

Constitutional Amendment to Overturn Citizens United

WHEREAS free and fair elections are essential to American democracy and effective self-governance;

WHEREAS in *Citizens United versus Federal Election Commission*, the United States Supreme Court held that independent spending on elections by corporations and other groups could not be limited by government regulation, a decision that allows for unlimited corporate spending in elections;

WHEREAS in reaching its decision in *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court interpreted the First Amendment of the Constitution to afford corporations the same free speech protections as natural persons;

WHEREAS the *Citizens United* decision has proven to be one of the Court's most controversial decisions and supersedes state and local efforts to regulate corporate activity in their campaign finance laws;

WHEREAS, in his eloquent dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens stated that “[c]orporations have no consciences, no beliefs, no feelings, no thoughts, no desires. Corporations help structure and facilitate the activities of human beings, to be sure, and their 'personhood' often serves as a useful legal fiction. But they are not themselves members of 'We the People' by whom and for whom our Constitution was established”; and

WHEREAS members of Congress are seeking to amend the Constitution in order to reverse the *Citizens United* decision and establish that corporations are not entitled to the entirety of protections of natural persons;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington State Democrats respectfully disagree with the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution in *Citizens United* regarding the rights of corporations; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washington State Democrats call on Congress to begin the process of amending the Constitution to provide that corporations are not entitled to the entirety of protections or "rights" of natural persons, specifically so that the expenditure of corporate money to influence the electoral process is no longer a form of constitutionally protected speech.

Submitted by the Grant County Convention.

43 The Platform Committee recommended that this resolution be passed at their June 17,
44 2016 meeting.

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46 The 2016 Washington State Democratic Convention passed this resolution on June 18,
47 2016.

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