

Senators Hood, Gregory, Conyers, Bieda and Hopgood offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 135.

A resolution to urge the United States Congress to pass legislation that regulates political advertisements on the internet, including social and digital media, like traditional political advertisements in order to encourage transparency.

Whereas, Social and digital media on the internet play a significant role in how people communicate, receive information, and make decisions. There are approximately 2 billion active monthly users on Facebook and 330 million on Twitter. With such a tremendous reach, these internet media platforms have become a marketplace where advertisements are purchased, produced, and distributed, much like on television and other forms of media; and

Whereas, Existing regulations require transparency for political advertising in traditional media sources. Federal regulations require that political candidates and committees include a disclaimer on "public communications" and "websites available to the public" if the communication expressly advocates for the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate or solicits funds in connection with the election. The disclaimer identifies the individual(s) or organization(s) that paid for the advertisement. Under current law, "public communication" is defined as a "broadcast, cable or satellite transmission..." and any "other general public political advertisement." "General public political advertisements" do not include internet advertisements unless they are specifically placed for a fee on another person's website; and

Whereas, Campaign finance regulatory loopholes exist in the realm of internet media, resulting in a lack of transparency for political advertising. Social and digital media pages promote and advertise political campaigns but are outside of the current federal regulatory scope. The owners of these pages, which can be managed by people outside of political campaigns, are not required to disclose their identity. Political videos, pictures, and other messages are circulated throughout social media networks, through organic and paid methods, creating an unregulated media source where unknown advertising outlets are targeting audiences without any transparency measures; and

Whereas, It is well documented that Russian and potentially other foreign actors tried to influence the 2016 election through social and digital media. For instance, Facebook has revealed that one Russian entity spent over \$100,000 to promote and circulate unidentified political ads on the social media network. If broadcast on a traditional media source, where disclosure is required, that would have been a violation; and

Whereas, With the continued emergence of social and digital media, including its use as a platform for political advertising, our campaign finance regulations must be strengthened. Recent court decisions have led to dramatically increasing campaign finance expenditures. Moreover, spending is shifting from traditional sources to new digital and social media on the internet. Television and radio have seen a political spending decline of 20 percent and 23 percent, respectively, since 2012. Digital advertising, totaling over \$1.4 billion, saw an uptick of 15 percent during the 2016 election cycle. This campaign finance trend will only continue and demands federal attention; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the United States Congress to pass legislation that regulates political advertisements on the internet, including social and digital media, like traditional political advertisements in order to encourage transparency; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.