

## **Resolution: Regarding Constitutional Rights for People, not Corporations**

**Whereas:** the U.S. Constitution, as amended, describes the rights and freedoms granted to people and to enshrine democratic self-government, and makes no mention of corporations; and

**Whereas:** the First Amendment is intended to protect free speech rights of human beings, not corporations; and

**Whereas:** corporations are legal creations only, chartered by law and given "privileges" to engage in commerce and civic affairs deemed necessary for the public good; corporations are not natural persons and should not have automatic or inalienable rights as natural persons; and

**Whereas:** corporations may be owned, in whole or in part, by foreign interests that should have no influence over elections, lawmaking or public policy in the US; and

**Whereas:** in recent years a divided United States Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that spending money is equivalent to speech, transforming the First Amendment into a powerful tool for corporations and great wealth to evade and invalidate democratically enacted reforms; and

**Whereas:** the corporate claim of the right to free speech reached an extreme conclusion in the Supreme Court ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*; and

**Whereas:** the Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. F.E.C.* overturned longstanding precedents prohibiting corporations from spending general treasury funds for electioneering to influence campaigns and election results; and

**Whereas:** recent Supreme Court rulings, based in part on Constitutional interpretations, have allowed alarming levels of wealth and corporate spending to influence campaigns and election results, unmatched by any campaign spending in U.S. history; and

**Whereas:** these recent rulings by the Supreme Court present a serious threat to democratic self-government by people, by empowering money and wealth to shout louder than the people's voice; and

**Whereas:** the people of the United States have previously used the constitutional amendment process to correct decisions of the Supreme Court that are deemed egregiously wrong and that go to the heart of our democracy and self-government;

### **Now, therefore, be it resolved:**

\_\_\_\_\_ *[name of organization or jurisdiction]*

hereby calls upon the Washington State Legislature to enact a joint resolution to the U.S. Congress in support of a Constitutional amendment as outlined below; and

hereby calls upon the Congress to enact a Constitutional amendment to establish that:

- (1) corporate entities shall not be considered as "persons" eligible for rights accorded to human beings under the U.S. Constitution, and
- (2) the use of money to influence elections or the acts of public officials shall not be considered a protected form of speech, and
- (3) to protect the inalienable right of self-governance by the people, Congress and the states shall be permitted to appropriately regulate contributions and expenditures for campaigns, elections, ballot measures and electioneering.