

January 16, 2019

Patricia Klee, Chairwomen
State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs
LOB Room 206
Concord, NH 03301

Good Afternoon Chair

My name is Olivia Zink, Executive Director of Open Democracy Action. Open Democracy Action's mission is to bring about and safeguard political equality for the people of New Hampshire. This will only happen through an open, accountable, and trusted democratic government, "of, by, and for the people," that is free from the corrupting influence of big-money politics and control.

I urge you to vote OTP on HCR 5 asking our federal officials to amend the Constitution to clarify that Constitutional rights belong to people and that money is not speech.

In 2010, the Supreme Court, in a case called Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, ruled to allow unlimited corporate and union money into elections. This decision gave artificial non-persons, and possibly non-citizen multinational corporations, the same Constitutional rights to free speech as people; and that has led to an astounding increase in political spending in local, state and national elections. The 2018 election was the most expensive in history.

96% of Americans believe that unlimited big money has a corrupting and undue influence over our political process. Republicans, Democrats, Independents, most people that we've talked to, do not look at this issue as being right/left or liberal vs. conservative, but rather as a move to put "We the People" back in charge of our democracy and large, moneyed interests out.

~~82 Warrant Articles have passed in NH. Towns and cities have raised their voices that a Constitutional Amendment is the long-term solution to fully reverse the Court's ruling and to restore our rights and assert that "Democracy is for People."~~

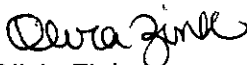
Even Justice Stevens, in his dissenting opinion in this Citizens United case, said, (quote) "...the distinction between corporate and human speakers is significant. Although they make enormous contributions to our society, corporations are not actually members of it. They cannot vote or run for office." (close quote) He added that because corporations can be controlled by foreigners, their interests may even conflict with the interests of eligible voters.

Former Senator Warren Rudman of New Hampshire wrote "Supreme Court opinion notwithstanding, corporations are not defined as people under the Constitution; and free speech can hardly be called free when only the rich are heard."

This call for a Constitutional Amendment is about free speech, every voice being heard equally.

Let's restore our Constitutional rights and start the process of getting BIG MONEY out of our elections and BIG IDEAS back in.

Please vote "OTP" on HCR 5


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