OMNI NEWSLETTER

ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE, CITIZENS UNITED & CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

Number 6


Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.

(Previous Newsletters on this subject: #1 11-2-11; #2 12-9-11; #3 1-2-12; #4 8-4-12; #5 9-23-12).

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:
such as Campaign Finance, Capitalism, Corporations, Democracy, Occupy.

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Here is the link to the Index:

http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

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From Ark Times/blog:  January 2013

Conway stands up for people against corporations

Jennifer Pierce reports that the Conway City Council voted 7-0 tonight in favor of a resolution that says corporations are not people. This is part of a national movement to amend the Constitution if necessary to overturn the Citizens United ruling in favor of corporate personhood.

Conway joins Eureka Springs, Fayetteville, North Little Rock and Pine Bluff in adopting this resolution.

Little Rock?

Little Rock loves corporations, particularly the corporate personage of the Little Rock
Regional Chamber of Commerce which gets direct financial subsidies from the city and holds critical power in shaping city decisions that grimy little citizen people can only dream of. Oppose corporate personhood? Not this bunch. Check the campaign contributions of the at-large directors who cast the swing votes on major issues. Corporate Arkansas is their middle name.


Renowned economist Jeff Faux explains why neither party's leaders have a plan to remedy America's unemployment, inequality, or long economic slide.

America's political and economic elite spent so long making such terrible decisions that they caused the collapse of 2008. So how can they continue down the same road? The simple answer, that no one in charge wants to publicly acknowledge: because things are still pretty great for the people who run America. It was an accident of history, Jeff Faux explains, that after World War II the U.S. could afford a prosperous middle class, a dominant military, and a booming economic elite at the same time. For the past three decades, all three have been competing, with the middle class always losing. Soon the military will decline as well.

- The most plausible projections Faux explores foresee a future economy nearly devoid of production and exports, with the most profitable industries existing solely to serve the wealthiest 1%
- **The author's last book, The Global Class War,** sold over 20,000 copies by correctly predicting the permanent decline of our debt-burdened middle class at the hands of our off-shoring executives, out of control financiers, and their friends in Washington
- Since his last book, Faux is repeatedly asked what either party will do to face these mounting crises. After looking over actual policies, proposed plans, non-partisan
reports, and think tank papers, his astonishing conclusion: more of the same.

NOAM CHOMSKY, POWER SYSTEMS

“Citizens United opens the way for massive contributionns that distort the political system. But this is something that’s been going on for a long time. So we’re talking about an expansionn of something that shouldn’t have happened in the first place.” P.175 of Power Systems. See pp. 174-5 for his fuller statement.

Kucinich’s Praise

Dick,

If it weren’t for everything Public Citizen has done for the past 42 years and counting, the cloud of corporate greed looming over so much of our lives may by now have cast all of America under a permanent shadow.

During my 16 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives, I saw over and over again just how vital Public Citizen is to defending health and safety, consumer rights, and our very democracy from Big Business and its many puppets in politics.

Public Citizen does the hard work behind the scenes that helps get good laws passed and bad bills stopped.

I really don’t know another organization that more skillfully and effectively counteracts the vastly better funded legions of corporate lobbyists that infest the halls of Congress day in and day out.

And — most significantly at this moment — nobody is doing more than Public Citizen to fight the U.S. Supreme Court’s stupid and stupefying decision in the Citizens United case.

It’s largely owing to Public Citizen that the movement to overturn Citizens United — and its evil twin McCutcheon v. FEC if it goes badly too — with a constitutional amendment has taken root so deeply and so quickly.

In this season of giving, I hope you will join me in making as generous a contribution to Public Citizen as you can.

Public Citizen can’t win without help from engaged Americans like you.

Please donate to Public Citizen today.
Citizens United's propaganda unleashed

Overturning Citizens United [alerts@pfaw.org]

To: James R. Bennett

Wednesday, August 14, 2013 1:48 PM

The Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in Citizens United v. FEC overturned a century of established law by declaring limits on corporate election spending unconstitutional. Help us restore Government By the People, NOT the corporations.

Dick, How's this for a sneaky way for a big money special interest group to influence an election?

