

Quick Guide for

Local Resolutions



AMERICAN PROMISE

Winning the 28th Amendment

On January 21, 2010, The Citizens United Supreme Court Decision said corporations and unions could spend unlimited amounts of money on political activities, as long as it was done independently of a party or candidate.

Since this Supreme Court ruling, citizens across the nation have been working together to pass local resolutions, win ballot initiatives, and gain the support of their elected officials to get money out of politics. Seven years later, the numbers show that we are well on our way to winning the 28th Amendment together!

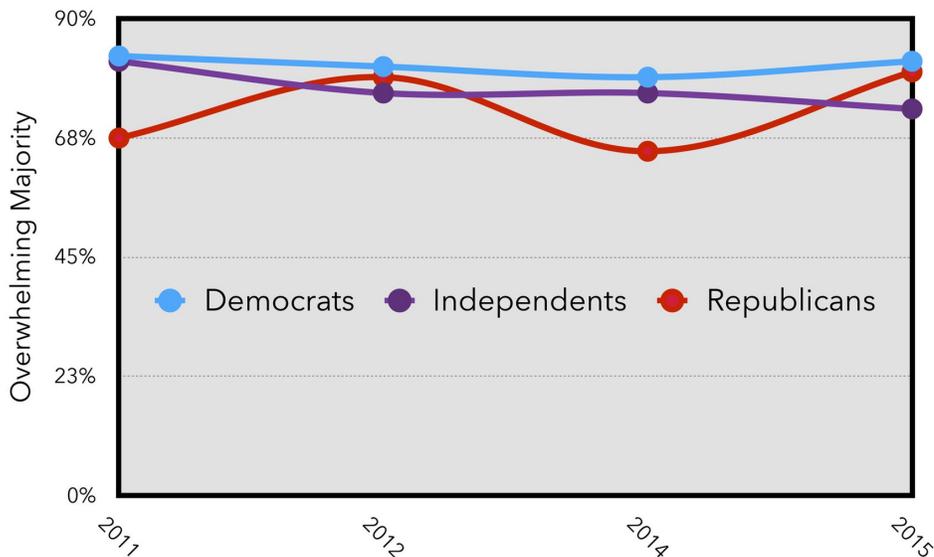
2010

25 Cities & Towns
1 State
0 Senators
2 Representatives

2016

740 Cities & Towns
18 States
48 Senators
167 Representatives

Americans Want To Get Money Out of Politics!



What Can I Do to Help Win the 28th Amendment

In My Community?



▲ **Start a Core Team or American Promise Association in your area.**

Get the support and training you need to be a champion for the 28th Amendment through American Promise's deep structure of support, which includes monthly conference calls, grassroots training, and educational videos. To learn more about how to start a Core Team or APA, please email Joyce Sanchez at joyces@americanpromise.net.

▲ **Pass a Local Resolution.**

Local resolutions are a powerful way to drive our politicians and build local support. A local resolution generally states a position of a city, which can be proportionate, flexible and timely way to resolve many complaints or issues.

▲ **Pass a Local Ballot Initiative.**

Ballot initiatives are also a powerful way to drive out politicians and build local support. A ballot initiative is a means by which a petition signed by a certain minimum number of registered voters can bring about a public vote on a proposed statute or constitutional amendment.

How to win a



Town or County Resolution

1

Find out if a local resolution has been passed in your area. Before contacting your local city council, research online to see if a resolution has already been passed. A great website to find local resolution is <http://united4thepeople.org/>.

2

Identify and organize allies by talking to neighbors, friends and family. 80% of people want money out of politics so you're not alone! Talk with people in your community and reach out to American Promise to start your Core Team or American Promise Association.

3

Identify method of putting resolution into consideration. Meet with your group and decide what way is best to present this resolution to the community. Do you want to present this resolution to the city or town council, at a local town meeting, or as a local ballot initiative?

4

Plan a timeline for the resolution campaign. Make sure you know when, and how often, the city council meets and how long it typically takes for a resolution to be passed. In bigger areas, it may take months for a resolution to become law.

5

Locate the contact information of the local board chairperson. After deciding what way is best your timeline for the campaign, call/email the chairperson, introduce yourself, and request time on the agenda for a future town meeting. Your county should have a website where this information is available. Don't forget to follow up the email with a phone call!

6

Once on the agenda, prepare packages for each town board member, and for any town officials who are not board members, e.g. treasurer, clerk etc. The package may include:

- A cover memo introducing the issue
- A list of all the municipalities and states that have already called for amending the constitution
- A general information sheet on why it's important for towns/counties in to pass a resolution
- The actual resolution you are asking them to pass (Resolution Language).
- Example language as it would appear on the ballot, if you chose the ballot initiative option.

7

Continue to educate the community and ask people to sign on to support. Your presentation and resolution will have more of an impact if many members of the community have expressed support. Decide on a target (100 supporters, then 250; then 500, etc.) and try to exceed it!

How to pass a



Town or County Resolution

8 **Make a brief presentation.** With your family, friends, and neighbors there to support, making a brief yet detailed presentation and present the signatures of the community supporters.

9 **County/Town Council will vote on the resolution that night, or move to vote at the next meeting.** If the Council moves to vote at the next meeting, don't be discouraged. Now you have more time to provide them with any additional information to ensure that they vote in your favor.

When your resolution or ballot initiative passes, let us know so we can alert the media and send us a copy of the resolution.

