

Sept. 1, 2015

NW15-014

To: Northwest Regional Council  
From: NW L&PA Committee  
Subject: **PRE-SUBMITTED NEW BUSINESS: Support WAmend**

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**Background**

See I-735 - DIGEST

The Washington Coalition to Amend the Constitution

<http://www.wamend.org/initiativelanguage>

**SPEEA Council has previously passed:**

**M12-015 Oppose Corporations are People Rights in State and National Politics.** It is moved that: The SPEEA Council supports State and National efforts to reverse the 2010 Citizens United ruling and to limit the power of corporations from having the same constitutional rights as people.

**I-735 Ballot Measure Summary**

The measure would urge the Washington state congressional delegation to propose a federal constitutional amendment clarifying that constitutional rights belong only to individuals, not corporations; that spending money is not free speech under the First Amendment; that governments are fully empowered to regulate political contributions and expenditures to prevent undue influence; and that political contributions and expenditures must be promptly disclosed to the public. The measure would urge the legislature to ratify such an amendment.

Per the WA State Constitution an initiative requires enough signatures equal to at least 8% of the votes cast for Governor in the most recent gubernatorial election. Based upon the 2012 Election 246,372 valid signatures of WA registered voters must be filed to reach the deadline for filing an initiative petition for the 2016 election.

The Washington Coalition to Amend the Constitution (WAmend) has filed with the Washington Secretary of State an initiative to the Legislature calling for amendment to the U.S. Constitution to:

1. Establish that the rights recognized in the Constitution are those of natural persons only, not of corporations, and that the spending of money is not a form of protected free speech; and
2. Require prompt, accessible disclosure of all political contributions and expenditures; and
3. Authorize federal, state and local governments to regulate such contributions

## **Help is needed to put Initiative 735 on the November 2016 ballot.**

### **NW L&PA Committee Recommendation**

The NW Legislative and Public Affairs Committee recommends' passage of this motion.

### **Motion**

It is moved that: **THE NORTHWEST COUNCIL RECOMMENDS SPEEA CONTRIBUTE \$3,000.00 TO WAMEND FOR ITS EFFORT TO OBTAIN THE NUMBER OF SIGNATURES NECESSARY TO QUALIFY INITIATIVE 735 AS AN INITIATIVE. IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT THE NORTHWEST COUNCIL ENCOURAGES SPEEA SUPPORT OF I-735 DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND AGAINST EFFORTS TO WEAKEN IT. IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT THE NW SPEEA COUNCIL ENCOURAGES SPEEA TO EDUCATE OUR MEMBERS ON I-735 UP TO THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTION.**

PRO: Our monetary support, in addition to other sponsors will assist WAMend's ability to hire paid signature collectors and increase their ability to succeed in meeting the signature threshold required to get the initiative on the ballot. *Citizens United* and other decisions invalidated campaign spending reform laws enacted by bipartisan majorities in Congress and thereby unleashed an ever-increasing torrent of special interest money into our political process; and because, this has increased business spending in political elections to at least 15 times greater than labor spending, and the disparity between the two is sure to increase to the disadvantage of working people.

CON: Reversing *Citizens United* and other decisions for campaign spending reform laws would prohibit and limit Businesses monetary expenditures to influence elections and our Legislators.