

Local group campaigns for finance reform

By DAYMOND STEER
THE CONWAY DAILY SUN

CONWAY — A local group, seeking national campaign finance reform, is calling on Carroll County towns to each pass a resolution asking for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution designed to mitigate the impact of big money on politics.

“We the People Mount Washington Valley” is proposing the towns pass warrant articles asking their state representatives to call for, and their congressional representative to propose, a constitutional amendment that declares the “rights and protections” given by the constitution only apply to “natural persons” so that federal and state legislatures have the authority to regulate and limit contributions and expenditures from corporations and special interests. A copy of the petitioned warrant article is published in the form of an ad in Saturday’s paper.

“The resolution we’re asking the towns to pass is basically just to express the will of the people,” said Eaton resident Ken McKenzie who is a member of We the People. “Polls have shown a large majority of people feel that money in politics is a problem and that’s from all sides of the political spectrum.”

To be enacted, the resolution would have to pass the U.S. Senate and U.S. House

by a vote of two thirds of both chambers. Then, the amendment would have to be ratified by at least 38 states. Across the nation, hundreds of towns, cities and organizations have already passed similar resolutions. Eleven state legislatures have petitioned the congress to pass similar amendments and that includes Vermont, according to group members.

We the People has an active core of about five members. That includes Joe Bagshaw and Dick Pollock, both of Conway, and McKenzie. The men met with a reporter on Thursday. About 30 other people have attended We the People meetings. The resolution is the result of about a year of work.

“You can just throw up your hands and say, ‘What can I do?’” said Pollock. “And we took the attitude, we needed to find something we could do.”

Bagshaw clarified that We the People is not calling for a constitutional convention. The group decided that the amendment process is more straight forward and will do the job.

Group members hope enough county residents will sign the petitions to get them on their local town warrants. Towns require between 10 and 25 signatures to put a petition on the warrant. The

deadline for submission is Feb. 5. Enough signatures have been gathered in Eaton, said McKenzie. McKenzie stressed the petition will not have any impact on town budgets or taxes.

The group is drawing attention to the petition this weekend because of the confluence of the third anniversary of the Citizen’s United Supreme Court decision, Martin Luther King Day and the presidential inauguration.

“Citizens United, along with several more minor Supreme Court decisions, have opened up the election process to Super PACs and huge amounts of anonymous money pouring into the election process,” said McKenzie. “Because the Supreme Court extends free speech rights to entities other than people, those entities can spend as much money as they want. If you limit free speech rights to people than congress can pass laws that limit the contributions that these other entities can make.”

McKenzie said corporations express the views of their majority share holders or share holder.

“Most corporations are controlled by a small handful of people who have the voting majority,” said McKenzie.

Bagshaw pointed to an NBC News story that reported Citizen’s United

created nearly a billion dollars in new campaign spending during the 2012 election. That represented about a sixth of the total spending during the election.

Pollock added in Citizen’s United, the Supreme Court said corporations are people and money is free speech.

We the People will be posting flyers about their efforts in public places such as post offices, said Bagshaw. According to Bagshaw, the founders, when they wrote the constitution, inadvertently created a loophole that corporations have exploited for over a century.

“They did not specify that the rights and protections of the constitution apply to natural persons only,” said Bagshaw.

Bagshaw added modern corporations, trade unions and professional societies, as we know them today, did not exist when the constitution was written.

The last time an amendment to the constitution was ratified was in 1992. The 27th amendment to the U.S. Constitution says that laws changing the compensation given to U.S. Senators and Representatives shall take effect after the next election. That amendment was proposed in 1789 as part of the Bill of Rights but wasn’t included in the final version.

Moulton free on plea deal

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OSS�PEE -- The Albany landlord who was found not guilty of attempting to kill his tenant in 2011 has pleaded guilty to a couple of relatively minor charges and given credit for time served and a suspended sentence.

Moulton, of 5 Moulton Drive in Albany, was charged with attempted murder and the two counts of assault for allegedly stabbing Ronald Routhier, of 6 Moulton Drive, in the head and the back during the evening of Feb. 7, 2011 at Trailside Drive in Albany.

In August, a Superior Court jury found Moulton not guilty of attempted murder and witness tampering. That jury hung on assault charges. In a prior trial, there was a hung jury on all charges against Moulton.

Just recently, Moulton struck a plea deal with county prosecutors. Moulton entered an Alford plea of guilty to reckless conduct and was sentenced to time served. By submitting an Alford plea, Moulton insists on his innocence but admits the prosecution could convince a jury to find him guilty. Moulton pleaded guilty to felon in possession of a deadly weapon and was given a two- to four-year prison sentence that was suspended for three years.

The assault charges were dropped.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Don't let our voices be drowned out by special interest money. Help us get this resolution on every Town Warrant in Carroll County. Registered voters, enter your Town, sign the petition, and mail it before Jan 28th. Mail to: Joe Bagshaw, 276 Davis Hill Rd., Center Conway, NH 03813 We will file it, then you can support passage at your Town meeting. For additional information: www.WeThePeople-MWV.org

WARRANT ARTICLE

On petition of the registered voters in the Town of _____: To see if the Town will vote to pass the following RESOLUTION;

WHEREAS, the founders intended that government should be answerable to, controlled by, and dependent upon “the people alone” (James Madison, *Federalist No. 52*, 1788); and

WHEREAS, the influence of corporate and other moneyed interests on the political process has diminished the dependency on the people alone;

BE IT RESOLVED that the voters of _____, New Hampshire instruct _____’s state representatives to call for, and _____’s congressional representatives to propose, an amendment to the United States Constitution declaring that; the rights and protections afforded to citizens by the Constitution of the United States apply only to natural persons, and; the federal and state legislatures shall have the authority to regulate and limit, but not ban, all expenditures from any source supporting or opposing the election of any candidate for federal or state office, or for any initiative or referendum. _____’s state legislators are instructed to ratify such a constitutional amendment.

IF A MAJORITY of voters support the question, the Selectmen shall immediately, and on the twenty-first of January of each year, until Congress has proposed an amendment and such amendment is ratified by the state, send a written notice to _____’s congressional delegation, and to _____’s state legislators, informing them of the instructions from their constituents.

#	Name (Printed)	Signature	Street Address

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