

Rep. Subeck: Joins Sen. Hansen to Introduce Proposal to Let Wisconsin Vote on Big Money in Politics

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Resolution would place Citizens United question on November, 2018 ballot

MADISON – Today, Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) and Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) introduced a resolution calling for a statewide advisory referendum to give voters the opportunity to voice their support for a constitutional amendment overturning the Supreme Court's ruling on *Citizens United*. Since the 2010 ruling which has ushered in a new era of unlimited corporate spending on elections, 105 communities across the State of Wisconsin have joined 18 states and 730 municipalities nationwide passing referendums or resolutions calling for action to overturn *Citizens United*.

"It is clear that people across our state and nation are fed up with the corrupting influence of unlimited special interest spending on our elections," said Rep. Subeck. "Through its ruling on *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court handed a giant megaphone to corporations and billionaires who can afford to drown out the voices of the average citizens."

LRB-0176 and LRB-1138, are Assembly and Senate Joint Resolutions that would place the following advisory referendum question on the November, 2018 ballot: "The U.S. Supreme Court's decisions in *Citizens United* and related cases allow unlimited spending to influence local, state, and federal elections. To allow all Americans to have an equal say in our democracy, shall Wisconsin's congressional delegation support, and the Wisconsin legislature ratify, an amendment to the U.S. Constitution stating:

1. Only human beings—not corporations, unions, nonprofit organizations, or similar associations—are endowed with constitutional rights, and
2. Money is not speech, and therefore limiting political contributions and spending is

not equivalent to restricting political speech.”

During the last two legislative sessions, the Republican majority failed to act on similar resolutions, refusing to even hold a hearing. Seven years after the Supreme Court ruling on *Citizens United*, outside spending on elections by special interests has reached an all-time high, while rulings by the Wisconsin Supreme Court have allowed the sources of much of this spending to go undisclosed, keeping Wisconsinites in the dark about who is trying to influence their votes.

In Wisconsin’s 2016 legislative races, \$8.9 million was spent by outside interest groups. This surpassed the previous record for non-recall legislative elections set in 2008 at \$7.1 million.

“*Citizens United* and the resulting influx of spending by corporations and SuperPACs have eroded the people’s trust in their elected officials,” said Rep. Subeck. “We need urgent action to restore our democracy and get big money out of politics, and the first step is to let the people’s voices be heard on overturning *Citizens United*.”