

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 2, 2014

Hon. Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Chairman Leahy:

As members of the U.S. House of Representatives who have called for a constitutional amendment to limit the corrosive influence of money in our elections, we write to thank you for initiating Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on the recent Supreme Court decisions that have fundamentally undermined American democracy.

Since 2010 when the Supreme Court issued its 5-4 decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, our elections have been exploited by wealthy individuals, corporations, and other special interests through Super PACs and 501(c)4 groups that may spend limitless sums of money influencing voters. As a result of *Citizens United* and related court decisions, \$7 billion was spent in the 2012 election cycle—the most expensive election cycle in our nation’s history. This unlimited spending has given deep-pocketed special interests the ability to drown out the voices of ordinary Americans in our elections and national discourse.

These rulings have declared spending money in elections to be a form of protected speech and embraced the court’s misguided holding in *Buckley v. Valeo*; that expenditures made independently of any candidate’s campaign do not cause government corruption. The Supreme Court went even further this year in *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission* when it struck down federal aggregate donation limits and held that the First Amendment gives campaign donors just as much of a right to influence public officials as the voters who elected them. Absent aggregate limits, wealthy individuals are now able to donate up to \$6 million to federal candidates, political parties, and joint election funds during a single election cycle. Allowing the wealthiest individuals to spend nearly 120 times the median household income to influence our elections has generated fear among Americans across the country who feel that these rulings will make it impossible for their elected representatives to hear their voices. As Justice Breyer warned in his dissent in *McCutcheon*, “Where enough money calls the tune, the general public will not be heard.”

Only a constitutional amendment that overturns these deeply flawed decisions will return constitutional legitimacy to campaign finance laws. Such an amendment must make clear that limits on contributions and expenditures, systems of public financing for elections, and the promotion of transparency does not disenfranchise the wealthy few but promotes the political equality of all Americans in our democracy.

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Chairman Leahy, we commend you for putting a constitutional amendment on the Senate Judiciary Committee's agenda. We share the view that amending the Constitution should only be reserved for times when no other recourse will do. However, now that we have seen the impact of the Supreme Court's decisions—allowing wealthy individuals and corporations to exert more influence over our elections than ordinary citizens—we are convinced that an amendment is ripe for consideration.

Your decision to hold hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee represents an important step forward for a nationwide movement to restore the balance of power to the people for whom this democracy was founded.

Sincerely,



Ted Deutch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



James P. McGovern
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



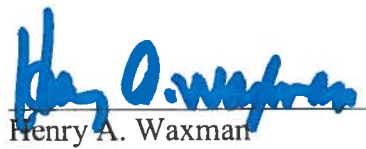
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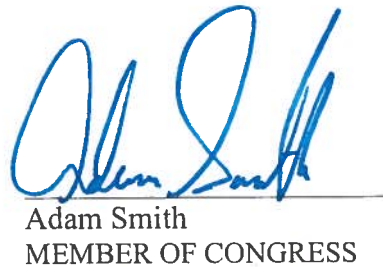
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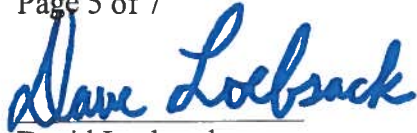


Steve Cohen
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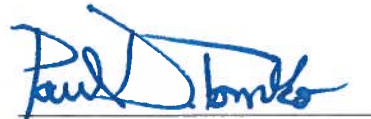
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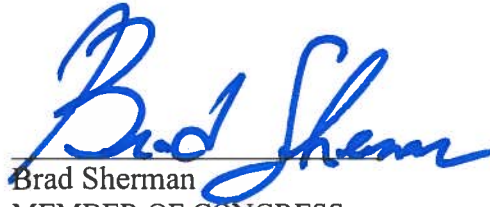

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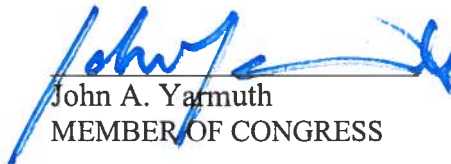
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