

REASONING BEHIND THE NEED FOR A LOCAL RESOLUTION

THE PROBLEM

- We have just experienced the most expensive election in history. (Over 6 billion spent) That's more than \$700 million over the previous "most expensive election in history (2008)".¹
- \$970 million came from Super PACs, and other "independent" special interest groups.²
- \$213 million was "dark money", or anonymous cash spent to influence the election.³
- The massive amounts of money required to campaign for public office cause elected officials to spend up to 70% of their time raising money, instead of attending to the people's business. This "dependence corruption" influences the legislators' views to be closer to the moneyed contributors' interests, rather than the will of the people.

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

- In 1787, the Founders believed they had created in the Constitution, a government "dependent upon the People alone".⁴
- Corporations, trade unions, political organizations as we know them today did not exist in 1787.
- The Founders could not have anticipated the cost of campaigning today, the large sums candidates must raise, or the influence of special-interest contributors.
- Because the Constitution does not specifically say that the rights granted under the Constitution are for natural persons only, the U.S. Supreme Court, in decisions going back to 1886, have interpreted the U.S. Constitution to also grant those rights to artificial entities.
- In the Supreme Court's 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*, the court pronounced that unlimited "independent" campaign expenditures, including those made by corporations, "do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption" and "will not cause the electorate to lose faith in this democracy." This was the beginning of Super PACs.

THE REALITY

- A PEW Research Center poll found that 65% of all Americans (60% of Republicans and 63% of Democrats, 67% of Independents) agree that "unlimited money to Super PACs will lead to corruption."⁵
- People have a historically low opinion of the federal government, with 62% rating it as "unfavorable", 81% of the people agreeing that elected officials quickly lose touch with the public, and only 41% of the people agree that the government is run for the benefit of all the people.⁶
- Campaign finance reform is virtually impossible under the current interpretation of the U.S. Constitution.

OUR GOAL

- The passage of local grassroots resolutions in each community, calling for;
 - An amendment to the U.S. Constitution specifying that the rights granted by the Constitution are for natural persons only. This will allow the Congress to pass REAL campaign finance reform limiting contributions and expenditures from corporations and other special-interests.
 - Campaign finance reform that eliminates the "dependence corruption" caused by candidates and elected officials constantly looking for their next contributor. Public financing of elections is one method that may contribute to this solution.

¹ [Center for Responsive Politics](#)

² [The New York Times' Nicholas Confessore](#)

³ [Sunlight Foundation](#)

⁴ [James Madison, Federalist No. 52, 1788](#)

⁵ [PEW Research Center, 17 Jan 2012](#)

⁶ [PEW Research Center, 6-4-12-V #56, 4 June 2012](#)