Citizens United, the organization at the center of the infamous 2010 Supreme Court decision, has produced a 30-minute “documentary” on Virginia Democratic gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe which it's licensed to air on three broadcast stations in Virginia starting this month.

The film is nothing more than smear propaganda, tantamount to a half-hour campaign ad for the Republican in the race, ultra-right-wing Ken Cuccinelli … and one more example of the dangerous proliferation of unlimited outside spending to influence elections.

Worst of all, even if they wanted to, Virginia lawmakers are powerless to restrict this kind of disguised, sneaky political ad campaign because of the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. FEC -- a decision that bears the very name of the right-wing front group in question here.
For this reason and many more, we MUST amend the Constitution to overturn *Citizens United* and the other court decisions that have removed all restraints from special interest spending to influence elections.

*us get the money out and restore government by the People.*

**Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to save our democracy now.**

Thank you for everything you do to help put the power in our democracy back where it belongs with the voters.

Ben Betz, Online Strategy Manager

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**info@sherrodbrown.com via uark.edu**

8:47 AM (50 minutes ago)

to James

**Dick,**

Today is the 21st, *Citizens United* has reached it’s “fruit & flowers” anniversary -- four years of degrading our electoral process, one attack ad at a time.

Other PACs and special interest groups spend millions of dollars to influence elections. We often don’t know where they get the money. We don’t know what their true motivation is. Yet they spend enough cash to put their agenda front and center, while middle class families in Ohio -- the ones that don’t have a million dollars to spend on campaigns -- get drowned out.

Karl Rove and the Koch brothers are celebrating today. You could have bought a sports team -- or maybe a small tropical island -- with the amount of money their affiliated groups spent on the last election. **But we’re going to use today to reaffirm our commitment to stand against *Citizens United***.

On this anniversary, I’m teaming up with some of my colleagues to gather 400,000 signatures on our petition to end the effects of *Citizens United*. **Join us -- sign the petition right now.**
In America, elections are determined by the people. Corporations and special interest groups don’t vote. And they shouldn’t get to collect cash from undisclosed donors, and spend it virtually without limit or oversight, to influence those who do.

Every year Citizens United is in effect, our democracy suffers just a little more. The spending will get worse. And if we are ever going to bring back some transparency and accountability to our electoral process, we need to make sure our opposition to Citizens United continues to grow.

And my colleagues reach 400,000 strong standing against Citizens United. Sign our petition today.

Thank you for all of your support.

for by Friends of Sherrod Brown

Contributions or gifts to Friends of Sherrod Brown are not tax deductible.

This email was sent to jbennet@uark.edu
http://www.sherrodbrown.com

Citizens United: Four years ago today

Robert Weissman, Public 1-21-14
robert@citizen.org via uark.edu
to James

Four years ago today, my staff and I were glued to our computers, awaiting the Supreme Court’s ruling in Citizens United. I’m sure you were too.
It’s happened since — see my earlier note below — really is amazing.

We can be proud that Public Citizen recognized the potential impact of *Citizens United* so early and that we were part of the team that worked on the case.

We can be proud that we spearheaded the movement for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*, which we launched with our allies within moments of the court issuing that fateful ruling.

We can be proud of all the work — signing petitions, emailing members of Congress, hosting organizing parties and events, passing state and local resolutions, and so much more — that Public Citizen supporters like you have done.

In just four years, you and Public Citizen have helped make a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United* a real possibility.

Of course, as the saying goes, we’ve only just begun.

I count on you to chip in $5 or more right now so that we don’t lose any of the momentum we’ve generated in our fight against *Citizens United*?

Thank you!

Robert

Dick,

I’ve been thinking about what to get you for our anniversary.

The fourth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s abysmal *Citizens United* ruling, that is — which is this Tuesday, January 21 — and the beginning of our work to overturn it.

Traditionally, fourth anniversaries are commemorated with gifts of flowers/fruit or linen/silk.

Modern advisors about such things also suggest appliances.

So I considered sending you a pineapple with a bow on it stuffed inside a toaster oven.

