



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Five Years Later, It is time for Wisconsin to be Heard on Citizens United
On 5 year anniversary, Representative Subeck and Senator Hansen introduce Citizens United referendum

MADISON – Today, on the 5th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United v. FEC* ruling which opened the floodgates to unlimited spending by corporations and special interest groups on elections, Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) introduced a resolution calling for a statewide advisory referendum to give voters the opportunity to voice their support for a constitutional amendment overturning *Citizens United*.

During the last legislative session, the Republican majority failed to act, refusing to even hold a hearing on a similar resolutions. Five 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.

Since the *Citizens United* ruling, 54 communities across the state of Wisconsin, along with 16 states 500 municipalities nationwide, have passed referendums or resolutions calling for action to overturn *Citizens United*.

Marking the 5th Anniversary of the ruling, Representative Subeck and Senator Dave Hansen announced the introduction of LRB 1145/1, an Assembly Joint Resolution that would place the following advisory referendum question on the November, 2016 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



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2. Money is not speech, and therefore limiting political contributions and spending is not equivalent to restricting political speech.”

“It is clear that the public is outraged by the unfettered special interest spending *Citizens United* has ushered into our electoral races. Worse yet, this unlimited spending too often leave politicians dependent upon special interests to fund their campaigns, in turn making them accountable to big money donors instead of the people they are elected to represent,” said Representative Lisa Subeck.

The 2014 midterms were the most expensive in history, with total spending topping \$3.7 billion. \$689 million was spent by outside interest groups and corporations, an increase of more than \$250 million over 2010 spending levels. The Wisconsin gubernatorial race alone saw \$12.6 million spent by sources such as Super PACs and interest groups outside of the candidates’ own campaigns.

“Unlimited election spending by corporations, Super PACs, and special interest groups has drowned out the voice of the people in our elections, and urgent action is needed to restore our democracy,” said Subeck. “In the post-*Citizens United* era, big money in politics has led to an erosion of the public’s trust in their elected officials. It is time to fix the problem by getting big money out of politics, and the first step is to let the people’s voices be heard on overturning *Citizens United*.”

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