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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Montana Voters Back Initiative to Ban Corporate Money from Elections**

*Stand with Montanans: Corporations Aren't People – Ban Corporate Campaign Spending Turns in Over 40,000 Signatures to Place I-166 on the November Ballot*

HELENA — Stand with Montanans: Corporations Aren't People – Ban Corporate Campaign Spending, the campaign FOR initiative 166, announced that enough Montana voters have signed the petition to place I-166 on the November Ballot. The proposed ballot measure would make it state policy that corporations are not human beings with constitutional rights, that money is not speech, and would charge Montana's congressional delegation to support an amendment to the United States Constitution to nullify the Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC*.

“Montanans want clean and fair elections and don't want corporations to use their checkbook to buy our elections,” said C.B. Pearson, treasurer for I-166 and a long-time Montana campaign reform advocate. “For nearly a century, Montana had elections free of corporate money. But now our fair elections system is under attack.”

The official announcement from the Montana Secretary of State's office may not come until mid-July, but having submitted over 40,000 signatures before Friday's deadline, the campaign is confident the measure will qualify.

**Paid for by Stand with Montanans:**  
Corporations Aren't People – Ban Corporate Campaign Spending  
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The Montana Constitution requires that a petition for an initiative receive signatures from at least 5% of Montana qualified electors (currently 24,337). County elections offices are processing I-166 petitions to confirm that signers are registered voters and match signatures with the one on file. County election administrators have until July 20 to process the petitions and file the results with the Secretary of State.

The initiative has received broad support, including endorsements from prominent political leaders from both the Democratic and Republican parties. At a May 3 signing ceremony and endorsement event in Helena, Democratic Gov. Brian Schweitzer joined Republican Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger and Republican former Sec. of State Verner Bertelsen in endorsing I-166.

“When you take this petition, and you sign your name, and you stand up for Montana, you will send a signal to all of Montana, you will send a signal to this entire country, and yes you will send a signal to the world that Montana is not for sale,” said Gov. Schweitzer at the May 3 event.

With the U.S. Supreme Court considering taking up a case challenging Montana’s Corrupt Practices Act, the eyes of the nation and world are indeed on Montana. Montana voters, by generating enough signatures to qualify I-166 for the November ballot, are keeping the state squarely in the national spotlight.

“The challenge to our ban on corporate money in elections has placed Montana in the spotlight, so Montanans are leading the way in the fight to restore government of, by, and for the people,” said Pearson. “We led the way 100 years ago when we passed the Corrupt Practices Act, and we are once again leading the way as Montanans stand up against the bad *Citizens United* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.”

One hundred years ago, Montana voters approved by initiative the Montana Corrupt Practices Act of 1912. That law was challenged by American Tradition Partnership, but the Montana Supreme Court denied the challenge. That decision has been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which issued a stay of the Montana Supreme Court decision until a final decision is made. That means the Corrupt Practices Act is currently not in effect and corporations are free to spend money in Montana elections.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in its *Citizens United* decision, ruled that corporations have the same rights as people and that unlimited corporate political spending equates to constitutionally protected free speech.

“Corporations are not people,” said Pearson. “They do not breathe, they do not have children, they do not die fighting in wars for our country, and they do not vote in our elections. In November, Montana voters will have the chance to clarify that corporations are not people, that money is not speech, and once again act to get big money out of our elections. We think it is important that the people of Montana speak on this important issue and that our elected representatives honor the wishes of the people to have fair elections.”

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