

NOTICE OF REFERENDUM

Rock County

November 8, 2016

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that at an election to be held in the County of Rock, on November 8, 2016 the following question will be submitted to a vote of the people in an advisory referendum.

RESOLUTION 16-6B-057 ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has a tradition of open government and non-partisan local elections, as well as campaign finance rules that have managed and mitigated the influence of money on those elections; and,

WHEREAS, the County has an interest in maintaining that tradition and the resident driven elections it allows; and,

WHEREAS, on January 10, 2010, in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, the Supreme Court overturned a century of precedent by ruling that corporate spending on elections cannot be limited under the First Amendment; and,

WHEREAS, granting constitutional rights to corporations and unions is counter to the purpose of our democracy and has wide-ranging impacts upon our economy and society; and,

WHEREAS, granting constitutional rights to corporations favors large corporations over small ones, and favors all corporations and all wealthy interests over citizens who cannot afford the corporate rights of limited liability, legal protections, and tax deductions; and,

WHEREAS, the constitutional right to speak freely should not be determined by the available finances of the speaker or their power and status in society; and,

WHEREAS, corporate money is property, not speech. A house or a car does not have constitutionally protected speech. Money is just another form of property. Property is constitutionally protected. Property's right to free speech is not; and,

WHEREAS, such ruling gives corporations and the wealthy undue political influence; and,

WHEREAS, democracy can only properly function when human beings have equal representation and access to their elected officials; and,

WHEREAS, countless municipalities nationwide and 75 Wisconsin communities including the Cities of Beloit and Janesville have overwhelmingly passed referenda signaling broad support for reversing the Citizens United court ruling.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rock County Board of Supervisors authorizes the following advisory referendum to be placed on the November 8, 2016 ballot:

QUESTION

“Shall the County of Rock, adopt the following resolution?”

Resolved, that “We the People” of the County of Rock, Wisconsin, seek to reclaim democracy from the expansion of corporate personhood rights and the corrupting influence of unregulated political contributions and spending. We stand with communities across the country to support passage of an amendment to the United States Constitution stating:

1. Only human beings are endowed with constitutional rights—not corporations, unions, nonprofits or other artificial entities, and
2. Money is not speech, and therefore regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting speech

Yes

No

EXPLANATION

A **Yes** vote supports the proposed United States Constitutional Amendment as stated in Numbers 1 and 2 of the question.

A **No** vote indicates opposition to the proposed United States Constitutional Amendment.

Lisa Tollefson
Rock County Clerk