

Senator Peter Welch
Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on the Constitution
Written Questions for Tim Whitehouse
Hearing on “Protecting American Citizenship IV: America 250 and the Meaning of American
Citizenship”
Wednesday, June 24, 2026

1. You testified that PEER is concerned with “transparency” and is “not questioning anyone’s patriotism.” Do you believe that promoting transparency can be patriotic? Please explain.

Yes, I believe that promoting transparency can be patriotic. The desire for transparency is a common thread in American civic tradition. Our nation was founded on the belief that self-government depends on an informed public. If citizens aren’t informed about what their government is doing and why, they can’t meaningfully consent to it, hold officials accountable, or correct course through elections.

That is why PEER believes strongly that sunlight laws, whistleblower protections, freedom of information requests, and a free press are an expression of our nation’s collective desire for government transparency. Americans want governments to readily share information with them concerning their decisions and practices. This helps our democratic system work as intended.

I believe the words of one of America’s great patriots, Patrick Henry, still ring true today: “The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them.”