



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

JOSEPH J. CZARNEZKI • COUNTY CLERK

MEMO

DATE: August 29, 2012
TO: The Honorable County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Joseph J. Czarnezki, County Clerk
SUBJECT: Vetoed File Returned

The County Executive has returned to my office the following file:

File No. 12-544 – A resolution providing for an advisory referendum on whether the U.S. Constitution should be amended to establish that only human beings, not corporations, are entitled to Constitutional rights, and money is not speech, and therefore regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting political speech.

This resolution was adopted by a vote of 14 ayes – 4 noes at your meeting of July 26, 2012.

The County Executive has vetoed this resolution and attached is a copy of his veto message wherein he states his objection.

This matter is now before your honorable body.

Joseph J. Czarnezki, County Clerk



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Milwaukee County

CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DATE: August 28, 2012

TO: The Honorable Milwaukee Board of Supervisors

FROM: Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive

RE: Veto of County Board File No. 12-544 on an advisory referendum relating to the Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling.

I am vetoing County Board File No.12-544 pursuant to the authority granted to me by Article IV, Section 23(a) of the Wisconsin Constitution and Section 59.17(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

The County Board adopted a resolution on July 26, 2012 providing for an advisory referendum on whether the U.S. Constitution should be amended to establish that only human beings, not corporations, are entitled to Constitutional rights, and money is not speech, and therefore regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting political speech.

Like most of you and many people across the country, I am against the Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling that states that corporations and unions have the same first amendment rights as people. I believe the high court's decision corrupts the political process. Justice John Stevens may have put it best when he wrote in his dissenting opinion, "A democracy cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold."

With all of that said, I cannot support the Board's resolution. My concerns with the resolution are the cost to taxpayers and the appropriate use of our time as elected officials in Milwaukee County.

Putting this advisory referendum on the ballot is expected to cost \$37,000. I don't believe the taxpayers of Milwaukee County are interested in spending their hard earned money on a referendum that does not bind decision-makers. Numerous polls tell us the majority of Americans are against the Citizen United ruling, and I would expect an advisory referendum would give us the same input. Spending even \$1 of taxpayer money without binding decision makers is both wasteful and gets us no closer to overturning Citizens United.

I also don't believe this is the best use of our time as elected officials in Milwaukee County. As Supervisor Theo Lipscomb said on the Board floor before voting against this resolution, this is not what the voters of Milwaukee County sent us here to do. We have enough issues and problems that we need to tackle in Milwaukee County, that's where our focus should be.

The County Board has two lobbyists and pays for a lobbyist in Washington D.C.; if the County Board feels strongly this law should be overturned, they should consider dedicating these existing resources to do so.

I ask the Board to uphold this veto and we can work together to lobby the appropriate decision makers to overturn Citizens United.