

2015 END OF YEAR UPDATE

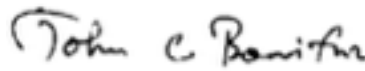
Free Speech For People

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TODAY, we face a critical challenge to our democracy, with unprecedented amounts of corporate and big money interests threatening to overwhelm the political will of the people. Yet, thanks to the support of people across the country and across the political spectrum, Free Speech For People is fighting back. We continue to lead a growing movement to reclaim our democracy through our multi-pronged strategy, building populist momentum and political pressure for a 28th Amendment while working in the courts to challenge unchecked corporate power and to advance a new jurisprudence on money in politics.

We are thrilled to share with you all that we have achieved together in 2015, from success in the courts to expanding the constitutional amendment movement in the states – all of which we could not have done without the support of people like you, dedicated to the fundamental promise of American self-government: of, by, and for the people.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Bonifaz". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin vertical line.

John Bonifaz
President

VICTORY IN THE COURTS

- **Supreme Court victory: Florida’s campaign finance rule upheld**

In the case of *Williams-Yulee v. The Florida Bar*, the Supreme Court upheld a Florida rule barring judges and judicial candidates from engaging in the personal solicitation of campaign contributions. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court recognized the importance of maintaining the dignity of the judicial office and rejected the free speech claim brought by a Florida judicial candidate. We filed an [amicus brief before the U.S. Supreme Court](#) in this case in defense of Florida’s rule. Our brief is the only one that made the dignity interest argument, and it is directly aligned with how the Court ruled.
- **Successful defense of the rights of workers in Seattle & Los Angeles to enact living wage laws**

Free Speech For People filed an [amicus brief](#) in defense of Seattle’s minimum wage ordinance, which, in stages, raises the city’s minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The law was challenged by franchised restaurant businesses claiming it violates the First Amendment and equal protection “rights” of the businesses. The living wage law was upheld, while the court rejected the constitutional challenge to the law. We also helped to defend a recently-passed living wage law in Los Angeles which is facing a similar corporate attack.
- **Defending Vermont’s GMO labeling law**

In 2014, we filed an [amicus brief before the federal district court in Vermont](#) in defense of Vermont’s recently-passed law requiring the labeling of food produced with genetic engineering. Major agribusinesses and industrial food manufacturers have challenged the law under the First Amendment, claiming that it forces them to “speak” against their will. In 2015, Vermont largely prevailed in defending the food-labeling law as a federal judge rejected the industry’s claims.

ADVANCING A NEW JURISPRUDENCE TO CHALLENGE *CITIZENS UNITED*, *BUCKLEY*, AND *MCCUTCHEON*

In partnership with Harvard Law School, we convened our first symposium, in November 2014, entitled “Advancing a New Jurisprudence for American Self-Government and Democracy.” Following this, we published key papers from the symposium in the Summer 2015 publication of *Constitutional Commentary*, the most prestigious law journal focusing on constitutional law. Articles from *Constitutional Commentary*, “Money, Politics, Corporations & the Constitution”, may be viewed on our website, www.freespeechforpeople.org.

The Harvard Law symposium was the first in a series of such convenings which bring together scholars, elected leaders and allies to create new and innovative legal strategies to challenge the doctrines underlying the *Citizens United*, *Buckley*, and *McCutcheon* rulings. In the Fall of 2015, we held a symposium at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, focusing on corporations and the Constitution; a forum in Durham, North Carolina, focusing on money in politics as a civil rights issue; and a panel at Harvard Law School discussing a legal challenge to *SpeechNow.org v. FEC*, the ruling which gave rise to SuperPAC spending in our elections.

BUILDING A TRANSPARTISAN MOVEMENT IN DEFENSE OF OUR DEMOCRACY

Free Speech For People has played an instrumental role in making the transpartisan case for ending the big money dominance of our politics. This work has included:

- Launching a new website highlighting transpartisan voices in the democracy movement, acrosstheaisle.us;
- [Reaching out to conservative media](#) to advance the argument why conservatives should support an amendment;
- [Enlisting a prominent former Republican Senator](#) to call on Republican state legislators across the country to support 28th Amendment resolutions.

GROWING THE AMENDMENT MOVEMENT IN THE STATES

- **Defending the rights of California voters**

In February 2015, we (along with organizational allies) filed [an amicus brief before the California Supreme Court](#) in support of the people's right to vote on California Proposition 49. The legislature submitted Prop 49 to ask the voters whether Congress should pass, and the California legislature should ratify, an amendment to reverse *Citizens United*. The ballot measure was scheduled for last November, but, in August 2014, the California Supreme Court issued an order preventing the vote from going forward, pending full legal argument. Our brief highlights that the people of California have a right to “instruct their representatives” and vote on Prop 49.

- **Developing transpartisan support for state legislative resolutions**

In collaboration with our allies, Free Speech For People worked in New Hampshire, New York and Washington to increase transpartisan support for legislative resolutions calling for an amendment.

EXPANDING OUR WORK IN 2016!

We look forward to continuing in 2016 this fight for our democracy and building on our past success.

In 2016, we will:

- **Launch a new campaign to end SuperPAC** spending in our elections by creating and litigating new test cases to challenge *SpeechNom.org v. FEC*;
- Develop further our Legal Advocacy Program to **advance a new jurisprudence on money in politics** and to **defend the rights of the people** to enact public interest laws against corporate claims of constitutional rights;
- **Build the national grassroots democracy movement** by working with our allies to pass state resolutions and ballot initiatives in support of a constitutional amendment overturning *Citizens United* and restoring democracy to the people.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, we will continue to grow the movement to reclaim our democracy and fulfill the promise of political equality for all. Together, we will continue to make history in defense of our democracy!

In addition to gifts from individual donors throughout the year, Free Speech For People is proud to have received support from the following foundations and organizations:

Amalgamated Transit Union	Park Foundation
The Clements Foundation	Rauch Foundation
Cloud Mountain Foundation	Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Foundation to Promote Open Society	Rockefeller Family Fund
Gaia Fund	Selkowitz Family Foundation
Laura Stratton Dewey Foundation	Sister Fund
Mertz Gilmore Foundation	Stewart R Mott Foundation
Namaste Solar Foundation	WhyNot Initiative
Overbrook Foundation	William B. Wiener, Jr. Foundation

Free Speech For People is grateful for all who supported our work in 2015