

Senator Hansen: Introduces Resolution to Give People a Voice on Overturning Citizens United Decision

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(Madison)—Speaking at a press conference today, State Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) announced that he and Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) are introducing a resolution to allow the people of Wisconsin to weigh in on a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would overturn the infamous Citizens United decision. In that decision the U.S. Supreme Court in effect ruled that corporations had the same rights as people and that money constitutes speech. “To say corporations are people and that money equals speech is absurd,” said Hansen. “It turns the whole notion of democracy on its head. Corporations and the rich should not have more rights and more influence than the rest of us. That’s not how democracy is supposed to work.”

The Citizens United decision opened the floodgates for the rich and corporations to unfairly and secretly tilt the scales in their favor by making it possible for them to pour unlimited amounts of money into elections. Since the Supreme Court made its decision in 2010 the gap between the rich and poor and the rising power of corporations have continued to grow unchecked. So has the amount of money pouring into state campaigns

“We’ve seen the impact of that decision in a very short time with the creation of Super PACs and dark money groups and the resulting overkill of TV ads, mail and robo-calls, most of which offer nothing of value for the voters other than to attack the opponents of whichever candidates they support.”

Just five years after the decision outside spending on campaigns doubled and outside spending in key races outpaced money that candidates spent on their own campaigns.

“It’s time to level the playing field and give every citizen an equal voice in our elections: The voice of the mother working for minimum wage, or the retired factory worker, or the college student worried about repaying their student loans should not be drowned out by those who seek to pay them less, cut their Social Security or profit from their student debt.

“The people of Wisconsin should have their say on whether or not they want to overturn Citizens United and restore a level playing field for voters in our democracy. Our resolution will give them a chance to have their voices heard.”