



Friendship petition seeks to repeal Citizens United

By Juliette Laaka | Jan 08, 2013

FRIENDSHIP — A grassroots petition effort by Friendship citizens on Election Day will be presented to the board of selectmen Jan. 14 to strengthen support for repeal of national campaign finance law Citizens United.

Independent House District 49 Legislator Jeffrey Evangelos of Friendship called the pursuit "democracy in action."

The petition, garnered 122 signatures and calls for the following article to be added to the town meeting agenda, "To see if the Town will vote to pass a resolution directing the Maine Legislature and Maine's Congressional delegation to call upon Congress to pass a U.S. Constitutional amendment for the purpose of overturning the Supreme Court's 'Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission' decision made on Jan. 21, 2010. The purpose of this amendment is to limit the influence and to control the political spending by corporations and unions in our elections."

The ruling is popularly known for the justification that corporations and unions are allowed the same rights as individuals, including protection of free speech under the First Amendment. The ruling determined that money is free speech and campaign spending cannot be infringed by a limit.

Evangelos said he supports the resolution and added special interest money, that financed "unprecedented" negative campaigning this election cycle, must be reversed.

"This grassroots effort, supported by Republicans, Democrats, and independents, is a critical bipartisan act of support for clean elections and real democracy in action," he said in an email.

Evangelos said repeal of Citizens United is a national movement and is in the "early momentum stage." The deadline to file a bill in the Maine Legislature is Jan. 18, but bills concerning campaign finance laws have already been prepared, he said.

Other Midcoast towns, such as Camden and Thomaston, will also participate, gathering petitions and presenting them to their respective boards, Evangelos said.

The Friendship town meeting is scheduled for March 19.

Evangelos said a rally at the statehouse is slated for Tuesday, Jan. 22 to support the repeal effort. "I welcome their efforts and they can count on my support," he said.

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