform. "Many people don't know that candidates don't have any control over these advertisements. This legislation will give candidates the ability to try to run a cleaner campaign."

"This simple measure is about giving candidates the ability to reject mudslinging – even if it's being used against their opponents," Price said. "If a candidate wants to run a clean campaign but an outside group is running attack ads against his or her opponent, that candidate should have the right to ask the group to stop. This bill makes it clear that candidates can exercise that right without fear of violating campaign finance law."

Nothing in this legislation would bind a party committee to follow a candidate's request, as the party's right to run independent advertisements has been ruled constitutional by the Supreme

Court. Nor would the bill create a broad exemption for coordination between candidates and national committees; the communication would have to be limited to a simple request not to run any campaign advertisements. Instead, it would provide a simple clarification of current law to let candidates take the high road if they so choose.

Meanwhile, Price also re-introduced his bill to allow additional time for conducting recounts in presidential elections. The Count Every Vote Act would push back the date when the Electoral College meets to officially select the winner of the presidency from mid-December to early January. Price originally introduced this bill in response to the Florida debacle during the 2000 presidential election, in which a recount was cut short by the Supreme Court due in part to the imminent meeting of the Electoral College.

"We have an obligation to go to the greatest lengths to ensure that the results of our elections are accurate," Price said. "The public's trust in our electoral system is a cornerstone of our democracy, and that trust should never be undermined by a simple scheduling conflict."

These two bills continue Price's long record of advocacy for clean and fair elections. Earlier this year he introduced a bipartisan bill to close a loophole in campaign finance law that allows political candidates and campaign committees to skirt responsibility for ads conveyed online. That bill, the Responsible Campaign Communications Act (H.R. 894), would also seek to curb the deceptive use of prerecorded telephone calls, or "robo-calls." Price also collaborated with Shays earlier this year to introduce a bill (H.R. 776) intended to salvage the public financing system for presidential campaigns.

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