Members of the GAE Committee, our resolution, HJ 64, is about a most pressing issue. There is a crisis taking place in our political system, a crisis of money and its crippling influence on our government.

In 1976 the court case of Buckley versus Valeo was brought before the Supreme Court. The end result was that our judicial system ruled that there be no limits to spending in political campaigns, declaring that money is equivalent to free speech. Fast forward to 2010 and the Citizens United ruling has extended those free speech rights to man-made entities, in short, giving the same rights as natural born individuals to corporations, associations, and unions.

I am here to tell you, money does *not* equal free speech. Corporations are *not* people. And the influence of money flooding into our political system is destroying our democracy.

The fact of the matter is, if we do actually believe that money is equivalent to free speech, then that would mean that according to our own definition, our citizens of this nation, would inherently have *less* free speech than the companies they work for, the groups they belong to, or the unions they take part in.

While it's true that a person may spend their money as they choose, and that direct advocacy *by an individual* is not inherently detrimental to political discourse, the scale on which we are speaking is far too great to make that kind of comparison. When entities whose sole purpose is to generate income are allowed to legally bribe our politicians, the common citizen has no chance of making their voice heard.

The influence of money has already taken root so deeply in our political system, that Congress cannot be counted on to fix this problem. The DISCLOSE Act was an attempt made to shed light on this issue and bring about some change, but it was voted down by Congress *twice.*

If we want lasting campaign finance reform on a nationwide scale we cannot wait for the federal government to act. The only recourse left for us is to take it to the states. This is the purpose of resolution HJ 64: the calling of an Article Five Convention, specifically for an amendment to limit the influence of money in our electoral process.

We have no interest in federal legislation that can be overturned by the justice system. A Constitutional Amendment is the strongest possible solution to this issue, and perhaps our last chance to restore true democracy to our nation.