

Resolution on Social Justice Implications of Citizens United Supreme Court Decision

On Monday November 6, the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area adopted a resolution proposed by our Social Justice Committee, unanimously endorsed by Session and by Presbytery's Bills and Overtures Committee. The resolution follows:

Resolution to Support an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

Whereas, the Session of Oak Grove Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, MN unanimously endorsed support for an amendment to the constitution to establish that corporations are not persons and money is not speech and urged the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area to request member congregations to consider similar resolutions; and

Whereas, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted a resolution that supports the personhood of individual citizens, and opposes laws and rulings that allow corporations and other private enterprises to be accorded the rights due human persons, and supports limits for political contributions by corporations, unions, political action committees, super PACs ("527's"), and individuals, while eliminating 501.c.4's and 501.c.6's (nonprofit social welfare organizations) campaign contributions, and;

Whereas, free and fair elections are essential to democracy; and

Whereas, unlimited corporate spending drowns out the voices of individuals and jeopardizes our democracy; and

Whereas, a 28th amendment to the Constitution is needed to overturn Citizens United and eliminate corporate personhood and money as speech, and;

Whereas, 19 States and over 748 local governments passed resolutions calling for such an amendment to the constitution, and;

Whereas the Bills and Overtures Committee of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area reviewed, discussed and endorsed this resolution for Presbytery consideration.

Therefore be it resolved, that Presbytery of the Twin Cities endorses legislation that calls for a constitutional amendment to establish that:

1. The Constitutional rights of the United States are the rights of natural persons only. Artificial entities, corporations, companies, and other entities, established by the laws of the United States, or foreign countries shall have no constitutional rights, inherent or inalienable privileges and are subject to regulation by the People, through Federal, State, or local law.
2. Establishes that Federal, State and local government shall regulate, limit, or prohibit contributions and expenditures, including a candidate's contributions, to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their economic status, have access to the political process, and that no person gains, as a result of their money, substantially more access or ability to influence the election of any candidate for public office or any ballot measure.
3. Federal, State, and local governments shall require that any contributions and expenditures be publicly disclosed.
4. The judiciary shall not construe the spending of money to influence elections to be speech under the First Amendment.

Be it further resolved that the Presbytery of the Twin Cities encourages member congregations to endorse this resolution.