



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31715, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION supporting Washington Initiative Measure 735, and urging Seattle voters to vote “Yes” on Initiative 735 on the November 8, 2016, general election ballot.

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court in its *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* and

Buckley v. Valeo decisions construed the spending of money by individuals, corporations, and special interests in elections as protected free speech under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the *Citizens United* decision has allowed unlimited donations to go through super political action committees (PACs), giving the nation’s wealthiest individuals and corporations undue influence over the outcome of elections and the policies of elected officials; and

WHEREAS, OpenSecrets.org, maintained by the Center for Responsive Politics, reported that super PACs raised \$828,224,700 and spent \$609,417,654 during the 2012 presidential campaign; and

WHEREAS, *The New York Times* reported on the electoral spending plans of Charles and David Koch in January 2015, noting that the “Koch Brothers’ Budget of \$889 Million for 2016 [Was] on Par With Both Parties’ Spending”; and

WHEREAS, *The Washington Post* reported on April 15, 2016, that 50 “mega-donors and their relatives” donated 41 percent of all money raised until February by super PACs for the 2016 presidential election; and

WHEREAS, an August 2016 study by the Wesleyan Media Project found that “there has been a vast increase in the volume of advertising sponsored by outside groups between 2000 and 2016,” and that “outside

groups aired more ads in the 2012 presidential general election than in any previous presidential election”; and

WHEREAS, *Time* reported in October 2014 that “Since the mid-1980s, the amount dumped on elections by campaigns and outside groups, as measured by the Federal Election Commission, has grown 555 percent-faster than even the alarming increases in the costs of health care and private college tuition”; and

WHEREAS, 17 states and more than 650 municipal governments, including 18 in Washington State, have passed resolutions advocating that *Citizens United* be overturned; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council passed Resolution 31380 in 2012 calling on the United States Congress to:

- initiate steps to amend the United States Constitution with provisions that clearly state that:
- (1) Corporations are not human beings, and only human beings are endowed with Constitutional rights.
 - (2) Contributions and expenditures for political purposes are not Constitutionally-protected speech, and that, therefore regulating political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting political speech.
 - (3) Congress and the States shall have the power to regulate contributions and expenditures for campaigns and ballot measures, and to require public disclosure of the sources of such contributions and expenditures

and

WHEREAS, Washington State Initiative 735, which will be on the November 2016 ballot, is consistent with Resolution 31380, stating:

1. The rights listed and acknowledged in The Constitution of the United States are the rights of individual human beings only.
2. The judiciary shall not construe the spending of money to be free speech under the First Amendment of The Constitution of the United States. Federal, state, and local governments shall be fully empowered to regulate political contributions and expenditures to ensure that no person or artificial legal entity gains undue influence over government and the political process.
3. All political contributions and expenditures shall be disclosed promptly and in a manner accessible to voters prior to elections.

WHEREAS, after notice in accordance with RCW 42.17A.555 and Seattle Municipal Code Section 2.04.300, persons in favor of Initiative 735 and those opposed to it have been given an equal opportunity to share

their views in an open public meeting; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR

CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. The Seattle City Council urges Seattle voters to vote “Yes” on Initiative 735 in the November 8, 2016, general election.

Adopted by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2016, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this ____ day of _____, 2016.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the ____ day of _____, 2016.

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2016.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)