

January 21, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Citizens United and the Fair Elections Now Act (H.R. 1826 & S. 752)

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

We write to you at an extremely troubling moment in the history of our democracy. The recent Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* has opened the door to increased election spending by the deepest pocketed political interests in American politics. The corrosive influence of special interest money already impairs our government's ability to address our nation's most critical problems. We cannot continue down this path.

As business leaders, we believe the current political fundraising system is already broken. The Supreme Court decision further exacerbates this problem. Members of Congress already spend too much time raising money from large contributors. And often, many of us individually are on the receiving end of solicitation phone calls from members of Congress. With additional money flowing into the system due to the Court's decision, the fundraising pressure on members of Congress will only increase.

Congress needs to spend its time working on the leading issues of the day, from reviving our economy to addressing our nation's energy crisis to reforming the healthcare system. And on those issues, Americans must have full confidence that Congress has acted in the best interests of the public, swayed by the merits of policy without regard to the interests of campaign contributors.

We believe Congress must address both the *Citizens United* decision and the problems of the current campaign finance system by passing the Fair Elections Now Act (S. 752 and H.R. 1826). This measure would enact a voluntary alternative system for financing federal elections, giving candidates the option to run for office on a mixture of small contributions and limited public funds.

Under the leadership of Assistant Majority Leader Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and House Democratic Caucus Chairman John Larson (D-Conn.), the bill is moving forward. We have significant momentum in the House, with 126 cosponsors joining Representative Larson. With a strong public financing system in place, candidates will not be consigned to a system in which constant fundraising creates conflicts of interest and leaves Members little time to do the job they were elected to do.

We hope in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision you will support the Fair Elections Now Act so that Congress can act effectively on the people's business.

Signed,

Berkley Bedell
Founder & Former President
Pure Fishing

Peter A. Benoliel
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Allan Brown
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Richard M. Burnes, Jr.
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Frank Butler
President (Ret.)
Eastman Gelatine Corp.

Ben Carlisle
President
Allegiant Partners Inc.

Ben Cohen
Founder
Ben & Jerry's

Charles Couric
Founder & Past President
Brita Products Company

Richard Foos
President
Shout! Factory

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Give Something Back

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Playboy Enterprises

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Corporate Affiliations for Identification Purposes Only

CC: Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
Senator Charles Schumer, Chairman, Committee on Rules & Administration
Senator Bob Bennett, Ranking Member, Committee on Rules & Administration
Assistant Majority Leader Richard Durbin