

Senate Elections Committee
Senator Jim Carlson, Chair
Senator Bonnie Westlin, Vice chair

Committee meeting Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 3p.m.

Testimony on behalf of [SF 569](#), “A resolution memorializing Congress to overturn the United States Supreme Court Citizens United v. FEC; requesting that Congress clarify that the rights are protected under the Constitution are the rights of natural persons and not the rights of artificial entities and that spending money to influence elections is not speech under the First Amendment; asking that Congress propose a constitutional amendment to provide such a clarification”

Committee Chair and members, good afternoon. My name is Jeff Clark and I’m a volunteer supporter of Minnesota Move to Amend.

S.F. 569 calls for a U.S. Constitutional amendment that expresses two principles that could use some clarification, judging by questions raised during past versions of this bill.

1. Only human beings, or “natural persons,” have U.S. Constitutional rights, as intended. Every organization or other entity created by legal instruments is not entitled to these rights. They have instead “privileges” written into law at every level (federal through state and local). This permits the governing laws to be flexibly updated, rather than “set in stone” by courts interpreting the Constitution to include them as persons with rights. Regarding entities created by legal instrument, the amendment’s scope would include every type of corporation (including “benefit corporations”), nonprofits, unions, and even farmers’ cooperatives should they become politically active.
2. Money raised and spent in the political campaign process is not the equivalent of free speech and must be regulated by Congress and made publicly transparent. Congress would be authorized to establish campaign finance law for the different categories of campaign contributors, so as to “level the playing field” for all participants and not disadvantage the average citizen in the political process.

A Constitutional amendment based on these two principles would authorize Congress to write implementing legislation. And require them to do so. This obviously would take time to develop. But the legislation could then be improved over time, adjusting to practical realities and improving its effectiveness across successive Congresses.

But the other consequence of the amendment would be almost instantaneous: It would require the U.S. Supreme Court to cease using the *opposite* of these principles—that corporations etc. are “persons’ with rights, and that spending money in politics is the same as speech and can’t be constrained—when they form opinions on litigation that tend more often than not to favor powerful corporate and money interests. Removing these two options in court reasoning could have a significant impact in favor of social, environmental, etc. welfare.

In summary, what this resolution proposes is *the most complete* solution to addressing the *full problem*: How to make our government, at all levels, more responsive to *all* the citizens who elect it to serve and protect their interests.

Therefore I urge you to vote **FOR** S.F. 569 as the first step toward making Minnesota the 23rd state to petition Congress to draft an amendment like the one I’ve described here.

Thank you.

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