

Get Money Out of Politics

By [Brandon Novick](#)

Individuals and corporations alike can spend infinite sums of money to influence elections and push candidates that will support and – at the very least – not oppose their interests. The Supreme Court protected such unlimited spending in its *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) decision by classifying independent expenditures – which support or oppose a clearly identifiable candidate but are not made in coordination with a candidate – as constitutionally protected speech. The Court spread that right from individuals to corporations and unions in *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010).

Money currently dominates American politics:

- The presidential and congressional elections in 2024 cost over \$14.8 billion.
- In 2024, the House and Senate candidates who spent more money won nearly 94 percent and 88 percent of the time, respectively.
- Outside groups – such as Super PACs, 501(c)(4)s, corporations, and individuals – spent over \$4.2 billion in “independent expenditures,” the outside spending the Supreme Court has barred Congress from limiting.
- Several studies show that campaign contributions yield greater access to lawmakers, providing a mechanism for lobbyists to purchase political power.

The Supreme Court has barred any legislature limiting the corruption of American politics. As the Court stated in its 2014 *McCutcheon v. FEC* decision, “the Government may not seek to limit the appearance of mere influence or access” in relation to spending “large sums [that] may garner ‘influence over or access to’ elected officials or political parties.”

Solution: Bypass the Supreme Court and Pass a Constitutional Amendment to Allow Government to Fight Corruption.

Congress should pass such an amendment, but it is not required. Two-thirds of state legislatures can call for a constitutional convention to propose an amendment to be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

- Pass a constitutional amendment to allow the government to regulate campaign fundraising and spending both by campaigns and outside individuals and artificial entities.
- Allow for the law to differentiate between natural persons and artificial entities along with persons and specifically registered lobbyists.

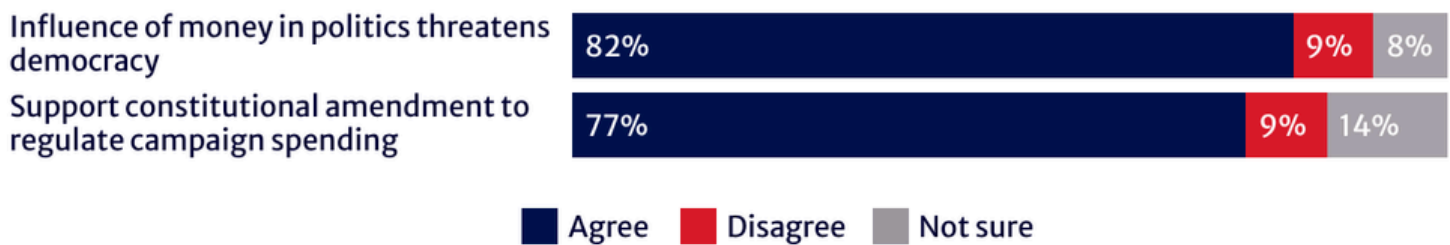
The Public Supports Taking Action

An October 16–21, 2024 American Promise [poll](#) of 1,010 registered voters nationwide asked the following questions:

- A proposed constitutional amendment would allow Congress and the states to reasonably regulate and limit money in our campaigns and elections. Would you support or oppose this amendment?
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Individuals and entities should be able to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence our campaigns and elections?”

Public Opposes the Influence of Big Money in Politics

Share of registered voters agreeing or disagreeing with statements about the influence of money in US elections



Source: Citizen Data, *American Promise October 2024 Toplines*, October 16–21, 2024. Some shares may not total 100% due to rounding.



Money dominates American politics, where the ability to spend millions and even billions of dollars is often the deciding factor in who gets elected. This political spending also significantly influences who has access and can successfully lobby elected officials. The Supreme Court has explicitly barred Congress or any state government from addressing this corruption by classifying political spending as protected speech. The vast majority of Americans agree: Individuals and entities should not be allowed to spend unlimited sums of money to buy elections and political power, and we should pass a constitutional amendment to allow the government to regulate money in politics.

Resources:

- [Cost of Election. Open Secrets.](#)
- [The Top 10 Things Every Voter Should Know About Money-in-Politics. Open Secrets.](#)
- [Money in Politics, Brennan Center for Justice.](#)
- [Report to the Attorney General: Limited Constitutional Conventions Under Article V of the United States Constitution. US Department of Justice, September 10, 1987.](#)