

DEL MAR

# Del Mar formally opposes Citizens United ruling

BY KRISTINA HOUCK

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Del Mar recently joined a growing national movement to cut campaign spending.

In a 3-2 vote, council members on Jan. 20 passed a resolution to support overturning the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling.

By adopting the resolution, Del Mar joins 700 cities across the country in formally opposing the 2010 ruling, which found the First Amendment prevents the government from limiting corporations, associations and labor unions from spending money on elections. Seventy other cities in California have adopted similar resolutions, including Solana Beach, Encinitas and San Diego, according to the staff report.

"At the Del Mar level, we had experience with that kind of an episode a few years back when we had a measure on our ballot for a transfer tax on real estate and some outside interest put in a lot of money," said Dwight Worden, who brought the resolution before the council, along with Councilman Don Mosier.

"There's a movement nationally to try to rectify this by doing a constitutional amendment at the federal level. ... Whether that has a chance of making it is anybody's guess. It has a steep hill to climb."

Echoing Worden's comments, Mosier agreed the ruling has had an impact on the local level.

"This is a Del Mar issue, even though it's a Supreme Court decision," Mosier said. "Other cities in our location have been impacted by outside spending groups. In particular, there

have been a number of school board elections where outside spending groups have really changed the election.

“So even though this is a federal statute we’re protesting, this is a local issue for cities. With this law in the books, it’s very hard for us to change our contribution limits that would prevent impact from outside spending groups.”

Al Corti and Terry Sinnott, however, voted against the resolution, questioning whether it truly reflected the thoughts of residents.

“From my standpoint, it is not the opposition to what the resolution is trying to achieve. It’s not about the lack of seriousness — I think the issue is very serious and should be addressed,” Sinnott said. “I just think that it’s beyond the scope of the City Council to be voicing the community’s concern without actually having that dialogue.”

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