



Ohio Senate

Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-4538
SD06@senate.state.oh.us

Committees:

Government Oversight, Chair
Education
Energy and Public Utilities

Jon Husted

State Senator
6th District

January 25, 2010

Senate President Bill Harris
1 Capitol Square
Ohio Senate # 201, 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Speaker Armond Budish
Riffe Center, 14th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear President Harris and Speaker Budish:

In light of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* prohibiting a ban on spending by corporations and unions in candidate elections, I write today urging the House and Senate to adopt legislation that would put proper safeguards in place to ensure transparency in campaign finance and advertising.

While Ohio law currently prohibits corporate and union contributions, the Court's ruling places aspects of these prohibitions in great jeopardy. As a result, Ohio elections will likely face the influence of these expenditures by court edict and without any disclosure requirements. It is only through proactive steps that we can avoid the influence of unlimited, undisclosed contributions from dominating the 2010 elections.

I write with a sense of urgency given the fact that the filing deadline for the 2010 election is less than one month away and businesses, unions, candidates and most of all the public deserve to know who is paying for the ads that could soon be appearing to promote, attack and defend candidates for public office. While the court ruled corporations and unions have the right to freedom of speech, it did not rule they had the right to anonymous free speech.

To that end, I am drafting legislation that would require the following:

- 1) That all corporate and union expenditures on campaigns must clearly identify who is paying for the advertising;

2) That corporations and unions must report the amount of the expenditure and the individual corporate or union donors to the Secretary of State.

I am concerned about the impact of unlimited expenditures from corporations and unions will have on the campaign and governing environment in Ohio. While we cannot prohibit or limit these expenditures in light of the Supreme Court's ruling, we should act on the fact that the court did not prohibit disclosure requirements and take full advantage of this open door to shine light on these expenditures.

I recognize there will be others in the General Assembly who will want to advance ideas in addition to what I have outlined and I encourage that thoughtful input. However, I wanted to advance the preceding framework as a proactive starting point.

I hope we will act promptly, cooperatively and in a bipartisan fashion to resolve what could be a destabilizing force in the 2010 elections.

Sincerely


Jon Husted

cc: Governor Ted Strickland
Secretary of State, Jennifer Brunner