DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INCOME

December 26, 1963

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Dear ---:

There are a number of reasons why I am opposed to the requirement contained in certain pending legislation to compel members of Congress to disclose full information on income, assets, stockholdings, etc.

Unlike appointees to high places, members of Congress appear before the electorate before they can achieve public office and it is within the power of any voter or group of voters to ask a candidate for a disclosure before election day.

No comparable disclosure is required from any one group of elected officials at other levels of government.

Such legislation singles out one group of citizens who must make such disclosure and I regard this as an invasion of all the rights and immunities of every other citizen who is not compelled to make such a disclosure.

There is nothing to prevent any elected federal official from voluntarily making such a disclosure if he is so disposed.

It could lead to a peculiar bias as between candidates for public office because one may have nothing more to offer to the voters than the fact that he has accumulated nothing and can, therefore, make campaign capital out of the fact that an opponent through diligence, hard work, and application to business has managed to accumulate a competence.

When a similar requirement is made upon all other citizens I shall be willing to consider making such disclosures.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen