



ENDING CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

THE PROBLEM:

Corporate money and influence are pouring into our political system, serving special interests at the expense of the public interest.

The 2010 *Citizens United* decision allowed corporations to spend unlimited amounts to influence elections. The 2014 *McCutcheon* decision extended it by abolishing aggregate limits on campaign donations.

Outside spending on the 2012 elections was \$1.04 billion, versus \$338 million in 2008. (In 2014, a midterm election year, it was \$565 million.)

There's usually no "quid pro quo", but this spending has a big effect on how public policy is crafted. Courts have held that corporations, as "artificial persons", enjoy the First Amendment right of free speech.

They have also held that expenditures of money are protected by the First Amendment, giving corporations a Constitutional right to influence our politics through spending. This means Congress cannot regulate corporate spending on campaigns.

Corporate personhood tends to favor big business over small, family-owned companies, allowing those with deep pockets to tilt the playing field in their favor. Everyone should be able to agree this is not in the public interest.

THE SOLUTION:

Our Supreme Court, in a long series of decisions dating from the 1970s, has overreached in allowing corporations to participate in politics. If we want to change the law, we must amend the Constitution.

Policymaking is dominated by the wealthy, as research by Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page has shown conclusively. We think the Supreme Court's bad decisions over the last 40 years have a lot to do with that. By overturning them, we hope to help restore democracy to this country.

Move To Amend has drafted a Constitutional amendment declaring that money is not speech, and corporations are not persons with rights protected by the Constitution.

Over 500 state and local jurisdictions have passed resolutions or initiatives in support of this movement. We need more communities to join that list. This is a true groundswell of ordinary citizens standing up to fix a broken system.

To officially propose an amendment requires either (1) two-thirds of both the House and Senate, or (2) a demand for a convention by two-thirds of the states.

Wolf PAC is a political action committee lobbying the states to call for a constitutional convention. So far, three of the necessary 34 states have signed on: Vermont, California, and Illinois.

"If you're a congressman and I give you a contribution, and I want something from you, that contribution may not be called a bribe, but it is a bribe at the end of the day."

— Jack Abramoff, former lobbyist convicted and sentenced to six years on corruption-related charges

OUR EFFORTS:

Central Texans United To Amend is an Austin-based coalition including Move To Amend, Common Ground for Texans, MoveOn.org, Common Cause, and Occupy Austin's End Corporate Personhood working group. In 2013 we passed a resolution calling for an amendment in Austin, and we've supported other Texas cities who are working toward the same goal.

We've launched an online petition for Texas and lobbied our representatives in person at the state capitol. In 2013 we supported three resolutions in the state legislature, which did not pass. We're trying again in 2015. We also plan to get Travis County to pass a resolution.

We participate in monthly calls with Texans United To Amend, composed of groups from all across Texas.

We are not opposed to corporations per se. In fact, our resolution was endorsed by numerous local businesses. We simply don't think that corporations were meant to be political actors, especially given that their owners and managers already have a say as individual citizens.

RESOURCES:

Move To Amend
www.movetoamend.org

Wolf PAC
www.wolf-pac.com

Common Cause
www.commoncause.org

Rootstrikers
www.rootstrikers.org

Americans for Campaign Reform
www.acrreform.org

Represent Us
represent.us

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Sign our online petition:
petitions.moveon.org/sign/texas-legislators-support

Get involved through Facebook:
www.facebook.com/groups/CenTexUnitedtoAmend
or by email to centex@texansunitedtoamend.org.

Sign up for emails from Move To Amend and other groups working on this issue.

Visit [Texans United to Amend](#) to find a group near you. If there isn't a group in your area, start one.

Spread the word. Educate yourself on the issues and talk with friends, family and neighbors about the need to take our democracy back.

Let your elected officials know this issue matters to you. Write letters to media outlets supporting an amendment.

"We need a level playing field and we need to go back to the realization that Teddy Roosevelt had that we have to have a limit on the flow of money, and that corporations are not people. That's why we have different laws that govern corporations than govern individual citizens."

— Sen. John McCain, R-AZ

