

Written testimony in support of HJM6
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OREGON HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 6 (HJM6)

--to help pass a US Constitutional amendment which makes corporations not people and money not speech and explicitly states that elected legislatures may regulate political campaign spending.

Our current and long term democracy is severely threatened. Money increasingly controls our elections and thereby our governmental decisions. The entities and people with great wealth and power are guided by the goal of maintaining and increasing that wealth and power. They clearly do not have the long-term common good as a primary goal. They use a relatively small part of their wealth to control our public decisions by investment in political campaigns and by influencing, by owning, the major and much minor media. Decisions promoting the long-term common good cannot now be made unless the decisions also promote maintenance and/or increase in their wealth and power. The corporate structure is immensely valuable to doing useful things.

The people in corporations are not bad people, but, the present legal structure favors money over the common good of the people of the country. We must change our structure to one in which the democratic process can identify the common good and promote it.

Our country is very fortunate to have a constitution which furnishes the answer to our problem. We can amend the constitution to end the legal status of corporations as people, of money as speech, and make it clear that national, state, and local governments can regulate election related money. Both personal rights for corporations and money as speech for all people must be eliminated. Corporations can function very effectively with legislated privileges but have become destructive by assuming the rights intended for real people.

WE THE PEOPLE AMENDMENT (HB29) has been introduced in the US House of Representatives initiating the 28th amendment to the US Constitution. There is widespread support for requesting that congress pass the amendment:

--10 cities and counties in Oregon have made the request. Four did so by 70+% popular vote last November.

--15 states have done what we are requesting of the Oregon Legislature (Among them Montana and Colorado supported with 75% in the November 2012 election.

--nearly 400 cities and counties in the country have made the request

So.....we have a severe threat to our democracy and the long term common good.. The US Constitution furnishes the answer. Amendment has widespread support. It is time to amend.

I ask the 2013 Oregon Legislature to pass HJM6 urging our Oregon delegation in Congress to pass HB 29.

Bill Harris