

## Move To Amend Comments

### Milwaukee County Judiciary, Safety and General Services Committee Hearing 4.10.2014

Good Morning, Chairman Lipscomb and Committee members. My name is James Ito and I am the current Secretary of the Milwaukee Move To Amend grassroots organization. Mary Laan, our Chair, is not able to be here this morning because of a work schedule priority.

The Milwaukee County representative system of government has been destroyed by Act 14. We believe that it was a Big Government style mandate supported by moneyed special interests. Power has been transferred to the County Executive. The power of our elected County Supervisors to represent their constituents has been severely curtailed.

We in our grassroots activity see the value for a constituent initiated referendum process because it is one form of direct democracy. We are living the unfortunate ramifications of the 2010 Citizens United US Supreme Court decision. It has led to a situation where our legislators are **trapped** between wealthy donors & moneyed artificial legal entities on one side and their constituents on the other side. Currently, it is very difficult to get one's message to the voters except by costly advertising. We, as pamphleteers were no match for Sheldon Lubar's expensive ad campaign to urge voters to say Yes in the recent referendum.

We believe that you as elected officials cannot succeed in changing the situation without the help of your constituents.

How do we change the system? We are attempting to do this by this referendum resolution to equalize the voters' voices with the loud noise of money in politics.

As President Theodore Roosevelt, in his "Charter of Democracy" speech to the 1912 Ohio constitutional convention, stated "I believe in the Initiative and Referendum, which should be used not to destroy representative government, but to correct it whenever it becomes misrepresentative."

We ask that you help us change the overwhelming strength of big money.

Money *simply* is not equivalent to speech. It is a metaphor for speech, it enables one to be heard, but it is not speech. Spending money for political gain is NOT a 1st Amendment right: the word money is NOT in the 1st Amendment at ALL.

The other problem was the US Supreme Court granting entities **invented** by we the people, such as corporations, unions, and other legal entities, our God-given Constitutional rights. This is a travesty. People, not corporations, are for whom the Constitution was written: the word corporation appears nowhere in the Constitution, so it stands to reason the Bill of Rights was not written with them in mind. The words, "We

the People" leads in the first sentence. and therefore, it is written with **us**, living, breathing human beings, in mind.

Don't leave the We the People, including yourselves of course, powerless and hopeless.

Please empower the voters, your constituents, to voice their opinion, as they have in 42 other communities in Wisconsin. The passage of an Amendment reversing the Supreme Court's decision that money is speech and corporations and unions have Constitutional rights will then allow our legislators to write campaign finance laws similar to the McCain-Feingold law. It would also allow our legislators to write laws providing for the common good without them being blocked by big business.

It is a long hard road we are traveling, and we ask that you help us.

We are on your side. We want our representative government officials to be free to do their jobs and work for the common good, not be influenced, coerced by big money. Let's not allow our government, and our planet, to be destroyed by inhuman, and inhumane, special interest greed.

Please allow we the people of Milwaukee County to say that a Corporation is not a person and that money is not speech and allow the Move To Amend movement to go forward.