

# Resolution Regarding Constitutional Rights for People, Not Corporations

**WHEREAS** America was born of a struggle for freedom from tyranny, not establishment of a corporate haven;

**WHEREAS** the U.S. Constitution, as amended, describes the rights and freedoms granted to people and to enshrine democratic self-government, and makes no mention of corporations;

**WHEREAS** the First Amendment is intended to protect free speech rights of human beings, not corporations;

**WHEREAS** corporations are legal creations only, chartered by law and given "privileges" to engage in commerce and civic affairs deemed necessary for the public good; corporations are not natural persons and should not have automatic or inalienable rights as natural persons;

**WHEREAS** corporations may be owned, in whole or in part, by foreign interests that should have no influence over elections, lawmaking or public policy in the US;

**WHEREAS** in recent years a divided United States Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that spending money is equivalent to speech, transforming the First Amendment into a powerful tool for corporations and great wealth to evade and invalidate democratically enacted reforms;

**WHEREAS** the corporate claim of the right to free speech reached an extreme conclusion in the Supreme Court ruling Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission;

**WHEREAS** the Supreme Court ruling in Citizens United overturned longstanding precedents prohibiting corporations from spending their funds for electioneering to influence campaigns and election results;

**WHEREAS** recent Supreme Court rulings, based in part on Constitutional interpretations, have allowed alarming levels of spending by corporations and wealthy individuals to influence campaigns and election results, unmatched by any campaign spending in U.S. history;

**WHEREAS** these recent rulings by the Supreme Court present a serious threat to democratic self-government by people, by empowering money and wealth to shout louder than the peoples' voice; and

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45 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats hereby call  
46 upon the Washington State Legislature to enact a joint resolution to the U.S. Congress in  
47 support of a Constitutional amendment to establish that corporate entities shall not be  
48 considered natural persons eligible for rights accorded to human beings under the U.S.  
49 Constitution, and the use of money to influence elections or the acts of public officials  
50 shall not be considered protected speech, and, to protect the inalienable right of self-  
51 governance by the people, Congress and the states shall be permitted to appropriately  
52 regulate contributions and expenditures for campaigns, elections, ballot measures and  
53 electioneering.

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55 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats  
56 hereby call upon Democrats of the Washington State Congressional Delegation to seek a  
57 constitutional amendment establishing as law that a corporation shall not be considered  
58 a person eligible for rights accorded human beings and the use of money to influence  
59 elections or the acts of public officials shall not be considered a protected form of speech  
60 and, to protect the inalienable right of self-governance by the people, Congress and the  
61 states shall be permitted to appropriately regulate contributions and expenditures for  
62 campaigns, elections, ballot measures and electioneering.

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66 Submitted by the 36<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Democrats to the Washington State  
67 Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date  
68 Submitted 5/3/2012)

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70 Submitted by the Mason County Democrats to the Washington State Democratic  
71 Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date Submitted  
72 5/3/2012)

73  
74 Submitted by the 45<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Democrats to the Washington State  
75 Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date  
76 Submitted 5/3/2012)

77  
78 Submitted by the San Juan County Democrats to the Washington State Democratic  
79 Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date Submitted  
80 5/3/2012)

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82 Recommended 'PASS WITH AMENDMENTS' by the Subcommittee on the Corporate  
83 Power, Education, Labor, and Media Reform at its May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in Ellensburg.

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85 Recommended 'PASS' by the Platform Committee at its June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Seattle.

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87 'PASSED' by the Washington State Democratic Convention at its June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in  
88 Seattle.