

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution was designed to protect the free-speech rights of individuals ("natural persons"), not corporations. For the past three decades, however, a divided United States Supreme Court has steadily eroded-in the name of First Amendment free-speech rights-a number of limitations placed on corporate expenditures aimed at influencing elections and the legislative process. These Supreme Court decisions have shifted political influence from ordinary citizens to corporations, thereby strengthening the power of corporations to limit and block democratically-enacted corporate reforms.

This granting of free-speech rights to corporations reached an extreme conclusion with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC*, which basically allows corporations to make unlimited expenditures for advocacy in favor or against political candidates and issues. Many see this development as not only a further erosion of the influence of individuals in the political process, but as- in essence- a corporate takeover of the First Amendment.

The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United* has already unleashed a torrent of corporate money in our political process unmatched by any campaign expenditure totals in the history of the United States; therefore, this ruling presents a serious and direct threat to our democracy "of the people, by the people and for the people." The people of the United States have previously used the constitutional amendment process to correct egregiously harmful decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court that go to the heart of our democracy and self-government, such as the *Citizens United* decision. It is for that reason that we present the following resolution to the voters of Great Barrington.

Be it resolved that the voters of Great Barrington, Massachusetts call upon the United States Congress to pass and send to the States for ratification, a Constitutional Amendment that Congress and the States will regulate the expenditure of funds for political speech by any corporation, limited liability company or other corporate entity, or to take any other action relative thereto.