ROTARY CLUB OF APPLETON
GUSTO

Service Above Self

MOVE TO AMEND: THE CASE FOR OR AGAINST

Move to Amend is a resolution to amend the U.S. Constitution. The resolution calls for controls on campaign fundraising and spending. The resolution also affirms that the protections of the U.S. Constitution extend to people, not to legal entities like corporations, non-profits and unions. Because 7,350 residents in Neenah, Menasha and Appleton signed petitions, the resolution will appear on the ballot in the November election. State-wide, 41 communities have passed resolutions with 61% to 87% approval. Nationally, 16 state legislatures have called for an amendment and 478 communities have passed a resolution or are considering one. The force that's driving political fundraising and spending is the cost of getting elected. That cost is soaring. The cost of getting elected to the U.S. House of Representatives averaged $1.6M per campaign in 2012. The raise this sum, a candidate must raise an average of $2,187 per day, 7 days per week throughout her 2 year term. Running for the Senate costs $10.4 M. A Senator must raise $4,727 per day, 7 days per week, throughout his 6 year term. The soaring cost of getting elected benefits incumbents since they can raise money more easily than their challengers. To raises these sums, elected officials spend significant time asking donors for money. According to U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, "I think most Americans would be shocked, not surprised but shocked, if they knew how much time a United States Senator spends raising money." Most of those hours are spent in call centers across the street from the U.S. Capitol. Peter DeFazio, US Representative from Oregon, explains, "Boy, this is about the worst looking, most abusive call center situation I've seen in my life. These people don't have any workspace. The other person is virtually touching them. It's like counters on the wall with telephones and people 8 inches away from you." "We sit at these desks with stacks of names in front of us and short bios and histories of giving," said Durbin. "And make these calls to people who are our faithful friends and ask them to give money or have a fundraiser." The 2nd issue addressed by the resolution is granting Constitutional rights to legal entities. In 1868, the 14 amendment was passed calling for "equal protection under the law". The amendment caused states to revise statutes so they afford equal protection to whites and the recently freed Negroes. Since then, courts have expanded the definition of "equal protection" to include legal entities like corporations, non-profits and unions. In 2010, a divided U.S. Supreme Court held that corporations are associations of people. Corporations therefore have free speech rights and since money is speech (Buckley v Valeo 1976), corporate political contributions to independent groups cannot be limited. Four of the nine justices disagreed saying that legal entities are not "We the People", a phrase from the preamble to the Constitution. The public opposed the decision by a wide margin. The Case For the resolution: (a) Since money is corrupting the political process, campaign fundraising and spending needs to be regulated and (b) Corporations are not people so they should not have the protections of the Constitution. The Case Against the resolution: (a) Money is speech. Any limitation on free speech puts us on a slippery slope and (b) Corporations are associations of people so they should have the protections of the Constitution. Jim Bowman, the presenter, seeks audiences for this program. Send suggestions to him at james@jbassoc.biz.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Rotary on the Road sign up sheets are available at the sign in table at each meeting. Make sure to sign up for which facility you are interested in attending. Rotary on the Road is September 23rd.
- FAMILY OF ROTARY invites you to attend An Historic Bus Tour of Neenah and Menasha on Wednesday, September 24.   Local Historian Nancy Barker will be our guide. Cost: $5 per person. Please sign up at the Registration Table as you attend the weekly Rotary meetings. Bus departs the parking lot on West College Avenue next to the McDonald's at 5:30 pm.   Tour will conclude at 7pm.   Participants wishing to gather for dinner at a local restaurant are encouraged to do so. WE RECEIVED GREAT FEEDBACK FROM LAST YEAR'S TOUR OF DOWNTOWN APPLETON.
- STATUS CHANGES: We have a few members who have changed to Attendance not required and they are: Karla Blair, Jeffrey Riester, Lisa Weiner and Tom Berkedal. We have had some members resign and they are: Alyce Dumke, Amna Qazi and Eric Turner.
- Val Wylie is moving to Phoenix at the end of this week, so we will lose her as member of our Club. Her email address is: valbirneyw@sbcglobal.net if members want to wish her well or contact her.

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GUESTS, VISITORS AND MAKE-UPS

Guests today were Kim Schiedermayer with Shipra Seefeldt

Visiting Rotarians were Stella Kasirye from Rotary Club of Bwaila in Lilongwe, Malawi

Make-ups were Rick Stark in Montana

NEXT WEEKS MEETING- CHILDREN WITH DISABILITES GRANT RECIPENTS

The Children with Disabilities Committee gave out over $20,000 in grants. On September 2 you'll hear from some of the recipients of those grants to learn how some of that money was spent.