

TO: The Minnesota House of Representatives
Election Finance and Policy Committee
Rep. Mike Freiberg, Chair
Rep. Emma Greenman, Vice-Chair

FROM: Vicki Barnes
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In-person Testimony in favor of HF1064 - a resolution asking that Congress propose an amendment to enable Congress and the states to regulate contributions and expenditures in campaigns, elections, and ballot measures.

Good morning. My name is Aaron Anderson. I live and vote in District 52B.

I'm here today as a volunteer for American Promise, a non-profit dedicated to protecting American democracy and the citizens it is supposed to serve. In that role I am speaking in support of HF1064 and the aim it endorses: overturning *Citizens United* via constitutional amendment.

Every Representative on this committee knows their constituents are bone weary of a political process dominated by negative advertising, partisan division, and the gridlock that results. Too many people simply resign interest and participation out of frustration. Much worse, it's far too understandable that they do.

Politics and government can only reclaim the people's esteem if Americans are given valid reason to trust our system. Soaring campaign costs fueled by billions of dollars of anonymous donations, usually routed through multiple political action committees will not do so.

But legally, that is precisely what is allowed and practiced by both major parties and, more importantly, by every industry and interest imaginable. *Citizens United* wrested away from us our ability to govern the very basis of our governance: our elections. Representation is increasingly won through donations instead of democracy. There are few if any safeguards against foreign money making its way into our elections. And it's never been promised that the biggest checkbook has the interests of the people at heart.

We know our own interests. The design and intent of our government rests on our ability to act on them. *Citizens United* hobbles that capacity. Our own known interests, however we each define them as actual citizens – not as corporations, unions, or lobbies – demand that we regain this vital power. I urge this committee to support HF1064 and for the Minnesota legislature to adopt it.

Thank you.

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