

1 **“Lowering the Voice of Money in Politics”**

2  
3 **Whereas**, politics has become the playground of money far beyond the vision of grass roots  
4 citizen support for election of candidates, initiative and referenda, and campaigns; and

5 **Whereas**, elected leaders regularly describe the amount of time needed for fundraising as  
6 exceeding fifty percent of their time, detracting from time better used in service to constituents  
7 and legislating to meet the needs of the country; and

8 **Whereas**, campaign spending unleashed by *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*,  
9 *558 U.S. 310 (2010)* removing barriers to corporate spending has exploded political action  
10 committee growth and the preference for non-disclosure pathways for spending; and

11 **Whereas**, according to Public Citizen based on Federal Election Commission reports, the  
12 first 10 years under *Citizen’s United*, corporate spending of more than one-half billion dollars to  
13 influence elections included:

- 14 • At least \$313-million from more than 2,200 corporations donating to more than 500 super  
15 PACs;
- 16 • Some \$226-million flowed from at least 30 corporate trade groups, which are not required to  
17 disclose their donors;
- 18 • Some \$230-million – about 74 percent -- of the total disclosed corporate donations went to a  
19 few super PACs dedicated to electing Republican candidates;
- 20 • Among those corporate trade groups not required to disclose The U.S. Chamber of  
21 Commerce alone accounts for \$143-million;
- 22 • More than one-third -- \$118 million -- came from the top 20 corporate donors through  
23 contributions to Super PACs that back Republicans, while only four of these corporations  
24 (three energy and one tobacco) are publicly traded enterprises; and of the 16 private  
25 companies, nearly half are run by billionaires;
- 26 • Top figures of these corporate donors gave more than \$127-million, primarily to  
27 Republicans; and

28 **Whereas**, wealth itself has become the principle instrument, including from out-of-  
29 jurisdiction contributors, to finance candidate campaigns often eclipsing support within their own  
30 constituency; and,

31 **Whereas**, examples abound where out-sized, out-of-jurisdiction contributions make to state  
32 and local candidacies drive up the specific and general costs of campaigns and office aspirations  
33 by many qualified local and state candidates. Examples include Oregon’s Fourth Congressional  
34 District where 2020 contributions to a Republican challenger drew 69.6 percent of reported  
35 financing from out-of-state compared to 41.9 percent for the Democrat incumbent, a trend  
36 continuing in 2022 open seat with the same Republican drawing 58.6 percent of contributions  
37 from out-of-state compared to 21.7 percent for the Democrat for an open seat; and

38 **Whereas**, according to the FEC total spending by Presidential candidates in 2020 reached  
39 more than \$4-billion; for Senate candidates more than \$2-billion – with only one-third of the  
40 seats up for elections; and for House candidates \$1.8-billion; and



## **LOWERING THE VOICE OF MONEY IN POLITICS**

WHEREAS, politics has become the playground of money far beyond the vision of grassroots citizen support for election of candidates, initiative and referenda, and campaigns; and

WHEREAS, elected leaders regularly describe the amount of time needed for fundraising as exceeding 50 percent of their time, detracting from time better used in service to constituents and legislating to meet the needs of the country; and

WHEREAS, campaign spending unleashed by *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010) removing barriers to corporate spending has exploded political action committee growth and the preference for nondisclosure pathways for spending; and

WHEREAS, according to Public Citizen, based on Federal Election Commission reports, the first 10 years under *Citizens United*, corporate spending of more than one-half billion dollars to influence elections included:

- At least \$313 million from more than 2,200 corporations donating to more than 500 super PACs;
- Some \$226 million flowed from at least 30 corporate trade groups, which are not required to disclose their donors;
- Some \$230 million—about 74 percent—of the total disclosed corporate donations went to a few super PACs dedicated to electing Republican candidates;
- Among those corporate trade groups not required to disclose, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce alone accounts for \$143 million;
- More than one-third—\$118 million—came from the top 20 corporate donors through contributions to super PACs that back Republicans, while only four of these corporations (three energy and one tobacco) are publicly traded enterprises; and of the 16 private companies, nearly half are run by billionaires;
- Top figures of these corporate donors gave more than \$127 million, primarily to Republicans; and

WHEREAS, wealth itself has become the principle instrument, including from out-of-jurisdiction contributors, to finance candidate campaigns often eclipsing support within their own constituency; and

WHEREAS, examples abound where outsized, out-of-jurisdiction contributions made to state and local candidacies drive up the specific and general costs of campaigns and office aspirations by many qualified local and state candidates. Examples include Oregon's 4th Congressional District where 2020 contributions to a Republican challenger drew 69.6 percent of reported financing from out-of-state compared with 41.9 percent for the Democrat incumbent, a trend continuing in a 2022 open seat, with the same Republican drawing 58.6 percent of contributions from out-of-state compared with 21.7 percent for the Democrat for an open seat; and

WHEREAS, according to the Federal Election Commission, total spending by presidential candidates in 2020 reached more than \$4 billion; for Senate candidates more than \$2 billion—with only one-third of the seats up for elections; and for House candidates \$1.8 billion; and

WHEREAS, the sum for presidential candidates exceeds the gross domestic product of each of at least 16 countries; and

WHEREAS, the greatest threat to campaign financing and electoral reform is the rise of “dark money,” though hard and soft money are influenced as well by Citizens United; and

WHEREAS, spending from Jan. 1, 2021, through April 30, 2022, well before the conclusion of primary season, totaled nearly \$3.2 billion by candidates, PACs and party committees:

**RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers reiterates its support as outlined in a 2016 resolution for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to clarify that “free speech” as envisioned by the framers of the U.S. Constitution was limited to individuals and groups; and**

**RESOLVED, that the AFT will support passage of measures like S.J. Res. 25 and H.J. Res 1, the Democracy for All Amendment, a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court’s disastrous Citizens United v. FEC decision by giving Congress and states the ability to set commonsense rules on political spending by corporate PACs, wealthy special interests and others; and**

**RESOLVED, that the AFT will urge political action activity among its affiliates to advance and support efforts among their own states and their congressional delegations to get big money out of politics.**

*Adopted 9/29/2022*