

February 14, 2012

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman  
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Chairman  
The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Ranking Member  
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution,  
Civil Rights, and Human Rights  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Leahy and Durbin and Ranking Members Grassley and Graham:

We are writing to request that the Senate Judiciary Committee hold hearings this year on the need to amend the Constitution to remedy the damage done to our nation by the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* and related cases. That decision, along with prior and subsequent cases, have unleashed a flood of corporate and special interest money that threatens to undermine the integrity of our elections and our democracy.

In *Citizens United*, the Court ruled that corporations are guaranteed the same free speech rights as real people to influence elections, thereby ruling that governmental restrictions on corporate spending to influence elections are invalid and unconstitutional. As to that astounding principle, Justice Stevens noted in his dissent that the framers "had little trouble distinguishing corporations from human beings, and when they constitutionalized the right to free speech in the First Amendment, it was the free speech of individual Americans that they had in mind."

Congress may pass legislation to try to mitigate the effects of this decision, for example to provide for public disclosure of election expenditures. But such measures, while beneficial, cannot undo the harm done by the Court in *Citizens United v. FEC*. Only amending the Constitution can fully secure the American people's authority to regulate corporate influence in our elections and restore our democracy.

So far in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, there have been 13 constitutional amendment resolutions about this issue introduced in the House and Senate. While these resolutions vary in scope and approach, they all were introduced because of the growing realization that the problems created by *Citizens United* and related decisions are so immense and so fundamental that they can only be addressed through constitutional remedies.

Americans have become increasingly distressed at the toxic effects of unrestrained corporate and special interest money that is influencing our political system. Fully 92% of the American people believe that the extent of corporate influence on our political system is a problem. Just one month after the *Citizens United* decision, polling revealed that eighty percent of Americans opposed the ruling.

As activists have mobilized and protested across the country on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Court's decision, and as city and county councils and state legislatures take up and pass resolutions calling for amending the Constitution to reverse *Citizens United*, it is time for Congress to explore in earnest the range of resolutions that have been introduced to undo the harmful effects of the Court's decision.

We urge you to use this session of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress to advance the very healthy and critical debate about how the Constitution should be amended to return our democracy to the people.

Sincerely,

350.org  
A New Way Forward  
African American Ministers in Action  
Alliance for Democracy  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Backbone Campaign

Campaign for America's Future  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Environmental Health  
CivicSponsor  
Codepink  
Coffee Party  
Common Cause  
Communications Workers of America  
Consumer Action  
Consumer Watchdog  
Democrats.com  
Earthworks  
East Bay Citizens for Action  
Ethical Markets  
Food Empowerment Project  
Free Speech for People  
Friends of the Earth  
Greenpeace  
Indiana Alliance for Democracy  
Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Project  
International Forum on Globalization  
Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution  
Main Street Alliance  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Move to Amend  
MoveOn  
National Education Association  
Oil Change International  
People For the American Way  
Pesticide Action Network North America  
Public Campaign  
Public Citizen  
Rebuild the Dream  
Roots Action  
Story of Stuff  
Sum of Us  
The Other 98%  
U.S. PIRG  
United Republic  
We the People Campaign  
Where's Our Money  
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign  
Wolf PAC  
Working Families Win

cc: Senate Judiciary Committee, Members