



June 21, 2012

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***Trailblazing Montana petitions will let voters speak on Citizens United***  
**State to be first in nation to vote on constitutional amendment limiting corporate political spending**

WASHINGTON – The national drive for a constitutional amendment overruling the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision and permitting Congress and state legislatures to limit corporate political spending hit an important milestone today in the Big Sky Country of Montana.

Organizers of [“Stand with Montanans,”](#) a statewide petition campaign backed by Gov. Brian Schweitzer and Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger, announced they’ve gathered more than enough signatures to place a voter initiative on *Citizens United* on the November ballot. The unusual measure would let Montanans instruct their senators and representative – at the ballot box – to vote and work in Washington for an amendment.

“Montanans want clean and fair elections and don’t want corporations using their corporate checkbooks to buy our elections,” said C.B. Pearson, treasurer for the ballot initiative effort and a long-time Montana campaign reform advocate. “For nearly a century, Montana had elections free of corporate expenditures. But now our fair elections system is under attack.”

“Montana is showing a way that other states could follow and create a rocky mountain rebellion against a Supreme Court ruling that is ungrounded in reality,” said Bob Edgar, president of Common Cause. “Citizens are standing up and pushing back, and eventually I’m confident we will prevail.”

“This is an historic moment for the people of Montana and this nation,” said John Bonifaz, executive director of Free Speech For People, a national organization pressing for a constitutional amendment to reclaim our democracy and a partner in this ballot initiative campaign. “Free Speech For People is proud to join with voters in Montana who are standing up to defend our republic and to demand that we the people, not we the

corporations, shall govern in America. This ballot initiative campaign will have a rippling effect across the country in building the movement for a constitutional amendment that will overturn *Citizens United* and that will restore democracy to the people.”

In *Citizens United* and several other decisions, the Supreme Court has declared that corporations enjoy the same free speech rights as individuals and so can tap their treasuries to make “independent expenditures” supporting or opposing candidates. Gifts from companies directly to the candidates and their campaign committees remain illegal in federal elections but are allowed in some states.

The “Stand with Montanans” effort gathered more than 40,000 signatures from state voters; that’s more than 15,000 above the total required by state law. The Montana secretary of state’s office is validating the signatures and is expected to confirm by mid-July that the petition totals are sufficient to put the question on the November ballot.

“The strong response to our petitions tells that voters don’t just support an amendment, they’re hungry for one,” Edgar said. “And support crosses party lines, beginning with Gov. Schweitzer, a Democrat, and Lt. Gov. Bohlinger, a Republican. Voters of all stripes understand that when corporations are allowed to tap their treasuries to support or oppose candidates, the door to corruption is thrown wide open.”

The Stand with Montanans announcement comes as US Supreme Court is considering whether to invalidate the Montana Corrupt Practices Act as in defiance of rules laid down in *Citizens United*. The Montana Supreme Court upheld the law in December, declaring that the state’s history of political corruption justifies special efforts to control corporate political spending.