

Fiore Rosenfeld and Kepert Put Forward a Resolution that Declares Corporations Shouldn't Have the Same Rights as People When it Comes to Political Campaign Contributions and the Right to Influence Our Democracy

posted on 12/20/2012 3:34:54 PM

December 19, 2012

Town Board resolution called for Federal and State governments to begin "Saving American Democracy" by engaging the process to amend the US Constitution concerning the Supreme Court Decision in Citizens United v. FEC

Farmingville, NY - At the December 18 Town Board Meeting, Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld and Councilwoman Connie Kepert jointly sponsored a Sense Resolution urging the Federal and State governments to take action and reject the United States Supreme Court's decision in the case of Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission. In the 2010 decision, the court ruled that corporations are entitled to the same rights guaranteed to individuals by the United States Constitution. Furthermore, this Court decided that political campaign donations are a form of speech and are somehow therefore protected under the First Amendment allowing corporations to donate without contribution limits and without regulation. The resolution also supported amending the United States Constitution with an amendment entitled "Saving American Democracy," which would overturn the Citizens United decision.

"The Citizens United decision has shaken the very pillars of our democratic system," said Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld. "Since it was founded in 1776, this country has taken pride in our unique individual rights. It is deeply troubling that our Supreme Court has allowed such rights to be encroached upon by corporations with vast financial resources. I am proud to stand with communities across the United States and my colleagues on the Town Board in calling for a constitutional amendment to reverse such a decision and renew the people's voice in our democracy."

Councilwoman Connie Kepert said, "Citizens of all political persuasions and of all interests understand the need to take money out of politics. Defining corporations as persons has detrimental effects on all elections, including local town races. Disenfranchising voters through a system that favors money hurts our democracy and consequently our communities. I am behind this sense resolution 100% as I firmly believe that all elected officials need to be accountable to the people."

"We relish the day we can have an honest debate on issues of the day based upon our words and not the size of our wallets" said Steve Lupo, a resident of Shirley and member of the "Move To Amend Brookhaven" organization.

"As we move into the New Year, we will continue to educate, mobilize, and involve our neighbors in this movement. We are going to be embarking on a canvassing campaign where we will be knocking on the doors of our neighbors to explain to them that we must restore our democracy and we truly hope that as we speak with our neighbors that we can let them know that the Brookhaven Town Council stands with us," said Lauren Carmichael, a resident of Coram and a member of "Move To Amend Brookhaven" organization.

Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld, Councilwomen Kepert and Walsh voted to adopt the resolution, while Councilwoman Jane Bonner and Councilmen Tim Mazzei and Dan Panico abstained. Supervisor Romaine, also abstained. After the vote failed to garner the four yes votes needed to pass, recently elected Supervisor Ed Romaine (R-Center Moriches), suggested that Councilman Fiore-Rosenfeld convert this Sense Resolution instead to a "sign on" letter stating the broad goals of the resolution which he stated he would sign. Furthermore, the Supervisor had hoped he could convince his other colleagues who had abstained to sign on to such a letter as well.

Amending the US Constitution: Article 5 - Amending

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258