

RESOLUTION #2016-27
Opposing The Citizens United U.S. Supreme Court Ruling

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has a tradition of open government and non-partisan local elections, as well as campaign finance rules that have managed and mitigated the influence of money on those elections; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Milton has an interest in maintaining that tradition and the resident driven elections it allows; and,

WHEREAS, on January 10, 2010, in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, the Supreme Court overturned a century of precedent by ruling that corporate spending on elections cannot be limited under the First Amendment; and,

WHEREAS, granting constitutional rights to corporations and unions is counter to the purpose of our democracy and has wide-ranging impacts upon our economy and society; and,

WHEREAS, granting constitutional rights to corporations favors large corporations over small ones, and favors all corporations and all wealthy interests over citizens who cannot afford the corporate rights of limited liability, legal protections, and tax deductions; and,

WHEREAS, the constitutional right to speak freely should not be determined by the available finances of the speaker or their power and status in society; and,

WHEREAS, corporate money is property, not speech. A house or a car does not have constitutionally protected speech. Money is just another form of property. Property is constitutionally protected. Property's right to free speech is not; and,

WHEREAS, such ruling gives corporations and the wealthy undue political influence; and,

WHEREAS, democracy can only properly function when human beings have equal representation and access to their elected officials; and,

WHEREAS, countless municipalities nationwide and 75 Wisconsin communities including the Cities of Beloit and Janesville have overwhelmingly passed referenda signaling broad support for reversing the Citizens United court ruling.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Milton Common Council resolves the following:

1. Only human beings are endowed with first amendment constitutional rights — not corporations, unions, nonprofits or other artificial entities, and
2. Money is not speech, and therefore regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting speech.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Milton Common Council authorizes the City Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to our state and federal representatives instructing them to enact resolutions and legislation to advance this effort.

By:

Anissa Welch, Mayor

Attest:

Elena Hilby, City Clerk