



NEWS RELEASE

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Stand with Montanans Issues Debate Challenge *Calls on Opponents to take the debate over I-166 out of the courtroom and to the people*

HELENA – Today, Stand with Montanans Treasurer C.B. Pearson sent a [letter to I-166 opponents](#) challenging them to a series of 10 debates this September.

“We invite you to join us in taking this debate over I-166 out of the courtroom and to the people,” reads the letter signed by I-166 Treasurer C.B. Pearson.

Opponents filed a suit with the Montana Supreme Court on June 20, asking for I-166 to be removed from the November ballot. On August 10, the Montana Supreme Court rejected the challenge in a 6-1 decision. But later that day, opponents filed another lawsuit, this time in a Fergus County district court.

“To date, your opposition to I-166 has focused on legal challenges aimed at blocking a vote by Montanans on this citizens’ initiative in November. Just last week, in the wake of the Montana Supreme Court decision rejecting your first lawsuit, you filed yet another frivolous lawsuit. Frankly we don’t know who is funding this effort and we don’t know who are opponents are and by offering this challenge we hope the people of Montana will find out. In Montana, our culture of politics is person to person,” said Pearson.

While opponents have decided to focus their efforts on legal challenges to I-166, the Stand with Montanans campaign is calling for opponents to engage in a series of debates to better inform Montana voters about the issue on which they will be voting in November.

“We believe there is a concerted effort to hide who is funding the opposition campaign and who is leading this opposition effort. We hope that during the debates you will

inform Montanans who is funding your campaign, as that is currently unclear. We also hope that you will illuminate who are the leading opponents to this measure, as few have so far come forward,” said Pearson in the letter.

“This November, Montana voters will have the opportunity to cast their votes on one of the most important issues of our time. The issue of corporate money in elections warrants a vigorous public debate; therefore, we challenge you to a series of debates to be held during the last two weeks of September,” said Pearson in the letter.

The letter was sent to Lorna Kuney (treasurer for Montanans Opposed to I-166), Chris Gallus (attorney for Montanans Opposed to I-166), James Brown (attorney for Montanans Opposed to I-166 and American Tradition Partnership), Donny Ferguson (executive director, American Tradition Partnership), Sen. Dave Lewis (plaintiff in the Montana Supreme Court challenge to I-166), and Phil Lilleberg (plaintiff in the Montana Supreme Court challenge to I-166). In the letter, Pearson asks the opponents to accept the challenge and identify who will be representing the opposition.

To date, opponents have filed two lawsuits, but it is unclear who is funding those legal challenges. The campaign finance report filed on August 10 by Montanans Opposed to I-166 reports \$0 income and \$0 in expenditures, shedding no light on the source of funding for the opposition’s legal challenges.

“Montana voters expect and deserve more; our politics are face-to-face, person-to-person. Using faceless and expensive legal actions – funded by out-of-state groups with deep pockets who won’t disclose their funders – is not the Montana way,” said Pearson in the letter.

More information is available at www.StandWithMontanans.org, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/StandWithMontanans, on Twitter, @STANDwMONTANANS, and by calling (406) 356-NOV6 (6686).