

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

Resolution Relating to Limiting Campaign Expenditures SPONSOR STATEMENT

"A democracy cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold."
– US Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens

Many Americans recognize that the ability of large contributions from corporations, wealthy individuals and organizations to political candidates harms the ability of citizens to have a voice in their own government. Prior to the landmark United States Supreme Court ruling of *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 130 S. Ct. 876 (2010), unlimited independent expenditures from corporations and unions was prohibited. Now, corporations and unions can make unlimited independent expenditures supporting or opposing a candidate for public office. This directly goes against the American idea of one person one vote, when one corporation can spend more than thousands.

This decision only made the cynicism most Americans feel about politics stronger. If people feel as if their vote does not matter, then voter participation will continue to decline.

The massive amount of money in politics following this decision is exploding the expense of campaigns, making it difficult for new or unknown candidates to enter a race. More and more, the money spent by corporations and unions is going to negative attacks ads that often misinform voters rather than promote productive discussion. Allowing unlimited campaign donations by corporations and unions takes the focus for candidates away from individual voters to those whose money can afford to sway hundreds of votes.

Unless the United States Supreme Court reverses these rulings, the only way to reverse the harmful effects of these decisions is to amend the Constitution of the United States. This resolution calls upon the Alaska State Legislature to urge the United States Congress and the President of the United States to work across party lines and propose a constitutional amendment to prohibit corporations, wealthy individuals and unions from making unlimited independent expenditure.

I ask that you support this resolution to support the democratic process and ensure that everyone has an equal voice in government.