



Action Sheet for March 2018

Our Action: Our action this month is focused on generating support for the [Candidate Pledge](#). **We urge you to write your member of Congress urging them to sign the Candidate Pledge.** Elected Officials don't create political will, they respond to it. It's up to us to encourage ours to sign the Candidate Pledge and stand with people, not profits.

Nearly 100 candidates have signed the Candidate Pledge. This month's action is part of the larger Candidate Pledge Campaign, aimed at placing the pledge in front of every candidate running for public office in 2018, incumbents and challengers alike. [Here's a past action sheet with specific instructions for reaching out to declared candidates not already in office.](#)

Laser Talk: Eight out of 10 Americans agree that our political system is out of control. Billions of dollars are pouring into campaigns from corporations, unions and the wealthy.

Special interests do not pour large sums of money into political campaigns just for the sake of it – they expect something in return and usually receive it. Citizens lose their voice in the process.

A 28th amendment would overturn the 2010 Citizens United Supreme Court decision which gave human constitutional rights to corporations and struck down laws that provided limits on campaign spending with increasingly frightening consequences. Here are two examples.

The heart-breaking shootings in Parkland, FL, make it painfully clear how campaign contributions from the NRA and others thwart sensible gun laws.

When Wall Street firms buy politicians, and financial corruption brings our economy to the brink, too many citizens lose their jobs, homes, and life savings, and Wall Street goes unpunished.

Americans see the urgency of passing a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which would allow us to place reasonable limits on campaign contributions and reserve human liberties for people, not corporations.

More Background:

We have been living through a decades-long trend where global corporations and special interests have been gaining “super-citizen” status. *Citizens United v. FEC* is a 2010 Supreme Court ruling that says: 1) corporations have the same rights as humans, 2) limitless political spending is the same as free speech, and 3) Americans cannot set limits on political spending.

The *Citizens United* decision has fueled elections dominated by record-breaking spending by Super PACs and unaccountable outside groups funded by corporations and a tiny, extraordinarily wealthy sliver of the American population. In 2012, the first presidential election cycle after *Citizens United*, 3,318 donors, amounting to less than .01 percent of the U.S. population, accounted for 93 percent of Super PAC funding.

Money isn't speech; it's power. Supreme Court decisions such as *Buckley v. Valeo* and *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* created radical new "free speech rights" for corporations, unions and special interests at the expense of the rights of all Americans and the interests of the country. The concentrated financial influence of special interests in our politics is the number one problem our nation faces, and the survival of American democracy is in jeopardy if we fail to act. A 28th Amendment is more urgent than ever. The Supreme Court won't fix its catastrophic mistake, so it's up to the people to ensure that our elected representatives fix it.

Write a letter to your U.S. Representative urging him or her to sign the Candidate Pledge:

1. **Introduce yourself:** Provide personal information to root yourself in the community (I have taught math at our local high school for 10 years, I am active in my local church, etc.) and briefly share why this issue matters to you.
2. **Make the 'ask':** a) Urge your member of Congress to sign the Candidate Pledge, saying they will use their office to advance a 28th Amendment to overturn *Citizens United*.
 - a. To identify your member of Congress.
 - i. Enter your address into <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members>
 - b. Figure out if they have already signed the Candidate Pledge by checking the [database](#).
 - i. If they already have, thank them and ask what more they can do to advance the 28th Amendment.
3. **Provide some background to support your argument:** In your own words, share why it is important for your member of Congress to sign the Candidate Pledge and advance the 28th Amendment. Visit the 'Laser Talk' and 'More Background' sections of this Action Sheet to support your argument.
4. **Repeat the 'ask', say thank you, and request a response:** Leave your address, phone number and email address so they can get back to you.

Bonus Action: Ask for a meeting with your member of Congress. If you are working with an APA you likely already have a liaison for your member of Congress. If so, the liaison can request the meeting. If you are working alone or there is not yet a liaison, follow the suggested procedures for requesting a meeting. When you meet, if your member of Congress is supportive, ask them to take the next step: submit an op-ed or get other members of Congress from your state to sign the pledge.