

# Sun Journal

## R. Cote: Disappointed in City Council

[Letters](#) |

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

On Feb. 4, the Auburn City Council decided not to vote on or consider further a citizen-initiated resolution in support of a U.S. constitutional amendment on campaign finance reform. That same evening, the Brunswick Town Council voted 6-3 in favor of a similar resolution, joining more than 24 Maine cities and towns in supporting an amendment.

Some Auburn councilors questioned whether the resolution was pertinent to city business. Last November, the District 15 state Senate race saw more than \$241,000 in outside spending — filling residents' mailboxes with negative advertising. That was up from the 2010 race, in which outside spending was decisive.

Undisclosed campaign contributions benefit the candidate who spends the money most effectively, be they Democrat or Republican, and they create an arms race from which neither party can step down. That will only increase without campaign finance reform. The state Legislature makes decisions that are vitally important to Auburn; who residents send to Augusta matters.

It is entirely possible that large undisclosed contributions will enter the picture in municipal elections right here in Auburn, if an outside group sees a financial reason for doing so. The question is not free speech, it is out-sized influence from corporations run by people who don't live here.

Constitutional amendments are a huge undertaking but vital to democracy, and support from municipal councils and state legislatures is part of the process.

I am disappointed the Auburn City Council didn't see it that way.

Renee Cote  
*Auburn*