

Testimony of Peter Bergel on HJM 2 & 4

Chair Hoyle and Members of the Rules Committee, my name is Peter Bergel. I reside at 1850 Saginaw St. S., Salem, Oregon.

I speak today in support of the intent of both HJM 2 and 4, that is, in support of these four elements:

1. Asking Congress to begin the process of amending the U.S. Constitution for the 28th time in order to remove the influence of money on our electoral process.
2. Corporations and other artificial entities are not what the Constitution means when it refers to “persons” and should not have the rights of people, especially in terms of influencing elections. Corporations should be returned to their original status as entities chartered to serve the public good and should be carefully monitored to ensure that they do.
3. The right to free speech does not include the right to use money to overwhelm others’ free speech rights.
4. All elections in this country should be fairly conducted, open to all citizens to participate as voters or candidates, and not dominated by excessive spending.

I ask you, Members of the Committee, are these principles not at the heart of the American dream? Are they not essential to liberty?

As elected officials, you are all aware of the disproportionate role money currently plays in the electoral process. I’m sure that among the first questions you asked yourself when you decided to run for the office you now hold is “where will I get the money it will take to run this campaign?” You were among the fortunate who were able to raise enough to campaign successfully. But should that ability be the main deciding factor in determining who sits in the chairs of government?

I say it should not, I hope you agree with me on that, and I therefore urge you to move one or both of these measures, or some combination of them, to the House Floor with a do pass recommendation.