

Town Meeting Petitioned Article

To see if the Town will vote to adopt:

A Nonbinding Resolution Calling Upon the United States Congress to Pass and Send to the States for Ratification, a Constitutional Amendment to Restore the First Amendment and Fair Elections to the People.

We, the voters at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting of the Town of Truro, affirm our belief that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution was designed to protect the free speech rights of people, not corporations.

The United States Supreme Court's 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, overturned longstanding precedent prohibiting corporations and unions from spending their general treasury funds in public elections. We believe that the ruling created a serious and direct threat to our democracy and the conduct of free and fair elections, by permitting corporations to drown out the voices of ordinary persons. Already we have seen our political process flooded with newly unleashed corporate money, resulting in historically unprecedented campaign expenditures.

The people of the United States have previously used the Constitutional Amendment process to correct decisions of the United States Supreme Court that invade or invalidate democratic institutions, including elections.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE VOTERS AT THE 2011 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF THE TOWN OF TRURO, CALL UPON THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PASS AND SEND TO THE STATES FOR RATIFICATION A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO RESTORE THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND FAIR ELECTIONS TO THE PEOPLE, AND FURTHER, WE CALL UPON THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL COURT TO PASS ONE OR MORE RESOLUTIONS ASKING THOSE ACTIONS.

[Officials of the Town of Truro shall send a copy of this resolution to the state and federal representatives and senators serving the Town of Truro, and to the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the President of the United States.]

Comment: The Supreme Court's 2010 decision in the Citizens United case held that corporations and unions can spend unlimited amounts of money advocating the election or defeat of candidates for office. That decision allows corporations (including huge multinational or foreign-based ones) to spend many millions of dollars to influence United States elections, dwarfing the resources and thus the voices of individuals, unions, and public-interest groups. The only way to revoke this newly granted corporate influence over elections is by amending the Constitution of the United States. This would not affect the free-speech rights of real persons (human beings), including individual officials of corporations or of other organizations, to advocate and spend their own money to further their political goals.