

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2012

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin:

We are writing to request that the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights hold a hearing on the constitutional amendments we have introduced to address the growing crisis in our nation's campaign finance system.

Two years ago, the Supreme Court issued its misguided decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*. This decision was a victory for special interests at the expense of the average American. It held that corporations deserve the same free speech protections as individual Americans, enabling them to spend freely from their corporate treasuries on campaign advertising. A subsequent lower court decision, based on the holding in *Citizens United*, gave rise to super PACs, which can raise and spend unlimited funds to campaign for or against candidates.

The toxic effect of these rulings has become brutally clear in the last two years. Floodgates to unprecedented campaign spending have opened, drowning out the voices of ordinary citizens. Huge sums of unregulated, unaccountable money are flooding the airwaves. An endless wave of attack ads, paid for by billionaires and corporations, is poisoning our political discourse.

In *The Federalist* No. 49, James Madison argued that the U.S. Constitution should be amended only on "great and extraordinary occasions." While our proposed amendments vary in their approach to addressing the problem, we are in complete agreement that our country has reached one of those great and extraordinary occasions.

We believe your Subcommittee is the best venue to examine the different approaches, to solicit input from constitutional experts, and to advance the national discussion about the need to return our elections to the American people.

We hope that you will consider holding a hearing in one of the upcoming work periods. Please do not hesitate to let us know if we or our staffs can assist in any way.

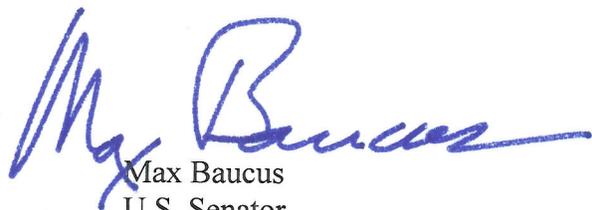
Sincerely,



Tom Udall
U.S. Senator



Bernard Sanders
U.S. Senator



Max Baucus
U.S. Senator