

By: Mr. Golombek

SUBJECT: The Influence of Unlimited Corporate Money On Elections

WHEREAS: The U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling in Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission rolled back legal restrictions on corporate spending in the electoral process, allowing unlimited corporate spending to influence elections, candidate selection, and policy decisions, thereby threatening the voices of "We the People" and the very foundation of our democracy; and

WHEREAS: Corporations are not mentioned in the United States Constitution and the First Amendment was never intended to let nonhuman business corporations spend unlimited corporate cash to influence our elections; and

WHEREAS: U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black in a 1938 opinion stated, "I do not believe the word 'person' in the Fourteenth Amendment includes corporations"; and

WHEREAS: Money affects the quality and quantity of speech and is NOT, in itself, speech; and allowing corporations with great wealth to use it as speech effectively drowns out the protected free speech of the People in our diverse society; and

WHEREAS: Corporations were already spending considerable amounts of money to influence elections, but Citizens United v. FEC allows CEOs to dip into corporate treasuries and spend as much as they want to buy pro-corporate lawmakers and punish those who stand up for the public interest; and

WHEREAS: Most of this new spending will be hidden from the public. Corporate front groups will sponsor cynical advertisements supporting industry-friendly candidates and attacking public servants who stand up to corporations; the public will not know who is funding the ads; and

WHEREAS: Corporations are not people. They do not vote, and they should not be allowed to have such an overwhelming influence on elections; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Buffalo Common Council supports the adoption of a Constitutional Amendment and other legislative actions ensuring that only human beings, not corporations, are endowed with constitutional rights and that money is not speech, and therefore the expenditure of corporate money to influence the electoral process is no longer a form of constitutionally protected speech.

ADOPTED



 Joseph Golombek Jr.

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