

- On Congress to pass an amendment to our Constitution to clearly establish that money is not the same as speech, and that human beings, not corporations, are entitled to constitutional rights such as free speech, and
- On our State Legislature to pass a resolution supporting a Constitutional amendment. Such a resolution, Senate Bill 772, is being considered by the Legislature. It had a hearing on February 28th and a committee vote is expected to have occurred by March 21.

WHO ELSE SUPPORTS OVERTURNING CITIZENS UNITED?

Fifteen cities or towns in Massachusetts, including Boston, and hundreds of communities across the United States have passed similar resolutions calling for a Constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United, including Los Angeles, New York, and the 55 VT towns that passed resolutions on March 6. At least two state legislatures (HI & NM) have passed such resolutions and a number of state legislatures are considering them.

Citizens all across the country have concluded that unlimited campaign spending by corporations and wealthy individuals means that our elections will not be a fair fight. Democracy's foundation, *government of, by, and for the People*, is undermined by the influence of money on elections and government decision-making. If, as *Citizens United* asserts, money equals speech, then those with more money have louder voices and those with no money have no voice. This flies in the face of the principles of our democracy and the Constitution that our founders wrote.

Over 200 groups have formed a loose coalition working to overturn *Citizens United*, including Move to Amend, Common Cause, the National Lawyers Guild, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and Veterans for Peace. The Montana Supreme Court upheld the state's 1912 law limiting corporate spending in campaigns, despite a lower court ruling that *Citizens United* had invalidated the law in question. The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals similarly upheld a New York City law that places limits on political contributions.

WHY IS OVERTURNING THE CITIZENS UNITED DECISION SO IMPORTANT?

With the 2012 election season underway, the consequences of the *Citizens United* decision are becoming clearer by the day. Some wealthy individuals and corporations are already contributing millions of dollars to Super PACs, which have already spent over \$40 million in the Republican presidential primaries. The amount spent to date is a drop in the bucket compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars that these Super PACs have stated they will raise and spend during the entire 2012 election period.

The unleashing of corporate funds has dramatically expanded possible election spending and, therefore, concerns that elected officials will be more responsive to contributors and their money than to constituents. The Open Secrets project at the Center for Responsive Politics calculated that even before *Citizens United* roughly 72% (\$3.4 billion) of all campaign contributions in 2007–2010 came from the business sector (individuals and organizations), with labor contributing 4% (\$172 million), ideological groups 7% (\$308 million), and others 17%. Now we can expect even greater business sector dominance.

Finance Committee Report: No report.

Bylaw Committee Report: No report.

Presentation given by:

- John Lippitt – See Attached

After extensive discussion a motion was made by Elaine Webb, Precinct 1 to move the question.

2/3 Vote Required
130 Voted in the affirmative
18 Voted in the negative
161 Town Meeting Members in Attendance