



For Immediate Release

April 2, 2013

Contact:

Ryan O'Donnell - (413) 335-9824
rodonnell@freespeechforpeople.org

Nevada Committee Approves Resolution to Overturn Citizens United

CARSON CITY, NV – The Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections approved a resolution on Tuesday calling on Congress to overturn the Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United* by amending the U.S. Constitution to make clear that corporations are not people with constitutional rights (SJR 11).

The vote puts Nevada on track to become the twelfth state to call for such a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*.

John Bonifaz, Executive Director of Free Speech For People, said: "This vote marks another important step for the defense of our democracy. More and more states are asking Congress to send them a constitutional amendment to get big money out of politics and make clear that people govern over corporations, not the other way around."

Robert Weissman, President of Public Citizen said, "The forward motion of this resolution reflects the growing movement to restore American democracy. Strong majorities of all parties agree that the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision was wrongly decided, and even larger majorities are angry about corporate control of the political process. We hope Nevada will be one of the next states to call for a constitutional amendment that states that democracy and constitutional rights are for the people, not the corporations."

Michael Ginsburg of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada said, "Prior to the *Citizens United* decision, Nevadans were just as cynical about politics and the corrupting influence of money over the process. When the Supreme Court handed down that decision, it reinforced a sense that our democracy was being bought by a relatively small group of corporate elites, intent on continuing to concentrate power and wealth amongst themselves. Frankly, most of us thought this problem would take a generation to fix, but just two years later Senator Spearman is leading the charge here in Nevada to right this wrong and restore faith in, and balance to, the political system."

A 2010 Peter Hart poll revealed that 68% of Republicans, 82% of independents, and 87% of Democrats support an amendment; a 2012 AP poll showed that 81% of Republicans, 78% of independents, and 85% of Democrats want to limit corporate, union, and other outside spending.

Senators Spearman, Jones and Parks and Assemblymembers Diaz, Elliot Anderson, Ohrenschall, Pierce, Aizley, Hogan, Munford and Swank sponsored the resolution.

The language of SJR 11 can be accessed here:

<https://nelis.leg.state.nv.us/77th2013/App#/77th2013/Bill/Text/SJR11>

Background

The movement to overturn *Citizens United* and reclaim our democracy has been growing across the country at the state and local levels. This past November, voters in both Montana and Colorado approved ballot measures by nearly three-to-one margins, and seven other states -- Hawaii, New Mexico, Vermont, Rhode Island, California, Massachusetts, and New Jersey -- acted through their legislatures, which passed resolutions calling for an amendment; in two more, Connecticut and Maryland, majorities of the legislatures signed letters to Congress calling for an amendment.

Congressman Jim McGovern introduced two such amendment bills this year. HJ Res 20 would restore Congress' and the states' authority to regulate campaign spending, and HJ Res 21 or the "People's Rights Amendment" would overturn *Citizens United* and clarify that constitutional rights apply to living persons, not corporations.

U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and U.S. Congressman Ted Deutch (D-FL) have introduced the Democracy Is For People constitutional amendment that would prevent corporations from spending to influence elections and would enable to government to regulate campaign spending from individuals.

Free Speech For People works to challenge the misuse of corporate power and restore republican democracy to the people. The group advances the movement to amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn *Citizens United v. FEC*, an earlier case called *Buckley v. Valeo*, and the fabricated doctrine of corporate constitutional rights. For more on Free Speech For People, visit: www.FreeSpeechForPeople.org.

Public Citizen is a national, nonprofit consumer advocacy organization that has worked to protect health, safety and democracy since 1971.

The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada's mission is to build collective strategic action among coalition partners in order to deepen democracy and achieve greater social justice in Nevada. Since 1994, PLAN Nevada has worked to bring together diverse and potentially competing organizations into one cohesive force for transformational change in Nevada.