

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

My name is Vicki Barnes. I am the volunteer MN State Chapter leader for American Promise, a national non-profit group formed in 2016 out of concern that engagement with conservative voters on this amendment effort was lacking. In Minnesota, my volunteers and I work in the rural areas, interacting with and being welcomed by folks who are eager to share how they feel about the outsized “voice” of billionaires and superPACs in our elections. And the relief in learning that a mechanism exists to address this issue changes their demeanor considerably and they are quick to sign a pledge of support.

This resolution represents how powerless and disillusioned voters feel. These are the words of the people. I urge you to read this with that in mind. This same resolution wording is what over 170 cities and towns in our neighboring state of Wisconsin have passed in citizen initiatives. In fact, 84% of voters in Janesville, WI approved this resolution while also reelecting Paul Ryan to Congress. And this resolution would have been passed here in Minnesota a decade ago if Minnesota had a statewide citizen initiative capability – not that I am advocating for that.

Ultimately, it is Congress that will write the amendment proposal in a bi-partisan manner, as a 2/3 count is needed per Article V of the U S Constitution. This amendment will be written in a way that enables Congress and the states to set reasonable spending limits in campaigns, elections, and ballot measures, thereby restoring the ability of self-government to the people, and sovereignty to the states. But to encourage that, we need the power of state resolutions calling Congress to act, as well as to demonstrate that Minnesota is ready to ratify. As the 23<sup>rd</sup> state to pass a resolution in support - in a bi-partisan vote - Minnesota might just be the tipping point to get more states currently having this same debate to push forward.