

Town Board

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May 23, 2012

The Honorable President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

RE: A Resolution Denouncing and Requesting Action to Overturn the *Citizens United* Decision

Dear President Obama:

Attached is a copy of a Resolution recently passed by the Town Board of the Town of Westport requesting that some kind of action be taken to limit the influence money has in our elections and legislation. Westport's Board was approached by several area citizens asking that its Board request this action on the behalf of the almost 4,000 residents of the Town, and the Board was more than happy to do so. Please review this Resolution. We are hoping it can assist in spurring action at the State and Federal level to limit the holding of the *Citizens United* case, and the influence of money in daily decisions by our governmental leaders. Specifically, our Board especially wants action taken to end the free spending on elections by corporate entities, unaffiliated organized groups, and SuperPACS.

Westport does not want what has become commonplace at the Federal and State level to reach its way down to local politics. At what point will interests groups or those with single focused issues begin to spend massive amounts of money at the local level to influence elections and local laws? For instance, a development corporation that wishes a specific controversial development to be approved without dissent could work to influence the election of the local board which makes the approval, and by inference so could the national environmental lobbying group in order to prevent what could be a reasonable local development proposal or accommodating growth policy. The possibilities for such impropriety up and down all levels of our wonderful democracy are apparent, and something should be done to stop it. We are hoping you agree and will do what you can to limit this abuse.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. By a copy of this to our Wisconsin Congressional delegation, we are respectfully requesting that they please do the same.

Very truly yours,

Thomas G. Wilson
Attorney/Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer

TGW/df

Enclosure

cc by mail: U.S. Senator Herb Kohl, U.S. Senator Ron Johnson, U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin,
Governor Scott Walker
cc by e-mail: John Van Dinter, Town Board Chair; Jackie Schultz

TOWN OF WESTPORT

RESOLUTION NO. 12-08

A RESOLUTION BY THE TOWN BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DENOUNCING AND REQUESTING ACTION
TO OVERTURN THE *CITIZENS UNITED* DECISION

WHEREAS, on January 24, 2010, the United States Supreme Court ruled that local, state, and federal governments cannot regulate corporate financial influence in politics by the precedent-setting 5-4 decision in *Citizens United vs. The Federal Election Commission*, in which the Court declared that corporations are 'persons' within the meaning of U.S. Constitution and are therefore guaranteed the same rights as natural persons; and,

WHEREAS, concerned citizens and residents of the Town of Westport, have requested that the Town Board of the Town of Westport adopt a written directive to representatives in the Wisconsin State Legislature and in the U.S. Congress, with copies to the President and Governor, requesting action be taken to overturn that decision.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Town Board of Supervisors of the Town of Westport, that the Town respectfully requests our representatives in the United States Congress and in the Wisconsin State Legislature to initiate and support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution which will establish that:

- 1) The rights established by the Constitution of the United States are the rights of natural persons only, not artificial entities such as corporations; and
- 2) Money is not speech and therefore federal, state, and local governments may regulate, limit, or prohibit contributions and expenditures of money to influence elections, elected officials or legislation.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that Town staff shall forward this Resolution to appropriate elected and appointed individuals, and any others as deemed appropriate, to provide maximum notice of the Town's action and request hereby.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Town Board of Supervisors of the Town of Westport, Dane County, Wisconsin at a regular meeting held on the 7th day of May, 2012, by a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, 0 abstaining, and 0 not voting (absent).

TOWN OF WESTPORT

By: J. A. Van Dinter

John A. Van Dinter, Town Board Chair

Attest: Thomas G. Wilson

Thomas G. Wilson,

Town Attorney/Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: 5/21/12

Published: 5/31/12