

March 14, 2017

**Senate Judiciary Committee Must Focus on
Judge Gorsuch's Troubling Money-in-Politics Record**

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Senate Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Grassley, and
Ranking Member Feinstein:

As organizations representing tens of millions of Americans, we write to express our deep concern regarding the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States because of his troubling record on money in politics.

Americans across the country are concerned about the growing influence of big money in our elections and our government.

Last year, the cost of running for federal office rose yet again, with more money than ever coming from a small group of elite donors, and a substantial amount of secret money in the system. The constant pursuit of campaign money from a relative handful of wealthy contributors skews policy outcomes and has shaken confidence in our political process. Eighty-five percent of voters say we should “fundamentally change” or “completely rebuild” the current campaign money system.¹

The Supreme Court has been a key source of the problem by outlawing common sense limits on big money spending, most famously in the *Citizens United* decision. The challenge to our democracy is not simply the influence gained by billionaires and powerful corporations but, more deeply, it is the loss of an effective voice for the vast majority of Americans and of public confidence by ordinary Americans in their government and federal officeholders.

The next justice confirmed to lifetime tenure on the Court will likely be a tie-breaking vote in new cases addressing political money. In future decisions, the Court might erase our few remaining protections against big money influence in campaigns and policy-making, or permit a balanced political system in which all voices are heard and currently marginalized communities have a full say in the decisions that affect their lives.

Americans understand this, and 93 percent of voters think it's important that President Trump nominates a Supreme Court justice who is open to limiting the influence of big money in politics.² Unfortunately, Judge Gorsuch's record on money in politics and corporate power is

deeply troubling, and suggests he would support increasing the power of the wealthiest interests within the system.³

As the Senate Judiciary Committee considers whether Judge Gorsuch is fit to serve all Americans as a Supreme Court Justice, we ask that you vigorously pursue this essential question:

Will Judge Gorsuch's legal philosophy lead him to strike down even more protections against the use of corporate or personal wealth to influence elections, such as candidate and party contribution limits, or will he permit sensible limits on political money in order to ensure the voices and will of all Americans are fully represented within the political process?

Our country's democracy is at stake in the answer to this key question. The seat Judge Gorsuch seeks does not belong to President Trump, Republicans, Democrats, liberals, or conservatives. It belongs to the American people. As Senators it is your duty to ensure that the next member of the Supreme Court holds dear the belief that the Constitution protects all of us, not just the wealthy and the powerful. Any nominee who does not meet this standard must not occupy a lifetime seat on the nation's highest court.

In support of our shared democracy,

99Rise

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AFSCME

Alliance for Citizenship

Alliance for Democracy

American Atheists

American Federation of Teachers

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

Americans for Democratic Action

American Postal Workers Union

Americans Against Trump

Arab American Institute

Asian Americans Advancing Justice

Association of Flight Attendants

Berkshire Environmental Action Team

Beyond Nuclear

Brave New Films

California Clean Money Campaign

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good

Center for American Progress

Center for Emergent Diplomacy

Center for Media and Democracy

Center for Popular Democracy

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Church Women United in New York State

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

Class Action

Clean Elections Texas

Coalition for Disability Health Equity

Coalition to Restore Democracy
CODEPINK
Coffee Party Savannah
Common Cause
Concerned Citizens for Change
Conscious Elders Network
Communications Workers of America
DC Emergent Diplomacy
DC Environmental Network
DC Latino Caucus
Democracy 21
Democracy Initiative
Democracy Matters
Democracy Spring
Demos
Don't Waste Michigan
End Citizens United
Endangered Species Coalition
Energy Action Coalition
EPI Policy Center
Every Voice
Fix Democracy First!
Free Speech For People
Friends of the Earth
Gender Justice Institute
Genius Hiphop
Get Money Out - Maryland
Greenpeace USA
Hightower Lowdown
Indivisible
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement
Workers of America, UAW
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Jobs with Justice
Just Foreign Policy
Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare
Latino Victory Project
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of Conservation Voters
League of United Latin American Citizens
Main Street Alliance
MapLight
MAYDAY America
Mi Familia Vota
Missouri Jobs With Justice Voter Action
National Association of Social Workers
NAACP
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Priorities Project
New Florida Majority
New Progressive Alliance
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Occupy.com
Occupy Bergen County
OLE - Organizers in the Land of Enchantment
Organize Florida
Other 98% Action
Our Revolution
Pachamama Alliance
Participatory Politics Foundation
Patriotic Millionaires
People Demanding Action
People for the American Way
PeopleNOW.org
People's Action
Power Shift Network
Pride at Work
Represent.US
ReThink Media
Reverb Press
RootsAction.org
SEIU
Sierra Club
Sierra Student Coalition
Small Planet Institute
Stamp Stampede
Student Debt Crisis
TakeAction Minnesota
The Rootstrikers Project of Demand Progress
The Workmen's Circle
Union For Reform Judaism
Voices for Progress
Voto Latino
West Virginia Citizen Action Group
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign
Working Families Party

¹ Nicholas Confessore and Megan Three-Brennan, [“Poll Shows Americans Favor an Overhaul of Campaign Financing.”](#) THE NEW YORK TIMES (June 2, 2015).

² [The Supreme Court and Money in Politics: Survey Topline Findings](#), HATTAWAY COMMUNICATIONS (January 2017).

³ [Judge Gorsuch's Extreme Views Could Undermine Urgently Needed Money in Politics Reforms](#), DEMOS & CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER (January 31, 2017).