

# *Act Across America*

*A 7-step guide to passing a city or town resolution to Get Money Out! of politics.*



take  
action



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DEMOCRACY IS NOT FOR SALE



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## STEP 1

### Build a Coalition of Local Organizations & Allies

We're going to connect you with other Get Money Out allies in your community, and help you meet up with them. Until then, you should figure out which community organizations, neighborhood associations, and other groups in your area might support the resolution. Talk to people active in local politics and activism.

Gather a host committee with representatives from different constituencies: faith-based groups, student & youth organizations, business groups, you name it. Create a list of potential organizations, as well as people in your area who might be helpful. Call a first meeting to launch the effort.



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## STEP 2

### Learn How To Talk About The Issue

Learn how to explain the issue in one minute.  
Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Why are you doing this?

***Here's an idea:*** Because our democracy has been auctioned off to the highest bidder, and big money lobbyists are calling the shots at our expense: bank bailouts, tax breaks for billionaires, “pork barrel” government spending, etc.

- What does it have to do with our town/city?

***Try this on for size:*** Every city, town... every American is suffering because big money lobbyists control our government. It is the gateway issue to nearly every issue that affects our own community.

- What will be the effect of the resolution?

***How about this one:*** The resolution will send a loud and clear signal to our federal representatives that our community is fed up, and is demanding real, lasting reform, not just lip service. It shows that the problem has become a crisis that must be addressed.

- Why not aim to pass a law?

***Check this out:*** We are trying to get politicians – in this case foxes – to put a lock on the hen house; to overhaul the very system that they control. They won't do it voluntarily... We have to force them. Local resolutions are an important step towards that goal.

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## STEP 3

### Survey Your City/Town Council

Survey your City Council or town selectmen so you can assess who are your allies, swing members, and those that might oppose the resolution. Call each office and ask the Council Members if they would generally support a

resolution to get money out of politics. This task can be divided amongst different organizations and allies. Make sure there is a point person who is collecting the results of the survey to report back at the next meeting.

*“We must assemble a broad, bipartisan movement to demand responsible stewardship of our public resources through fiscal and campaign finance reform. Our future really does depend on it.”*

Former Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY), 2011



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## STEP 4

### Identify Council Member Allies

**Identify your strongest ally(ies)** on your City Council and set up a meeting with him/her to discuss introducing a resolution. Bring a packet of material to share with them including talking points, copies of City Council resolutions from other communities, newspaper articles, costs to your community and signed petitions. (We will be adding those materials to [unitedrepublic.org](http://unitedrepublic.org) in the coming weeks.)

**Ask the Council Person(s) to take the lead** in garnering the support of other Council Members. Ask the Council Person to approve the language in the draft resolution. This process may take a number of days and a fair amount of negotiating.

**If the Council Person agrees to take the lead,** set a follow-up meeting with the Council Person's aide. To secure the support of other council members and to move the process along swiftly it is often easier to work with aides.

**If the Council Person is not willing to lead** the effort to get a resolution passed, first assess the reasons why. Is it that the resolution you presented would prove impossible to get secure support? Is the Council Person afraid to take the lead on this issue? Depending on the reason you may want to try some of the following paths:

**IF THE COUNCIL PERSON WON'T LEAD**  
**Try a different member of the council.**  
**Plan actions to target the member. (be creative!)**  
**Negotiate on the draft resolution language (see sample resolutions and other City Council Resolutions).**

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## STEP 5

### Gather Public Signatures & Email Addresses

If you have enough volunteers to help, you should take the Get Money Out Resolution on the last page of this guide and gather petition signatures & emails from the Councilpeople's constituents. This will help leverage Council Members' support and helps in getting the Get

Money Out language passed by the Council instead of a watered-down version. Ask the members of your coalition to each collect a stack of signatures. Emails will allow you to communicate with supporters. (don't send them too many emails!)

## STEP 6

### Set Up A Public Education Event or Town Hall Meeting

At any point in this process you may want to consider setting up a public event in your city to garner wider support for your initiative, to bring more citizen power into the effort, and to build the movement in your city. If there are forums already planned you may want to just work with the organizers of those events to get on the speaking docket and

invite the public to your next planning meeting. One way bring City Council Members into this effort early is to set it up as a "town hall meeting" where you have a panel of people presenting the various arguments for (and against) the resolution and a panel of Council Members and citizens listening and asking follow-up questions.







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## WHAT IF?

### What to do when a City Council Resolution will not pass (or even get introduced) in your city

It may prove almost impossible for some cities to pass a resolution on an issue that the council may view as too “non-local” to advance. The following are some alternative options for expressing the support for your position in your city:

If you have any allied Council Members ask them to circulate a general letter in support of your position to other members and other officials in your city government including the board of education, the mayor’s office and other municipal departments. If you live in a rural area, you can do the same thing with county offices. Any formal expressions you can obtain in favor of your campaign will help the national efforts to show the strength of local movements.

You can also try different bodies in your city such as university resolutions, labor union local resolutions, parent and teacher associations, or other civic bodies. If you have a sympathetic mayor in your city, ask him or her to issue a statement.





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## THE RESOLUTION

**RESOLVED**, the People of [City], [State], stand with United Republic and communities across America in protecting our republic from the corrupting effects of well-financed interests, by establishing that:

- 1. Campaign financing and spending should be structured to prevent undue influence by any person or entity over politicians and policymaking;**
- 2. Corporations should not enjoy the Constitutional rights of human beings.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the People of [City], [State], hereby instruct our state and federal representatives to end the auction of American democracy by enacting resolutions, legislation and constitutional amendments to advance these principles.

