



AJR 1 – Petition for Federal Constitutional Convention to Overturn *Citizens United v. FEC (2010)*

SUMMARY

AJR 1 constitutes an application to Congress to call a constitutional convention for the sole purpose of amending the United States Constitution to limit corporate personhood and declare that money does not constitute speech, thereby overturning *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010) 130 S.Ct. 876*.

BACKGROUND

In *Citizens United*, a deeply divided Supreme Court held that corporations are due the same free-speech rights enjoyed by natural persons. The decision spawned “Super PACs,” which have flooded unlimited corporate money into federal elections.

Reports indicate that casino magnate Sheldon Adelson spent close to \$150 million the 2012 election cycle alone, in an effort to defeat President Obama and elect Republicans to Congress. Adelson contributed \$15 million to the Super PAC “Winning Our Future” with the hopes of winning former House Speaker Newt Gingrich the Republican presidential nomination, and after those efforts proved futile, he gave \$20 million to “Restore Our Future,” the primary Super PAC supporting presidential candidate Mitt Romney’s run at the White House.

Similarly, over \$372 million was spent to promote or attack the 11 ballot initiatives on the California’s 2012 General Election ballot, according to MapLight, a nonpartisan organization that crunches numbers from the Secretary of State. The top 20 donors provided 69% of all initiative funding.

At least 13 symbolic state resolutions seeking to overturn *Citizens United* have been introduced to Congress, and during the 2012 General Elections, more than 150 cities voted in favor of measures calling for an end to the policies of corporate personhood and the use money as speech. Voters across the country illustrated their frustration with the concept that money is speech and the nothing that big money can drown out the speech of average citizens.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

AJR 1 starts the process to amend the Constitution. It utilizes the powers relegated to states found in Article V to force Congress to call a constitutional convention for the sole purpose of proposing an amendment to the federal Constitution that would limit corporate personhood for the purposes of campaign finance and political speech. It also declares that money does not constitute speech and may be democratically limited. The measure states that it is a continuing application for a Constitutional Convention until 2/3 of the state legislatures pass similar applications. Finally, AJR 1 sets forth grounds for a limited Constitution, explicitly stating that Congress may not call a convention for any purpose other than limiting corporate personhood.

SPONSOR: Author

SUPPORT: California Clean Money Campaign
California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG)
California State Grange
Consumer Watchdog

OPPOSITION: None on File

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