

In support of SJ 33,

Hello, my name is Michael Monetta, and I am a National Coordinator with Wolf PAC, the political arm of The Young Turks - the largest online news show in the world. Thank you Chairmen Cassano and Jutila, and members of the committee for having us here today. We are a citizen-funded grassroots organization working with volunteers currently in 40 states to pass resolutions at the state level calling for an amendment convention to restore free and fair elections. We will have at least 20 live resolutions in 2016 and have passed resolutions in Vermont, California, Illinois, and New Jersey. I really hope we can add Connecticut to the growing list of states standing up and demanding a government of, by, and for the American people.

President Jefferson once said, "The same is true today as has been throughout all history, whether men shall be allowed to govern himself or be ruled by a small elite." When donors, not voters, choose who is elected to Congress, we are in danger of being ruled once again by a small elite.

Every American knows that elections should be free of the corrupting influence of excessive spending by outside interests and fair enough that any citizen can be elected to public office, not just millionaires, billionaires, and their allies. But that is not the case as it stands in America today, where candidates for Congress must spend 5-7 hours/day, 5-7 days/week raising money from rich people to run for office. That is not the way it's supposed to be – how many good people with great ideas do we miss sending to Washington DC because they refuse to become professional telemarketers, dialing for dollars every day.

The good news is that we can fix this. Just like every other generation of Americans, we can amend the Constitution to make America more democratic, more inclusive, and a more perfect union. We must amend because the Supreme Court has taken a wrecking ball to the wall of separation between wealth and state, handing down decisions that destroyed federal campaign finance regulation. So no law passed at the state or the federal level can be protected without an Amendment to the US Constitution.

Since our country's founding there have been over 700 applications from the states on a variety of issues. This is how we know a convention can be limited to one subject. Because if you could take 10 applications for issue A, 20 applications for issue B, and 4 for issue C, count them together to get the  $\frac{2}{3}$  needed to force a convention, Congress could call that convention tomorrow, but they don't because they count applications in separate piles based on subject matter. All we're doing with SJ 33 is adding to the pile for campaign finance reform.

The historical record shows that there is a very strong precedent for a single issue convention. The Department of Justice, American Bar Association, and Congressional Research Service all agree the states have the power to have a limited convention. Furthermore, there have been over 233 state level conventions to amend and adapt their state constitutions and none have ever exceeded the scope of their mandate ... Zero.

The same reason some groups and individuals oppose the convention process, such as the John Birch Society, is the same reason that I'm for it – it's a democratic process. You get people together from a variety of perspectives, assume that nobody has a monopoly on the truth, discuss and debate ideas, distill and synthesize those ideas into a proposed solution, and then present that idea to the rest of the population for validation through the ratification process – that's how democracy is supposed to work in this country. And we've never solved any problem in America with less democracy, but we have solved some serious problems by amending the Constitution. Every generation of Americans has amended the Constitution, except one... Ours. and now it's our turn and this is our generation's issue to fix. Thank you for being leaders in the fight for free and fair elections in America. I ask that you vote yes on SJ 33.

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'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.' - Margaret Mead