



Minnesota SF 2404 - We the People bill

FACT SHEET

Informal Name of Legislation: We the People bill

89th Session (2015-2016): Introduced by Senator John Marty on March 8, 2016

Senate Bill Number: [SF 2404](#)

Issue Addressed by this Act: Democracy of, by and for the people has been impaired by Supreme Court decisions that have granted artificial entities the same rights as people under the U.S. Constitution. We are all effectively weakened when artificial entities possess inalienable constitutional rights to influence public opinion, overturn public laws, buy public officials and intimidate individuals and local communities.

Short Description of this Act: A resolution memorializing Congress; requesting that Congress clarify that the rights protected under the Constitution are the rights of natural persons and not the rights of artificial entities and that spending money to influence elections is not speech under the First Amendment; asking that Congress propose a constitutional amendment to provide such clarification, and, if Congress does not propose an amendment, applying to Congress to call a convention to propose such an amendment.

Status: It passed on March 18 in the Senate Judiciary Committee and passed to the [Rules Subcommittee on Elections](#).

89th Session Reconvened on March 8, 2016; session to end no later than May 23, 2016.

Impact at the National Level: Article V of the U.S. Constitution states amendments may be proposed by Congress or two-thirds of state legislatures through a constitutional convention. Sixteen (16) states have passed resolutions in support of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution clarifying that corporations do not have inherent constitutional rights and that spending money on political campaigns is not free speech. The MN “We the People” bill would be the first to stipulate that if Congress takes no action Minnesota will exercise its right to call for an amendments convention.

Background on Development of the We the People bill. During the 88th Session MN State Senator John Marty and State Representative Raymond Dehn were the primary champions of the bill (SF17/HF276), working with former Representative Bill Hilty, Move to Amend volunteers from local affiliates in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, and Grand Rapids areas, with support from Common Cause Minnesota. The resolution in the bill introduced in the 89th Session is basically the same; however the Whereas statements expand the need for the bill.

Move to Amend is a national, grassroots coalition that works toward overcoming corporate power by calling for a constitutional amendment ending corporate personhood and declaring that money is not speech. The nonpartisan group was created in response to the Supreme Court ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. The ruling held that corporations have a First Amendment right to make expenditures from their general treasuries supporting or opposing candidates for political office. Move to Amend argues that the Court's decision disrupts the democratic process by granting disproportionate influence to the wealthy.

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To become involved: Sign the petition at www.movetoamend.org or text “Sign” to 707-656-4019. This is a national database and if you provide your email address and/or phone number our local affiliates will be able to communicate with you.