First of all, Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to see that

there's broad bipartisan agreement on this issue. It's always a great

benefit when we can work things out--and occasionally we do, just as

we've seen. So that's a good thing. But I do have an obligation to

speak up for constituents of my own on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say on the record that there have been more

than 17,000 people killed in Syria over the last 14 months. That's when

a nonviolent uprising began in response to Bashar Al-Assad's brutal

torture and murder of teenage kids in the city of Dara'a. Violence

against civilians has escalated rapidly in months. There have been

large massacres in the villages of Houla, Qubair, and possibly Tremseh.

The international community, including the Arab League, has

overwhelmingly condemned Al-Assad's violent repression. One country--

Russia--has refused to stop arming Al-Assad and his murderous campaign.

In fact, a Russian cargo ship could deliver military helicopters to

Syria this week. Rosoboronexport is the Russian weapons dealer arming

the Al-Assad regime. There's substantial evidence Al-Assad is using

weapons from Rosoboronexport against innocent civilians in Syria. I was

surprised to learn that our own government is buying Russian-made

helicopters from Rosoboronexport.

Put simply, our government is supporting Syria's arms dealer, which

is enabling the Syrian regime's bloody crackdown. This should stop.

That's why I urge all to support this amendment, which it looks like

there's broad agreement on. American taxpayers should not be supporting

Syria's arms dealer. If the military wants to buy helicopters, it

should by American ones and create jobs at home, not in Russia. Our

amendment does the right thing. It ends the U.S. purchases from

Rosoboronexport. I'm proud that it has strong bipartisan support, and I

urge all of my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, Representative Eshoo and I have submitted

this very straightforward amendment for a very simple reason. We

believe that it's simply fair and it's good for public disclosure to

require defense contractors to publicly show and disclose their

political contributions. Money, secret money in particular, can breed

corruption. Sunlight will banish it away.

When government contractors make political contributions, there's no

doubt that the officeholder knows who gave the money. The only ones in

the dark are the American public. This can lead to pay-to-play

corruption where contractors donate to candidates they believe will

benefit them, and this would misserve our democracy. We need full

disclosure so that the public can ensure that contracts are awarded

based on merit rather than money.

Now, some have expressed a concerns in the past with disclosure pre-

contract. A pre-contract disclosure requirement could be a problem

because they fear that agencies would choose contractors for partisan

reasons. While I think this is an overstated concern and I don't agree

with it, our bill doesn't do that. Our amendment requires disclosure

post-contract to avoid any fear of that.

So I just want to say that we are in an era where the public needs to

trust Congress and government more than it does. In order to promote

real trust and real confidence, we need to implement amendments that

will promote transparency and that will let the public know that we are

doing the right thing with the public dollar, particularly as it

relates to the defense industry.

Let me close by saying I think this amendment is a first step. I'm a

proud cosponsor of the DISCLOSE Act by Representative Van Hollen, which

requires reporting of all corporate campaign activity.

Also, we won't be able to truly tackle money in politics until we

overturn Citizens United, in my opinion. The public agrees with that as

a proposition by 82 percent.

I yield back the balance of my time.