

# ★ MAKING IT BIG

**“A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.”**

— FRANCIS BACON

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Congratulations! You just passed a student government resolution calling for *Citizens United* to be overturned with a constitutional amendment!

Now what? You can still help build the movement. Here’s how:

## **A. PASS A TOWN/CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OR BALLOT INITIATIVE**

Work with people in your local community to pass a town or city resolution. Check out [www.resolutionsweek.org](http://www.resolutionsweek.org) to see if your town has passed a resolution or if there are local activists working in your area. If there isn’t a local group already working on something, start a group by following the same steps as you did to build a campus organization. We recommend you find someone who is active in local politics and is familiar with local issues and the council to share leadership in your effort.

More resources for organizing in communities rather than on campus are here: [http://www.resolutionsweek.org/?page\\_id=334](http://www.resolutionsweek.org/?page_id=334).

It’s a good idea to power map the individuals and groups that have the ability to help pass a resolution in your town, as you did for your resolution. It’s worth noting that sometimes students are viewed as transient by city councilors, whereas older residents tend to have more connections and have a stronger voice in city politics.

If you have success with a town or city council resolution, don’t forget to let us know by emailing [amendment@citizen.org](mailto:amendment@citizen.org). Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, founders of Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream, are also offering free ice cream coupons for those who pass a resolution in areas with participating scoop shops.

## **B. HELP PASS A STATE LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION**

While California, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and the District of Columbia have called for a constitutional amendment, many more states have yet to act. Call Public Citizen at 202-588-1000 and ask for the Democracy Is For People Campaign to find out the latest information on what is happening your state and how you can get involved.

## C. ASK YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO SUPPORT AN AMENDMENT

More than 125 members of Congress have called for an amendment, and the number is growing. We encourage you to reach out to your representatives in Congress to request they support a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United* and get big money out of our elections.

There are number of constitutional amendments to overturn *Citizens United* already proposed in Congress, and while we are supportive of all of them, we strongly favor the Sanders-Deutch amendment (see <http://www.citizen.org/documents/Sanders-Deutch-Citizens-United-Fact-Sheet.pdf>). If your representative feels uncomfortable with co-sponsoring any resolution, ask him or her to consider supporting the Declaration for Democracy (see [www.united4thepeople.org](http://www.united4thepeople.org)). The declaration calls for an amendment without requiring endorsement of any currently proposed language.

### I. WHO IS MY MEMBER OF CONGRESS? DO THEY SUPPORT AN AMENDMENT?

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You can find your member by looking online here, <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>. Just type in your zip code. If you go to this address, <http://united4thepeople.org/endorsers.html>, you can search for your Representative and Senators by pressing CTRL + F to see if they support a resolution. If they don't, it's time to work to change that!

### 2. WHICH AMENDMENT SHOULD I ASK THEM TO SUPPORT?

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If your member of Congress has not yet expressed support for an amendment, we're recommending you ask them to sign the Declaration of Support (<http://www.united4thepeople.org/add-official.html>), which expresses general support for an amendment to undo *Citizens United* and related issues.

If your member of Congress has declared support for an amendment but has yet to sponsor a specific amendment, Public Citizen recommends members sponsor those introduced by U.S Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.) and U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).

Ultimately, support for any of the numerous amendment proposals is a positive step forward.

### 3. WHAT IF MY MEMBER ALREADY SUPPORTS AN AMENDMENT?

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If your member of Congress already supports an amendment, you can still hold a meeting to express your thanks to them for doing so. You can also ask them to deepen their support in a number of ways:

- Support the Deutch Amendment if they are in the House and the Sanders Amendment if they are in the Senate.
- Get another colleague in Congress on board, or present the issue to others in their caucus.
- Publish an op-ed in a local newspaper expressing support for an amendment.
- Hold a meeting in your district with other constituents to educate them on the importance of an amendment.

### 4. HOW DO I SET UP A MEETING?

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- We've created a great "How To" for meeting with your representatives in Congress at <http://www.citizen.org/meeting>.



- **Who should be there?** This can vary, but you want to think about which voices would be the most compelling and meaningful to your member of Congress. For example, if your member is a former teacher, contacting and inviting a local teacher who shares your position on an amendment is a great idea. A diverse group is ideal. One that could include a small business owner, a faith-based leader, and a professor, among other people who have clout in your community.

Use our power map guide from Step Two to get a better handle on what constituencies and voices might influence your Congressperson or their senior staff, and how you can reach out to those constituencies.

The bottom line is: If you can find three or four eloquent friends and neighbors who can speak clearly and compellingly about the need to support an amendment, you're on the right track. You want to keep it to four people if possible, as too many people make it harder to stay on message and connect with your member of Congress or a senior staff person.

- **Who do I talk to?** Ask for the scheduler in the member of Congress's district office near you. You can also ask to speak to someone in the district office who deals with issues related to election law, campaign finance policy, or legislation.
- **How to Organize the Meeting?** Come up with an agenda beforehand; identify the main points you want to convey; identify who will speak; make sure you make a direct and specific ask; stay on schedule; and include time to set follow-up plans with the member and/or their staff.

Run through the dialogue of the entire meeting beforehand to ensure everyone in the groups stays on topic.

- **How Do We Get Them to Commit?** The best way is to make direct and specific ask. Done respectfully, this isn't rude; it clearly conveys what action you want your representative to take.

Bringing in examples of other kinds of support – news articles, list of organizations and other public officials supporting an amendment, examples of local resolutions – can demonstrate the public support for an amendment and add weight to your voices.

If you get a “maybe” or “not sure” answer, ask follow-up questions to get a better understanding of what your member of Congress is considering as they make their decision. Even directly asking, “What information or support would you need to see, in order to support an amendment?” can help.

Lastly, follow-up is key to getting a commitment.

- **How Do We Follow Up?** Set a specific time, day, or week, when you will follow up to get a response. Or, ask the member of Congress or their staff person when you should expect a response from them. Make sure you give and get accurate contact information. Make sure someone from your group is responsible for following up.

If you offer more information or it is requested, make sure to pass that along as soon as you can after the meeting. And, if it's clear the member of Congress needs to hear from other voices or individuals, finding those voices and asking them to weigh in can be an action step your group can take in the meantime.

