



For Immediate Release

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U.S. Supreme Court Overturns Federal Campaign Finance Law

5-4 ruling strikes down aggregate contribution limits for wealthiest Americans

Portland, ME – In a ruling released today, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the overall contribution limit to federal candidates, political parties, and political action committees (PACs). The *McCutcheon v. FEC* ruling increases the role wealthy individuals play in financing federal elections.

“This ruling is bad for our democracy and everyday people. It advantages the wealthiest among us – those who give more than \$123,200 in an election cycle,” said Andrew Bossie, Executive Director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. “This is another blow to average Americans who increasingly feel shut out of elections and government thanks to the flood of big money let loose by this Court. From *Citizens United* to *McCutcheon*, the Court is moving campaign finance law in the wrong direction.”

Claiming that the aggregate limits infringe on “the most fundamental First Amendment activities,” while failing to prevent corruption, the Court remanded the case back to the District Court, which had upheld the limit. Currently, the aggregate limit to all federal candidates is \$48,600. Wealthy donors may also give \$74,600 to parties and PACs, make unlimited donations to SuperPACs, and spend without limit on independent expenditures. Under the new ruling, these donors would be able to give the maximum individual contribution to all candidates, which could amount to millions of dollars in each election cycle.

The contribution limit to individual candidates was not challenged in *McCutcheon v. FEC*, but Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that he favored going further and striking down all contribution limits.

In his dissent, Justice Breyer stressed that measures to combat systemic corruption are important to protect democracy, writing, “Where enough money calls the tune, the general public will not be heard.”

“As the Court elevates the role of money in our elections, it’s important that people stand up for our democracy,” said Bossie. “It is more important than ever that Maine people step up to preserve and strengthen our Clean Election and transparency laws. If the voices of everyday people are to matter in elections, it will be because everyday people stood firm for laws that enhance their First Amendment rights, too.” He concluded, “At MCCE, we believe the First Amendment is important for everyone, and that when it comes to elections, all voices deserve to be heard. It’s time for common-sense reforms that are relevant to the political realities of today.”

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