

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Stop foreign-influenced corporations from having sway in Illinois elections

By [Letters to the Editor](#) | June 7, 2025

Illinois stands at a crossroads in safeguarding its democratic process.

State Rep. Amy “Murri” Briel’s, D-Ottawa, proposed legislation, [House Bill 3071](#), which aims to close a dangerous loophole that allows foreign-influenced corporations to spend money to attempt to sway state and local elections. This legislation is a critical step toward ensuring Illinois elections reflect the will of its residents.

The loophole stems from the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2010 Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission decision, which unleashed corporate spending in elections by treating corporations as “associations of citizens” with First Amendment rights.

This ruling opened the door for foreign interests to subvert, through U.S. corporations, longstanding federal law barring foreign influence in our elections. By acquiring significant ownership stakes, foreign entities can influence or control a corporation’s political spending, including campaign contributions, super PAC donations and independent expenditures.

Companies like Amazon, Chevron and Uber — with substantial foreign ownership — have used their financial clout to shape electoral outcomes, often prioritizing corporate interests over those of Illinois voters.

Federal law already prohibits foreign individuals, governments and businesses from directly or indirectly spending money to influence U.S. elections.

Yet, the loophole undermines this ban. HB3071 would prohibit corporations from spending in Illinois elections if a single foreign investor holds more than 1% ownership or if foreign investors collectively hold more than 5%. This threshold ensures foreign investors can’t use corporations as a backdoor to influence state and local elections.

Similar laws are already in effect in [Seattle and San Jose](#), proving that such measures are feasible. At the federal level, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., have introduced the [Get Foreign Money Out of U.S. Elections Act](#).

The stakes are high. Foreign-influenced corporations can drown out the voices of Illinois residents, skewing policies on many matters, including labor rights and environmental protections.

Elections should reflect the will of the people, not the wealth of multinational corporations. Organizations like Common Cause Illinois and Free Speech For People, which have championed HB3071, emphasize that transparency and fairness in elections are nonpartisan values.

Illinois has a proud history of advancing democratic reforms. Passing HB3071 is the next step in helping to secure a government of, for and by the people.

Courtney Hostetler, legal director, Free Speech For People, Elizabeth Grossman, executive director, Common Cause Illinois, and state Rep. Amy “Murri” Briel