**After McCutcheon, a constitutional amendment is the only way to get money out of politics [Letter]**

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/readersrespond/bs-ed-mccutcheon-amendment-letter-20140409,0,2572919.story>

April 9, 2014, Baltimore Sun

Your recent editorial rightly criticized the Supreme Court's disastrous decisions in McCutcheon and Citizens United, which transfer even more power to the ruling class by valiantly freeing us from the tyranny of not-enough-money-in-politics ("A win for the billionaires," April 4).

What problem does the McCutcheon decision solve? In the last election cycle, only 646 Americans bumped up against the aggregate limits on federal donations. The ruling gives them even more power and does absolutely nothing for anyone else. It's a naked power grab by the already-powerful.

Does anyone actually believe that corporations and wealthy donors don't expect — and receive — favors in return for their political "investments?" What do you call a system where lawmakers accept money from those with an interest in the outcome of legislation? (The answer: "Corrupt").¿¿

The court's ridiculous pretense was that the wealthiest and most powerful 1 percent of the 1 percent were inconvenienced by any limit whatever on their ability to buy legislators.

If democracy means rule by the people then we've lost our way at the federal level. Corporations and the wealthy can spend whatever they want to buy policies that benefit themselves at the expense of everyone else. This explains the growing income disparity we've been hearing about, which didn't happen by accident.

Your editorial suggests that we shouldn't give up hope. Unfortunately, the "remedies" of public financing and transparency would need to be passed by Congress. This is unlikely to happen in our lifetimes. Congress is now dependent on money raised from corporations and wealthy donors. It couldn't even pass a disclosure bill that basically said "at least tell us who's bribing you."

Obviously, a constitutional amendment is needed to overrule the Supreme Court, and it's not going to come from Congress. Luckily, our Constitution includes a provision by which the people, through their state legislatures, can propose amendments, bypassing Congress.

A "convention of the states" for the purpose of proposing amendments must be convened when 34 state legislatures call for such a convention on any issue. The convention is limited to proposing amendments to issues specified by the states; it is not a "constitutional convention."

The Maryland General Assembly saw for the first time this year a resolution for the "Democracy Amendment" designed for just this purpose. It was promoted by GetMoneyOutMD.org and Wolf-Pac.com, with widespread support among state legislators.

If and when it passes next year, Maryland would join a national movement in which two-thirds of state legislatures pass similar resolutions. This may be the only practical way to limit the influence of money in politics. There really is a reason to hope — and fight for change.

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