

Movement to Overturn *Citizens United* Reaches New Milestone

By Rhoda Feng/ Public Citizen, July 1, 2019

In June, the country took a major step toward fixing our broken democracy, as New Hampshire became the 20th state to support a constitutional amendment to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's disastrous *Citizens United* decision, allow Congress to regulate big money and help restore elections to the people.

The Granite State's approval of HB 504 represents a major milestone, bringing the national movement to overturn *Citizens United* beyond the symbolic halfway point of the 38 states needed to ratify a constitutional amendment to overturn the 2010 ruling, which allowed unlimited money from wealthy and corporate donors to flood elections. The state Senate's vote to overturn *Citizens United* followed the March 19 approval of HB 504 by the state House of Representatives.

"New Hampshire's vote should signal to the U.S. Senate that it should vote on the For the People Act (H.R. 1), which contains a host of democracy reforms, including a call for overturning *Citizens United*," said Jonah Minkoff-Zern, co-director of Public Citizen's Democracy Is For People Campaign.

Over the past seven years, Public Citizen has led an energized to pass 82 local resolutions in support of an amendment, which would establish that corporations don't have a right to participate in elections and that campaign money does not equal speech. Public Citizen held countless rallies in Concord and marches at other locations across New Hampshire. Thousands of residents attended hearings, called state lawmakers, signed petitions and turned out for demonstrations.

The New Hampshire legislature was not always in sync with the state's residents. As recently as March 2014, the New Hampshire Senate defeated proposed language calling for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*. Instead lawmakers moved forward a hollow bill, SB 307, which created a committee to examine the impact of the *Citizens United* ruling.

New Hampshire residents, on the other hand, consistently made it crystal clear that they wanted to free elections from corporate influence and megadonors. For example, in 2014, the same year that the Senate voted down the resolution, Granite State residents overwhelmingly passed at 48 town meetings in 2014 calling for the state Legislature to support a constitutional amendment to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court ruling. Thirty-six of the 48 towns that voted to pass a resolution were in Senate Republican districts, showing bipartisan support for an amendment.

Americans across the political spectrum agree that big donors have too much power over our government. With New Hampshire joining the national movement to support [overturning *Citizens United*](#), limiting corporate influence on federal lawmakers is within arm's reach.

Nineteen other states (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia), Washington, D.C., and more than 800 municipalities have called for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*. More than 5 million petition signatures have been gathered nationwide calling for an amendment.

“By overwhelming margins, the American people want to end big money domination of our elections and politics,” said Robert Weissman, president, Public Citizen. “No state legislature lightly calls for a constitutional amendment. But New Hampshire joins those who recognize that we need a constitutional amendment to loosen the death grip by which giant corporations and the superrich are strangling our democracy.”

To build on that victory, Public Citizen is urging readers to tell their members of Congress to co-sponsor H.J.Res. 2, a constitutional amendment that would permit Congress and the states to set reasonable limits on campaign finance spending.