Afraid of the Sunshine

One, and only one, Congressional Republican has decided that unregulated money should not be allowed to swamp this campaign year. Representative Michael Castle of Delaware is daring to co-sponsor a bill to repair some of the damage from the Supreme Court’s decision to give corporations and unions free rein to spend unlimited amounts on campaign ads and advocacy.

The Democrats’ reform legislation would protect the public interest by requiring disclosure of the top five deep-pocketed operatives who produce blind attacks and propaganda schemes to hurt or help specific candidates. Big check writers with an ax to grind would have to declare, like candidates, that, yes, they approved the ad.

That bit of sunshine is the least voters deserve. But the rest of the Republicans are shying from the idea. This is the same G.O.P. that insisted that disclosure was far better than any campaign spending regulations. “Republicans are in favor of disclosure,” Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader, declared in 2000 when he was fighting campaign reform legislation.

Has he somehow forgotten? The voters should remind him. The latest Quinnipiac poll shows the public registering 79 percent disapproval of the court’s ruling.

Where are the G.O.P. moderates and mavericks of yesteryear? Senator John McCain, fighting a right-wing primary challenge, has fled the political reformer’s mantle he once wore proudly. Surely a Republican with the stature of Senator Olympia Snowe will eventually come forward, just as she did in the past as a principal supporter of campaign reform.

Senator Snowe criticized the high court ruling as a “serious disservice to our country.” Now is her chance to lead a bipartisan drive to undo some of the disservice with a vital dose of sunshine.