

# REGION/NATION

THE KEENE SENTINEL

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## The answer is right there

While the editorial "Citizens uniting" (Sentinel Friday, Feb. 14) is correct to decry the deleterious effects of the "millions of dollars being poured into federal and state races by so-called super PACs" following the 2009 Supreme Court ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, it is not the case that "there are only two ways to undo the court's ruling."

The Sentinel editorial rightfully rejects the second of these two ways — the call for a constitutional convention. It also notes that efforts to amend the Constitution are not likely to pass in our politically deadlocked Congress.

The grassroots political efforts to overturn *Citizens United* called for in the editorial are admirable, but there is a much easier way to blunt its effect — simply enforce the Supreme Court ruling as it is written.

I can only assume that most people who write about *Citizens United* have not actually read the Supreme Court ruling. While it clearly overturns the limits on corporate and labor union funding of political ads of the 2003 Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA § 441b), the *Citizens United* ruling also upholds the disclaimer and

disclosure requirements of that law (§ 201 and 311). In other words, the Supreme Court ruling does not allow for those who donate to super PACs to remain anonymous.

The reason that the *Citizens United* ruling has led to unlimited anonymous money corrupting our democratic process is that the Federal Election Commission — a toothless agency with a three Democratic and three Republican commissioners — has failed to make public the identities of the actual corporations or labor unions that are paying for the attack ads that muddy our airwaves at election time. The FEC has interpreted "paid for by Patriot Majority" or "paid for by American Crossroads" added to the end of an attack ad as sufficient disclosure.

If we force the FEC to make public the actual funders of these super-PACs — data that the FEC already collects — then we might be able to exert real grassroots pressure in the form of economic boycotts of corporations that think they can buy our democracy.

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