

WITNESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF H.R. NO 74

Time: 3:00

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by

Michael Greenman

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I'm Michael Greenman, a resident of Westerville, Ohio for the past 17 years; for the last 7, a supporter of Move to Amend and more recently, National Moderator of the Move to Amend Interfaith Caucus. I am pleased to speak in favor of the Ohio General Assembly supporting and passing H.R. No. 74.

I have been involved in the push for this amendment for the past 16 years.

I firmly believe that the two issues that are most responsible for the deplorable situation of our democracy are the realities that corporations are legally considered to be persons and that money is considered to be speech. Both of these resulted from US Supreme Court decisions, rather than from the wishes of the people and the passage of legislation.

Money from corporations and from wealth flows into our elections in unprecedented amounts with few limits. Add to this the influence, either through lobbying or through court decisions favoring corporate interests – and together they have set us on a path leading to the degradation of our democracy and to many critical aspects of our society and our planet.

I am well aware from personal conversations with legislators at all levels of government that NO ONE likes to have to “Dial for Dollars” every day in order to ensure their re-election. Passage of this amendment will permit the return to limits on campaign spending, and the renewal of the former trend towards public financing of elections.

You've heard from others regarding the broader reasons for reversing these damaging realities.

I'd like add to the discussion what I believe is the most important reason to remove corporations and money from our political system: The existential threat to our planet from growing climate change!

There is near unanimity that the primary cause of the acceleration of climate change is the emission into our atmosphere of greenhouse gases by the fossil fuel and commercial-meat industries. Efforts by governments at all levels have had no success in mitigating those emissions.

Real systemic change can only come from this or a similar constitutional amendment eliminating corporate personhood and money as speech. Its passage, absent the overwhelming power of corporations and money, will lead inevitably to reasonable laws and regulations allowing for real change.

So, to the many reasons for securing the amendment that will come from the passage of HR 74, and from similar actions in other states, I add for your consideration the suggestion that this is the most certain way to allow “We the People” to realistically begin a meaningful path towards abating, or even reversing climate change, and ensuring the long-term wellbeing of our planet and ourselves.