

To: House Committee on Rules

From: Evan Preston, OSPIRG Fellow

Date: April 10, 2013

Re: Testimony in support of House Joint Memorial 6

Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee,

OSPIRG supports House Joint Memorial 6, as it calls for a constitutional amendment affirming the right of voters to limit the amount of money that can be raised and spent on our elections.

OSPIRG agrees with the findings of House Joint Memorial 6: no citizen should have more political influence than any other citizen because of the amount of money she has. Unlimited money in elections narrows the scope of the conversation about the issues facing our nation by allowing the wealthiest interests to dominate the debate. Rapidly increasing campaign contributions from a small number of powerful sources exacerbate the public perception that the voices of ordinary voters are not significant, and **limiting the amount that can be contributed to political candidates and campaigns strengthens the public's faith in our democracy.**

Decisions by the United States Supreme Court, most recently in *Citizens United vs. F.E.C.*, have rejected laws to meaningfully limit big money in politics. The only way to permanently establish the right of voters to limit money in politics is through a constitutional amendment. **The more states that pass resolutions in support of an amendment, the more momentum we build for change.** To date, eleven states, including states as diverse as Montana and New Jersey, have taken action in support of just such an amendment to the United States constitution.

Because it calls for a constitutional amendment to advance political equality and strengthen public faith in our democracy, **OSPIRG supports House Joint Memorial 6.**