



Action Sheet for October 2018

Our Action: With a little less than a month to go before the midterm elections, our action this month is focused on generating support for the [Candidate Pledge](#). **We will write one of our congressional candidates urging them to sign the Candidate Pledge.** Candidates running for public office don't create political will, they respond to it. It's up to us to encourage candidates to sign the Candidate Pledge and stand with people, not profits.

Over 240 candidates have signed the Candidate Pledge. This tool will help voters know where candidates stand on this issue on election day.

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. It's time for candidates to demonstrate that they see the urgency too by signing the Candidate Pledge.

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 one of your congressional candidates urging them 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 congressional candidate to sign the Candidate Pledge, saying they will use their office to advance a 28th Amendment to overturn *Citizens United*.
 - a. Identify your congressional candidates.
 - i. Enter your address into https://ballotpedia.org/United_States_Congress_elections,_2018
 - b. Figure out if this congressional candidate has already signed the Candidate Pledge by checking the [database](#).
 - i. If they already have, thank them and ask if you could work with them to advance the 28th Amendment by announcing their support in an op-ed you could help draft or by participating in a briefing or town hall meeting on the issue.
 3. Provide some background to support your argument: In your own words, share why it is important 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 congressional candidate. If you are working with an APA and reaching out to an incumbent seeking reelection, 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 requested procedures for requesting a meeting.