

The potential impact on elections is enormous: if ExxonMobil had spent just two percent of its 2008 profits in the last presidential election, it would have outspent presidential candidates McCain and Obama *combined*.¹⁷ Indeed, according to the *Washington Post*, spending on television ads by groups independent of the campaigns is already *five times* what it was during the entire Republican primary season four years ago.¹⁸ We're already seeing the avalanche of money resulting from the *Citizens United* case – by far the largest expenditures in the current Republican primary have been made by the super PAC of the leading candidate¹⁹, suggesting that Super PACs have already become kingmakers – and the negative effects will only increase.

For over a century, Congress and the states have limited the role of money in the political process due to its inevitable corrupting influence. This is no less important today.

Before sending a proposed constitutional amendment to the states, Congress must first approve it by a two-thirds vote in both houses. Three-quarters of the state legislatures (38 out of 50) must then ratify the amendment for it to succeed.

(An amendment may also be proposed by a national constitutional convention called for by two-thirds of the state legislatures, but this has never happened previously. A third possibility is ratification by conventions in three-quarters of the states. This has occurred only once, when Prohibition was repealed).

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Any reports from Town Officers and Committees are included under this article in the Combined Reports. Town Meeting action is not required on any of the reports.

¹⁷ <http://www.tvweek.com/blogs/2009/09/the-us-supreme-court-heard-a-case-yesterday-that-could-affect-millions-and-millions-of-dollars-spent.php>

¹⁸ www.washingtonpost.com/politics/.../gIQA3dzjP_story.html

¹⁹ <http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/superpacs.php>