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### **Candidates Pledge to End Outsized Political Influence American Promise to Inform Voters in 2022 California Primary**

Americans across the political spectrum widely support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to reduce the powerful influence of political spending in politics, but Congress does not currently reflect that approval. Informed California voters have the greatest potential to close this gap by voting in the primary election on June 7<sup>th</sup>. In at least 14 districts where newly competitive candidates are challenging incumbents within the parties, American Promise will ask candidates to sign the American Promise Candidate Pledge to use their office, if elected, to advance such an amendment. We track and report the results of the Candidate Pledge campaign, which will allow the voters to distinguish between the many challengers for Congress in advance of the primary election in California on June 7, 2022.

Previously, California's congressional delegation included more than 40 co-sponsors of proposed amendments to enable reasonable limits to be set on campaign funding as designed by the states. Significant re-drawing of California districts based on the 2020 census has created competition among candidates, many of whom have demonstrated strong support for an amendment in the past. All candidates for federal office in California's 52 districts will receive an invitation to sign the American Promise Candidate Pledge by April 30, 2022.

American Promise provides signers with a Candidate Graphic, featuring the candidate's own photo and their quote, to assist them in their campaign. Signers may anticipate media coverage of their action, since our national citizen network routinely writes Letters to the Editor, Op-Eds, and articles to educate the public on the urgent need and progress of achieving the Amendment at the state, national and local levels. American Promise maintains a non-partisan approach and does not endorse candidates but works to educate voters on this crucial issue through educational forums and sharing candidates' positions on this initiative.

#### Background on American Promise and the Amendment

##### **The Problem**

Money isn't speech; it's power. Supreme Court decisions such as *Buckley v. Valeo* and *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* created radical new "free speech rights" for the money of corporations, unions, wealthy individuals, and special interests at the expense of the rights of

all Americans and the interests of the country. The concentrated financial influence of special interests in our politics is the number one problem our nation faces, and the survival of American democracy is on the line if we fail to act. Now, an Amendment is more urgent than ever. Global corporations and special interests have been gaining “super-citizen” status for decades. *Citizens United v. FEC* is a 2010 Supreme Court ruling that says: 1) corporations and other legal entities have the same rights as humans, 2) limitless political spending is the same as free speech, and 3) Americans cannot set limits on political spending.

### **The Solution**

An amendment is the only way to rebuild the foundation of American democracy by allowing the American people to set common sense, fair limits on political spending. The Amendment will: 1) secure fair, free elections; 2) protect the rights of all Americans to equal participation and representation; and 3) return to original liberties for people rather than new privileges for the largest corporations, unions, and special interests.

Right now, the Supreme Court says we are prohibited from setting limits to money in our politics because money is free speech. Americans overwhelmingly disagree, and know that effective democracy requires political representation for all, not only those who can afford it. A political system based on money isn't democracy; it's plutocracy. The Amendment will empower all Americans to have their voices heard, and will be the eighth time the American people used the amendment process to reverse Supreme Court mistakes that endangered the nation. Americans won all twenty-seven previous Constitutional amendments—including the Bill of Rights, equal rights for all regardless of race, votes for women, term limits on Presidents, election of Senators and an end to the poll tax—by forcing 2/3 of Congress to propose the Amendment, and 3/4 (38) state legislatures to ratify the amendment. Now we will do so again. Twenty two (22) states and more than 800 cities and towns have already called for this amendment. The Amendment to the U.S. Constitution replaces the Supreme Court's doctrine of political inequality, reflected in decisions such as *Citizens United v. FEC* and *Buckley v. Valeo*, with foundational American principles of equal citizenship and representation as safeguards against systemic corruption.

American Promise is a nation-wide cross-partisan network of Americans working to ratify an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to end unlimited, outsized influence of global corporations and wealthy concentrated interests in American politics. <https://americanpromise.net/>