

March 2018

Move to Amend for Free and Fair Democracy

A project of the Social Justice & Outreach Council

Please join us as we work to expand democracy and return power to We the People by curbing the ability of well-funded special interests and outside groups to dominate our elections and political process. To accomplish this, we conclude that the nation must **amend the U.S. Constitution**. The group supports efforts to propose such an amendment via both of the paths allowed by Article V of the Constitution – through Congress and through a convention of the states.

The committee believes that this issue is not the most important one on the nation's domestic agenda – *but* it is the problem that needs to be solved *first* before virtually all of the other issues can be properly addressed.

To join the committee, email movetoamend@uucdc.org or contact Neil Goldstein through the church office.

How to participate

- Join the committee (see above)
- Tell others about the committee via your social media accounts
 - Join PA United to Amend and advocate with state legislators (see “Resolutions before the state legislature,” below)
 - Call or write your state legislators and ask them to support the resolutions endorsed by PA United to Amend (see “Resolutions before the state legislature,” below). If they already support the measures, thank them!
 - Sign the national Move to Amend group's petition (see “Amendment proposal before Congress,” below; NOTE that this group is unrelated to PA United to Amend)
 - Call or write your federal legislators and ask them to support the national Move to Amend group's proposed amendment (see “Amendment proposal before Congress,” below)
 - Stamp your cash with messages in support of the movement (see below)

Current actions

Resolutions before the state legislature. Through the all-volunteer PA United to Amend coalition (PAUA), we are working to pass paired resolutions in both houses of the legislature calling for a limited convention of the states to propose an amendment for free and fair elections, allowing regulation of election campaign contributions and expenditures. The measures are House Resolution 357 and Senate Resolution 254. Five

states have officially called for such a convention, and resolutions have been introduced in many other states. It takes 34 states for a convention to be called.

Our committee led the Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network to create the PAUA coalition by joining with the national, cross-partisan, largely volunteer Wolf PAC organization. To work for passage of the resolutions, register as a Pennsylvania volunteer at <http://www.wolf-pac.com>, noting in the Comments section that you were referred by UUPLAN. (Wolf PAC has nothing to do with Gov. Wolf.)

Amendment proposal before Congress. A proposed amendment drafted by the national Move to Amend organization has been introduced in the U.S. Congress. That proposal would explicitly overturn Supreme Court doctrines that grant constitutional rights to artificial entities and that define spending money as protected free speech. Our committee is inspired by and endorses national MTA's efforts, and asks congregants to join the national group at <https://movetoamend.org>.

Stamping cash. To help congregants make their mark against big money in politics, when they pay for soup lunches or Fair Trade products, we rubber-stamp their paper cash with anti-corruption messages such as "Not to Be Used for Bribing Politicians" and "Corporations Are NOT People." The stamps support the campaign for a constitutional amendment to curb the undue political influence of big money, corporations, unions and other special interest groups.

Stay tuned for updates!

Background

This congregation voted on Jan. 26, 2014, to join many other groups across the country to endorse adoption of an amendment to unequivocally state that inalienable rights belong to human beings only, and that money is not a form of protected free speech under the First Amendment and can be regulated in political campaigns. (see "Amendment proposal before Congress," above).

The Unitarian Universalist Association endorsed such an amendment as an Action of Immediate Witness in June 2013, and asked congregations to do the same. The UUA has said that our principles of inherent human dignity and the use of the democratic process are being eroded by the court-created doctrines of corporate personhood and money being equated with speech, as well as by the Citizens United court ruling. As a result of those and other court doctrines, unprecedented amounts of money from corporations and other interests have flooded the political landscape, corrupting our democratic processes and putting the entire democracy at risk.

The amendment is endorsed by UU's for a Just Economic Community, UUA Board of Trustees, the UU Service Committee, and several congregations. Also endorsing such an amendment are at least 290 municipal legislatures as well as the state legislatures of Illinois, Minnesota and Vermont.

In addition to the above, we endorse and are advocating for paired resolutions before the Pennsylvania state legislature calling for a convention of the states to propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to ensure free and fair elections and to curb corruption and special-interest influence in Washington, D.C. We're working on this matter through the PA United to Amend coalition (see "Resolutions before the state legislature," above).