Model Local Resolution

RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PROPOSE AND SEND TO THE STATES FOR RATIFICATION A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO RESTORE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND FAIR ELECTIONS TO THE PEOPLE

WHEREAS, Fair and free elections are essential to democracy and effective self-governance; and
WHEREAS, Campaign finance laws, including limits on campaign contributions, are key tools to combating political corruption; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court rulings in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission, 130 S.Ct. 876 (2010) and related cases overturned campaign finance laws and other democratically enacted laws by finding that spending money to influence elections is protected by the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment, and that corporations have many of the same constitutional rights as people; and

WHEREAS, Justice John Paul Stevens, writing on behalf of the four dissenting justices in Citizens United, noted that "corporations help structure and facilitate the activities of human beings, to be sure, and their 'personhood' often serves as a useful legal fiction. But they are not themselves members of 'We the People' by whom and for whom our Constitution was established;" and

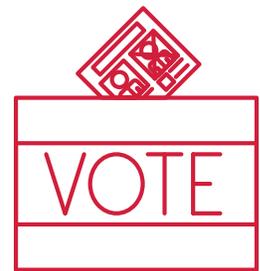
WHEREAS, Restricting the ability of Congress and the States to impose legal limits on political contributions and spending allows corporations and wealthy individuals to unduly influence elections, candidate selection, and policy decisions, and drowns the voices of ordinary citizens; and

WHEREAS, Article V of the United States Constitution empowers and obligates the people and States of the United States of America to use the Constitutional amendment process to correct those egregiously wrong decisions of the United States Supreme Court that go to the heart of our democracy and republican form of self-government; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the members of the *** Council, call upon the United States Congress to propose and send to the states for ratification a Constitutional amendment to make clear that Congress and the States shall have the power to regulate and set limits on all election contributions and expenditures; and the rights protected by the Constitution are the rights of natural persons; that corporations are subject to sound regulation by the people through the legislative process so long as the regulations are consistent with the powers of Congress and the States and do not limit freedom of the press; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and submitted to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Minority Leader of the United States Senate, and to each member of the Illinois Congressional delegation.

Ballot Initiative Language



While a local ballot initiative is another way citizens can pass a resolution, this option and its specific requirements vary state-by-state. So the best steps to get a full understanding on how to pass a local ballot initiative in your area are:

- 1 Find out if your state allows for Local Ballot Initiatives.** To see your state has this available, check out the The Initiative and Referendum Institute (IRI) link below:
IRI Website Link: <http://www.iandrinstute.org/states.cfm>
- 2 Contact your elections office to learn about the specifics of the Local Ballot Initiative process and requirements in your area.** Don't start a local ballot initiative campaign without speaking to your local elections office. To find the contact information, you can use the link below:
County Office Information Link: <http://www.countyoffice.org/>

Model Ballot Question

Shall the people of [MUNICIPALITY] stand with ## states and ### communities across the country in urging that our elected representatives at all levels of government use their office in any and every lawful way to advance an amendment to the United States Constitution to reestablish that Congress and the states have the authority to limit political spending in elections, and secure the rights of natural people over the privileges of corporations and special interests?

Why is money in politics a

Local Issue?



The Citizens United decision benefits only large corporations, disadvantaging the small businesses that local governments most closely work with and support.

- ▲ Campaign finance laws thrown out by Citizens United allowed both big and small donors to influence elections. Without limits, only large corporations, not small businesses, have the resources to flood local elections with out-of-district campaign funds.

Town governments are the defense of local interests.

- ▲ The mission and interests of local governments—preserving local landmarks, supporting local businesses, etc.— are the interests that large corporations are least likely to share.
- ▲ Large corporations have sued, or threatened to sue, local governments on ‘equal protection’ grounds when their residents seek local ordinances to control lighting, traffic, and land use to encourage small operations and discourage the “big-box” stores that destroy local character and put local merchants out of business.

Standing up for self- government and democracy has always been a local job.

- ▲ Americans have never relied—with good reason—on the national government to protect our right to self-government. From the invention of corporations in the 1500s throughout America’s history, corporations have (understandably) struggled to gain control of the governments that the people created to “provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.”

Talking Points for

Your Local Resolution



▲ Do you think there's too much money corruption in our political system?

According to a New York Times/CBS News poll, 84% of Americans believe money has too much influence in political campaigns. This feeling cuts across party lines, with 80% of Republicans, 90% of Democrats and 84% of independents believing campaign cash plays too big a role.

▲ This is part of a national, historic amendment and get corrupt money out of our politics system and to win a 28th Amendment.

American Promise is a cross-partisan organization dedicated to overturning Citizens United and passing the 28th. American Promise is leading the charge for the 28th Amendment so we the people govern the United States -- not big money, not unions, and not corporations.

▲ Discuss the Constitutional Amendment.

The 28th Amendment affirms that We the People - not big money, not unions, not corporations - govern the United States. The strongest consensus language for the Amendment will secure:

- 1. Rights for human beings over privileges for global corporations and special interests**
- 2. Fair and free elections for ALL Americans**
- 3. Rights of all Americans to equal participation and representation**

Now, American Promise is leading a year-long effort to build national consensus. Over the next twelve months, we will continue to bring many more Americans into the deliberations and debate. We're confident that we will get the best, most effective Amendment language in a timely manner consistent with our roadmap for passage and ratification of the 28th Amendment.

Sources & Helpful Links

Sources

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- "Town & County Handbook." *Wisconsin United To Amend*. N.p., 14 Mar. 2017. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.

Helpful Links

- **IRI:** <http://www.iandrinstitute.org/states.cfm>
- **Move to Amend:** <https://movetoamend.org/pass-local-resolution>
- **County Office:** <http://www.countyoffice.org/>
- **United to Amend Wisconsin:** <http://wiuta.org/resources/town-county-handbook/>