

In support of HJM 201,

Hello, I'm Alison Hartson, a National Director with Wolf PAC, which is the political arm of The Young Turks - the largest online news show in the world. Thank you Chairwoman and members of the committee for having us here today. We're working with volunteers currently in 40 states to pass resolutions at the state level calling for an amendment convention to restore Free and Fair Elections. We will have at least 25 live resolutions in 2016 and recently passed a resolution in Vermont, California, Illinois, and New Jersey.

Americans know that elections should be free of the corrupting influence of excessive spending by outside interests and fair enough that any citizen can run for public office, not just millionaires, billionaires, and their allies. But that is not the case as it stands in America today, where candidates for Congress spend as much as 4-7 hours/day raising money from rich people to run for office. That is not the way it's supposed to be - how many good people with great ideas do we miss sending to Washington D.C. because they refuse to become professional telemarketers, dialing for dollars every day.

The good news is that we can fix this. Just like every other generation of Americans, we can amend the Constitution to make America more democratic, and a more perfect union. We must amend because no law establishing rules around elections at the state or the federal level can be protected from the Supreme Court without an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

HJM 201 calls for an Amendment through a limited convention. Here's how we know that a convention can be limited to a single subject: It takes 2/3 of the states (34) to pass a resolution calling for an amendment convention on the same issue. Since our country's founding there have been over 700 applications calling for an amendment convention submitted by the states - on a variety of subjects. Now, if you could take 10 applications for issue A, 20 applications for issue B, and 4 for issue C, count them together to get the 34 states needed to force a convention, then Congress could call that convention tomorrow, but they don't because they count applications in separate piles based on their subject matter. With HJM 201 we're adding to the pile for campaign finance reform.

Furthermore, there have also been 233 state level conventions to amend and adapt their state constitutions and none have ever exceeded the scope of their mandate. Zero.

The same reason some groups and individuals oppose the convention process, is the same reason that I'm for it - it's a democratic process. You get people together from a variety of perspectives, discuss and debate ideas, and then present that idea to the rest of the population for the ratification process - that's how democracy is supposed to work in this country. Every generation of Americans has amended the Constitution, except one... Ours. and now it's our turn. Let us use the tools the Founding Fathers provided to revitalize our republic. This will be our legacy and our gift to future generations of Americans.

Thank you for being leaders in the fight for free and fair elections in America. I ask for your favorable vote on HJM 201.