

★ FACT SHEET: *CITIZENS UNITED V. FEC*

“A democracy cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold.”

— JUSTICE JOHN PAUL STEVENS, 2010

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission overturned a century of campaign finance law. Already, it is dealing a devastating blow to our democracy. Corporate money flooded the 2010 congressional midterm elections and is inundating the 2012 presidential elections. We must act.

AMERICANS ARE OUTRAGED

- Nearly nine in ten Americans say that big companies (88%) have too much power in Washington, D.C. ¹
- Eight in ten Americans oppose the court’s decision in *Citizens United*. ² Across the board, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents who have heard about *Citizens United* believe by a significant margin (almost 4-to-1) that the ruling is having a negative effect. ³
- 83% of Americans (85% of Democrats, 81% of Republicans and 78% of Independents) think there should be limits on how much money corporations can give in elections. ⁴
- 73% of the public agrees that “there would be less corruption if there were limits on how much could be given to Super PACs.” Only 14% disagree. 75% of Republicans and 78% of Democrats agree. ⁵
- 66% of small business owners surveyed view the *Citizens United* ruling as bad for small business’ ability to compete. Only 9% said it was good for small business. ⁶

SINCE THE COURT’S DECISION, ELECTION EXPENDITURES HAVE SOARED

- Spending by outside groups rose 243% in 2012 over the previous presidential election cycle. ⁷
- Super PACs, which became funnels for outside spending after an appeals court applied *Citizens United*, collectively spent more than \$609 million during the 2012 election cycle. Overall outside spending topped \$1.29 billion. ⁸
- In the 2012 election, the largest super PAC spent an astounding \$142 million. ⁹
- The 2012 election was the most expensive in history, costing more than \$7 billion. ¹⁰



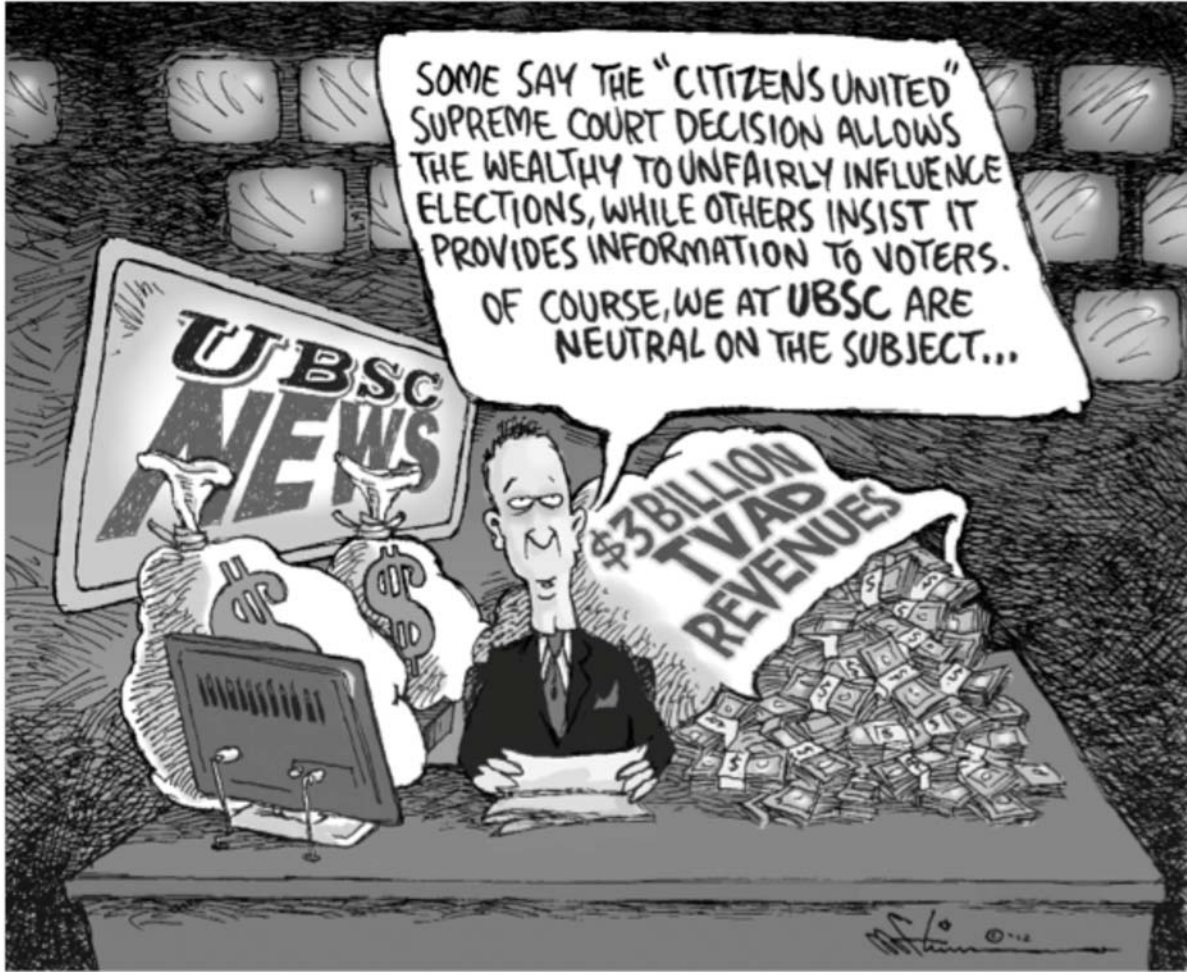
WHY A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT?

- A constitutional amendment is the long-term solution to fully overturn the Court’s decision, restore our rights, and assert once and for all that democracy is for people, not corporations.
- Our elected officials cannot effectively represent the people when they fear that millions of dollars of corporate money will go toward defeating them in the next election.
- A corporation is not a person. It does not vote and should not be able to have such tremendous influence over election outcomes. Neither should the richest individual corporate executives.
- A constitutional amendment is ultimately the only way to finally overcome the profound challenges to our democracy posed by *Citizens United* and related decisions.

SUPPORT IS GROWING FOR AN AMENDMENT

- So far, more than 2 million signatures have been gathered in support of an amendment. More than 125 members of Congress have declared their support, as has President Barack Obama.
- More than 120 national organizations – groups concerned about civil rights, the environment and climate change, open government and workers’ rights – have joined the call for a constitutional amendment. The organizations include the Sierra Club, U.S. PIRG, Hip Hop Caucus, and more: <http://www.united4thepeople.org/orgs.html>.
- Nearly 500 communities have passed resolutions calling for a constitutional amendment, from New York City to Los Angeles.
- Fifteen states – California, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia – and the District of Columbia have called for an amendment. (For an updated list of states that have passed an amendment, email amendment@citizen.org or call us at 202-588-1000.)





SOURCES

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