



RESOLUTION NO. 12-013

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES
CONSTITUTION TO REGULATE CORPORATE POLITICAL SPENDING AND
CAMPAIGN FINANCING

WHEREAS, in a 2010 decision by the United States Supreme Court, Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission, the Supreme Court overturned some provisions of the federal Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, and ruled that corporate entities have the same rights as persons to unrestricted spending on political speech; and

WHEREAS, in reaching its decision, a majority of the Supreme Court rejected decades of legal precedent, going back to 1934 and Burroughs v. United States in which the Court found that denying Congress the power to safeguard against "the improper use of money to influence the result (of an election) is to deny to the nation in a vital particular the power of self protection"; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court's decision in effect allows unlimited corporate spending to influence campaigns, elections, lawmaking and public policy decisions. In the two years since the ruling, there has been tremendous growth in contributions and spending by super political action committees for media ads and related independent electioneering activities; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. F.E.C. severely restricts the ability of federal, state and local governments to enact reasonable campaign finance reforms and regulation regarding corporate political activity; and

WHEREAS, the decision indirectly subjects lawmaking by state and local governments to the undue influence of excessive spending on lobbying to influence election results, which has a detrimental effect on state and local governance and trust by voters in the democratic process; and

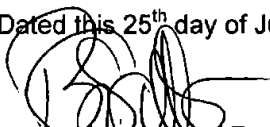
WHEREAS, several proposed amendments to the Constitution have recently been introduced in Congress that would allow governments to regulate the raising and spending of money by corporations to influence elections; and

WHEREAS, the people of the United States have previously used the constitutional amendment process to correct decisions of the Supreme Court that are deemed to be egregious or wrongly decided, or significantly out-of-step with the prevailing values of the populace;


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Snohomish County Council calls upon the Washington State Legislature and the United States Congress to initiate steps to amend the United States Constitution with provisions that clearly state the following:

1. Contributions and expenditures for political purposes are not constitutionally protected speech. Therefore, regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting political speech.
2. Congress and the States shall have the power to regulate contributions and expenditures for campaigns and ballot measures, and to require public disclosure of the sources of such contributions and expenditures.


Dated this 25th day of July, 2012.




Brian Sullivan
Council Chair



Stephanie Wright
Council Vice-Chair

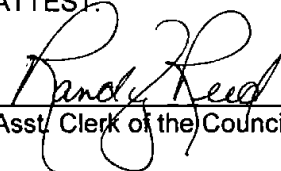


Dave Gossett
Councilmember



Dave Somers
Councilmember

ATTEST:



Randy Reed
Asst. Clerk of the Council