But that just didn’t seem practical.
Instead, I’m giving you an update on our nationwide campaign to mitigate the anti-democratic and pro-plutocracy effects of *Citizens United* and to ultimately pass a constitutional amendment overturning it.

Some impressive data to start with:

- This time last year — as a result of grassroots organizing driven by Public Citizen and our allies — 11 states had formally called for an amendment.

- We’ve added five more states in the past year, for a total of 16.

- We are mobilizing in 13 more: Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington.

- We’ll soon have fully half the number of states needed to eventually ratify an amendment.

- A year ago, some 350 cities, towns and communities throughout the nation had passed amendment resolutions.

- Now that number is more than 500.

- As of the third anniversary of *Citizens United*, just over 100 members of Congress were on record supporting an amendment.

- That count is approaching 150 today.

- The popular amendment introduced in Congress by Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Ted Deutch is named after our Democracy Is For People campaign.

That’s a sampling of the good news.

**But of course the fight is far from over.**

The *Citizens United* ruling is one of the worst Supreme Court decisions of our time and one of the gravest threats our democracy has ever faced.

The midterm elections later this year will see record-setting spending by billionaires like Sheldon Adelson and the Koch Brothers, corporate giants like Exxon Mobil and Bank of America, and dark money conduits like Karl Rove’s Crossroads GPS and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Let me remind you what that means in practical terms with a few examples:
• The Koch Brothers are the sixth and seventh richest people on the planet, with a combined net worth of $72 billion. They are spending hundreds of millions — amazingly, a mere pittance to them — backing Tea Party, climate-science denying, “free market” candidates for office around the country. By the way, they were collectively worth $35 billion four years ago. In other words, they’ve more than doubled their wealth since

• Meanwhile, casino magnate Sheldon Adelson (“only” the 15th wealthiest person on earth) spent more than $100 million on elections in 2012, and he’s bragged that he’ll double that in 2016. If you think he’s bluffing, consider that he made $41 million A DAY last year.

• Then there’s Karl Rove, the Typhoid Mary behind the plague of dark money infecting our elections. Rove’s Crossroads GPS is the top “social welfare” organization exploiting the along with lax FEC and IRS enforcement, to radically distort elections for the benefit of the far right corporate elite.

• And as for Exxon Mobil, the world’s most profitable corporation raked in profits every 3 hours in 2012 equal to what it cost to run Public Citizen for that entire year.

Citizens United enables billionaires and Big Business to make a mockery of the principle of “one person, one vote” that is at the core of our democracy and our national identity.

Their dark money will dominate the airwaves with an unprecedented barrage of negative ads. And right around the corner — the Supreme Court could announce a decision any day — is a ruling in a case that could amount to a sequel to Citizens United.


If it rules badly in McCutcheon, as it did in Court could essentially eliminate meaningful limits on election spending by individuals, allowing someone to directly ante up as much as $5.9 million per election cycle to a single party and its candidates.

Public Citizen submitted an amicus brief in the case, and we will elevate our constitutional amendment push to another level if the Supreme Court uses McCutcheon to double down on its We’re fighting Citizens United.
Public Citizen has led a two-year, multi-organizational effort urging the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to require publicly held corporations to disclose their political spending.

The current lack of disclosure means that the public — and even a corporation’s own shareholders — are kept in the dark when executives funnel corporate money into partisan political attack machines operated by the likes of Karl Rove and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

That we’re doing the right thing on this issue was confirmed last year when Representative Darrell Issa — the richest person in Congress, with an estimated net worth of up to $451 million — commissioned a special report that singles us out for our work on it.

Winning this commonsense and popular rule at the SEC is the most important step we can take in the short term — while we keep making progress toward a constitutional amendment — to counteract United States v. Citizens United.

As former Congressman Dennis Kucinich wrote a few weeks ago:

Nobody is doing more than Public Citizen to fight the U.S. Supreme Court’s stupid and stupefying decision in United States v. Citizens United and the evil twin McCutcheon v. FEC if it goes badly too — with a constitutional amendment has taken root so deeply and so quickly.

Four years ago, a lot of people thought a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United was impossible, even the idea that Citizens United might be overturned.

It's impossible, they thought.

