

Do you Remember Why America Fought for Independence?

This past weekend, all around the country people celebrated the 4th of July—an important day celebrating a momentous occasion in our nation’s history. We celebrate because the people of the original 13 colonies raised their voices, took action, became separate from British rule, and created the United States of America.

Under British rule the Colonists were unhappy, the elite monarchy had control over their lives and government, so a group of them decided to write a document proclaiming:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, **Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness...***

By signing this document, it symbolized the end of the monarchy’s hold on the colony, the triumph of liberty and a time to celebrate a new beginning.

Look at the words above and ask yourself—do they still ring true?

In the nearly five years since the Citizens United vs FEC ruling, the infiltration of secret dark money in elections has skyrocketed. While outside groups existed before *Citizens United*, they were legally limited in the ways they could use that money to influence elections. *Citizens United* paved the way for direct spending and the creation of super PACs, which are allowed to accept unlimited contributions from corporations, unions and wealthy individuals for the purpose of making independent expenditures. During the 2012 cycle, non-party outside spending tripled 2008’s total and topped \$1 billion for the first time, super PACs accounted for more than \$600 million of that spending.* The 2016 election is projected to quadruple that amount and exceed \$4 billion.

Initiative 735 here in Washington State urges our Congressional delegation to propose a federal Constitutional amendment that clarifies constitutional rights belong only to individuals, not corporations; spending money is not free speech under the First Amendment; governments are empowered to regulate political contributions and expenditures to prevent undue influence; and, political contributions and expenditures must be promptly disclosed to the public.

Amendments are both useful and important in making sure our government is fair and acting in the best interests of the people.

Throughout history, amendments have been made to our constitution when people stood up and spoke up to force their government to change. Some of the more well-known amendments include the 13th Amendment – ratified almost immediately after the end of the Civil War, abolishing slavery; 19th Amendment in 1920 – making it unconstitutional to restrict voting based on gender and giving women the right to vote; 24th Amendment in 1964 – another voting rights act, this time making it unconstitutional to compel voters to pay “poll taxes” which were being applied to Southern blacks as a

way to discourage their voting; 17th Amendment – United States Senators used to be selected by state legislatures-this amendment elects them by a direct vote of the people; 18th amendment creating the prohibition of alcohol; 21st Amendment – repealing the 18th amendment; 22nd Amendment- Ratified in 1951 in response to Franklin Roosevelt being elected four times, this amendment restricts the President to two terms of office.

Initiative 735 is using an all-volunteer signature gathering strategy because people across our nation believe Washington's politicians have failed to act and that's why thousands of committed citizens are standing up and speaking up to say no more! Stop allowing money to corrupt our government, amend the constitution and give the power back to the people.

So, if you still believe in a government of the people, for the people, by the people-please add your voice and name to WAMend's growing list of supporters and help collect signatures! It's a great way to remind yourself why we celebrate the 4th of July.

For more information go to www.WAmend.org

*SOURCE: OpenSecrets