

*There being no discussion, the Moderator declared Article 33 carried by unanimous voice vote.*

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CITIZEN'S PETITION

**Article 36.** To request the Town of Williamstown to approve the following resolution to call upon the United States Congress to pass and send to the states for ratification a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* and to restore democracy to the people.

In a 5-4 ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the Supreme Court held for the first time that corporations, both for-profit and not-for-profit, and unions have a First Amendment right to spend unlimited amounts from their treasuries to support or oppose candidates for elected office. Prohibitions on corporate political donations, according to the court, violate the First Amendment-guaranteed free speech rights of corporations. This ruling essentially established that according to meaning and intent of the First Amendment, corporations should be treated as natural persons and that money equals free speech. While special interest money was always a concern in elections, **corporations**-including foreign corporations-may now intervene directly in elections, taking power away from voters.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution was designed to protect the free speech rights of people, not corporations;

WHEREAS, for the past three decades, the United States Supreme Court has transformed the First Amendment into a powerful tool for corporations seeking to evade and invalidate democratically-enacted reforms;

WHEREAS, this corporate takeover of the First Amendment has reached its extreme conclusion in the United States Supreme Court's recent ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC*, overturning longstanding precedent prohibiting corporations from spending their general treasury funds in our elections;

WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC* will now unleash a torrent of corporate money in our political process unmatched by any campaign expenditure totals in United States history;

WHEREAS, the people of the United States have previously used the constitutional amendment process to correct those egregiously wrong decisions of the United States Supreme Court that go to the heart of our democracy and self-government;

Now be it resolved that the Town of Williamstown, Williamstown, Massachusetts hereby calls upon the United States Congress to pass and send to the states for ratification a constitutional amendment to restore the First Amendment and fair elections to the people.

Now be it further resolved that the Town Clerk be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Williamstown's Congressional Representative (John Olver), Mass State Senator (Benjamin Downing), and Mass State Representative (Gailanne Carridi).

**The Board of Selectmen recommends the adoption of this article by a vote of 3-0-2.**

*Article 35 is on the warrant by petition of ten or more registered voters. The text must be printed here exactly as presented in the petition.*

***Proceeding: Elizabeth Smith moved, and it was seconded, to accept this article.***

***Following a short period of comments by residents, the Moderator declared Article 36 carried by majority voice vote.***