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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

December 2, 2014

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Hon. Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Judiciary Committee
B-351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

The 113th Congress is coming to a close on the heels of an election season that once again shattered all previous records for midterm election spending. With Americans of all political persuasions fed up by the growing influence of special interests in government and frustrated by the partisan gridlock in Congress, we believe the House Judiciary Committee can help start the 114th Congress off right by holding hearings on a constitutional amendment to reduce the influence of big money in politics.

In the nearly five years since the Supreme Court issued its 5-4 ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*, Americans have witnessed each election cycle grow more expensive than the last as wealthy donors, corporations, and other special interests take advantage of a newfound right to spend unlimited sums of money through Super PACs and secretive 501(c)(4) groups. The Supreme Court only further diminished the influence of ordinary voters in our elections with this year's 5-4 ruling in *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*, which struck down federal aggregate donation limits and declared that wealthy donors have just as much of a right to influence public officials as the voters they were elected by. The access to public officials gained by large dollar donors is well-documented and only destined to intensify now that wealthy individuals are able to donate \$6 million to federal candidates, political parties, and joint election funds during a single election cycle. The end of the aggregate limit means that one person can spend nearly 120 times the median household income to donate to candidates across the country, and only the most overt forms of bribery will remain off limits.

While our campaign finance system has been flawed for some time, it is no surprise why so many of our constituents feel as though their voices are not being heard in the post-*Citizens United* era. These highly controversial Supreme Court decisions have unleashed unprecedented spending in our elections. During the 2012 presidential election – the most expensive cycle in our nation's history – it took just 32 wealthy Super PAC donors to outspend the small donations of nearly 3.7 million ordinary Americans. Likewise, the 2014 elections – now the most

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expensive midterm election cycle in our nation's history – saw nearly \$4 billion spent by candidates, political parties, Super PACs, and outside groups.

More than 120 members of the U.S. House of Representatives have cosponsored H.J. Res 119, a proposed constitutional amendment that restores legitimacy to reasonable limits on election spending. Likewise, the U.S. Senate engaged in a worthwhile and spirited debate on this constitutional amendment earlier this year, and thus far sixteen states and over 550 municipalities nationwide have passed resolutions calling for an amendment overturning *Citizens United* and related rulings.

Most Americans agree that the rise of big money in politics undermines the basic guiding principle of our democracy—that every citizen enjoys equality under the law and an equal voice in our elections. While we believe that amending the Constitution should be reserved only for times when no other recourse will do, we have seen the impact of these decisions, and we are convinced that an amendment is ripe for consideration.

We respectfully request that you allow for consideration of a constitutional amendment to limit the influence of money in politics in the House Judiciary Committee. These issues are so essential to the health of our democracy and they deserve a full and open debate.

Sincerely,



Ted Deutch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



James P. McGovern
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



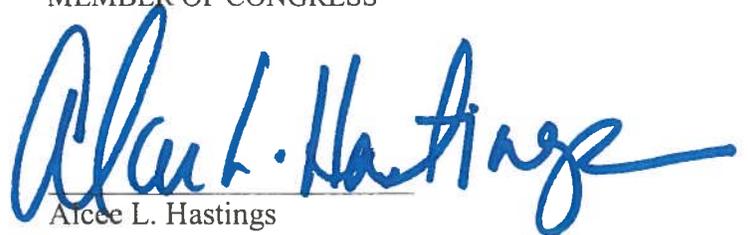
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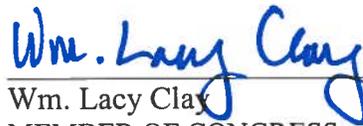
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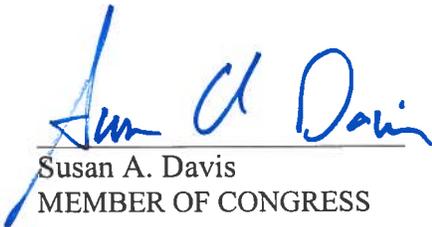
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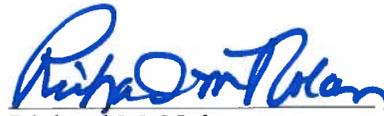
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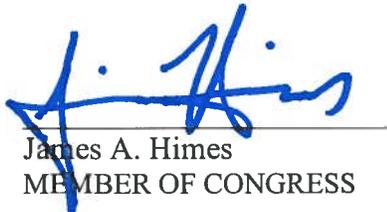
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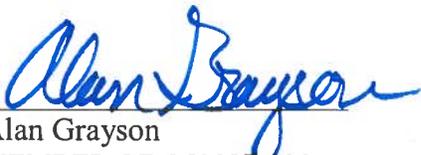
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Alan Lowenthal
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



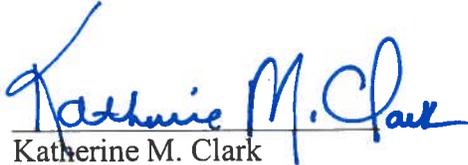
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