Well, as you know, Public Citizen is not dissuaded by “impossible.” Time and again throughout our 43 years, we have accomplished what others — even other progressive organizations — considered impossible.

I’ll grant that it’s not easy. Amending the Constitution should not be easy. But in just four years, we’ve brought what many deemed a pipe dream into the mainstream.

People know what Citizens United did to our democracy from the inside out. From every corner of America, from every walk of life, they are joining this historic campaign.

As the inauspicious anniversary...
This once-in-a-generation movement strong by donating to Public Citizen right now.

It is an honor for me to work with committed Public Citizen supporters like you as we stand united against the corporate and plutocratic powers that seek to dismantle the progress that is the hallmark of the society we’ve made together.

Thank you for your support.

Onward,

Robert Weissman
President, Public Citizen

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GOOGLE SEARCH, OPPOSITION TO CITIZENS UNITED, CORPORATE PERSONHOOD, January 21, 2014, first page

1. **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission** - Wikipedia, the free ...
   
   
   The *Citizens United* decision did not disturb prohibitions on corporate ... state law that prohibited corporations from using treasury money to support or oppose ...... the Constitution to abolish corporate personhood, thus stripping corporations of ...

2. **Corporate Personhood** | An Introduction - Reclaim Democracy!
   
   [reclaimdemocracy.org/corporate-personhood/](reclaimdemocracy.org/corporate-personhood/)
   
   A clear introduction to Corporate Personhood, the legal doctrine which gives ... “rights,” (published nearly a decade before the *Citizens United* v FEC ruling). .... we're aware of to officially oppose corporate personhood — a tactic that lends itself ...

   Introduction to Corporate ... - Controversies Relating to ...

3. **What is Citizens United?** | An Introduction - Reclaim Democracy!
   
   [reclaimdemocracy.org/who-are-citizens-united/](reclaimdemocracy.org/who-are-citizens-united/)
As a result, **Citizens United** has greatly affected the way corporations and unions ... We **oppose** the **Citizens United** decision, for the following reasons: ... influence is the legal concept of "corporate personhood," wherein corporations receive ...

4. **The Problem With Citizens United Is Not Corporate Personhood**

Jan 17, 2012 - Fast Track **Opponents** Predict More Lost Jobs, Higher Trade Deficit; ... The Problem With **Citizens United** Is Not **Corporate Personhood** ... In an opinion piece critical of the decision in **Citizens United**, Senator Sanders wrote:..

5. **Corporate Personhood** News, Photos and Videos - ABC News

Browse **Corporate Personhood** latest news and updates, watch videos and view all ... In **Citizens United**, the court struck ..... spending limits for corporations and ... **opposed to Citizens United**, which involved ..... expenditures by corporations.

6. **List of Amendment Resolutions To Overturn Citizens United** and ...

034-51, the **Corporate Personhood** Resolution, declaring corporate ..... 2012 by State Representative Stephanie Benfield, **opposed Citizens United** and ...

7. **Citizens United** Constitutional Amendments Introduced In The Senate

Jun 19, 2013 - But the concept of **corporate personhood** -- which Tester's ... 62 percent of Americans said they **opposed** the **Citizens United** ruling, and eight in ...

8. **Citizens United**: Chicago Alderman Joe Moore Introducing ...

Jul 23, 2012 - ... Joe Moore Introducing Resolution Targeting **Corporate Personhood** ... The resolution [PDF] states that the **Citizens United** ruling -- as well as its ... Paul Stevens' dissenting **Citizens United** opinion -- that corporations ... non-binding proposal that would make **opposition** to the ruling an official city policy.

9. **Citizens United**? Polls Show Bipartisan Agreement on **Constitutional ...**

by Brooke Jarvis - in 849 Google+ circles

Jan 21, 2011 - Poll after poll has shown that Americans **oppose Citizens United** by about 4 ... Widespread belief in the need to keep **corporations** out of politics ...

10. **End Corporate Personhood** | Peace & Justice Center

**Citizens United** is an organization that accepted corporate funding to produce ... either
reverse *Citizens United* or oppose the concept of *corporate personhood*.