



# I'm a conservative against Citizens United

BY JOHN PUDNER, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 01/20/20 04:00 PM EST  
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Tomorrow is the 10th Anniversary of the Citizens United decision. Today I'm taking the stage in Washington, D.C., with a bunch of national leaders who argue with me regarding my support of the Electoral College, voter ID laws and opposition to impeachment.

If background music were played when I took the microphone outside the United States Capitol, perhaps the theme should be the old "Sesame Street" song:

One of these things is not like the others.

One of these things just doesn't belong.

And yet, I believe opposition to the far-reaching Citizens United decision is consistent with conservative views across the board.

Conservatives believe that true capitalism is the best supplier of human needs, and proven much more effective than alternatives from communism in Russia to socialism in Venezuela. We cannot continue to support a Citizens United decision that trades competition in the marketplace for the government picking winners and losers based on run

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away, pay-for-play politics.

Conservatives believe that basic religious values Bill Bennett laid out in the Book of Virtues, shared by faithful Christians, Jews and yes Muslims and other religions throughout history is essential for a democratic republic to function. We cannot continue to support an activist Supreme Court inventing rights such as corporations are people that no one from the Founders through almost 200 years judges saw - even while criticizing activists judges in cases we believe attack religious values.

Conservatives believe government closest to the people is usually best, and state legislatures can better determine what laws are needed or not needed based on the situation in their state. We cannot continue to support this decision that now leads others to strike down state laws aimed at stopping corruption in pay for play deals that have stripped farmers of the rights to what is below their land at the bidding of big out of state political donors.

Conservatives believe our military makes the U.S. a force for good far more often than for bad. We cannot support this decision that let's huge anonymous donations from government contractors steer U.S. military policy that puts America's finest in harm's way.

And let's cut to the chase, some conservatives understand all the reasons Citizens United was bad judicial activism, but support it as a means to justify the ends of electing more Republicans. Republicans did benefit from the decision the first several years, but this is no longer the case. Republicans will not win a bidding war with Tom Steyer, Michael Bloomberg and George Soros.

President Trump won in 2016 despite being outspent 2-to-1. In 2018, for the first time there was more dark money on the left than on the right. Nate Silver pointed out the money advantage gave Democrats a far bigger majority in the House than they would have otherwise won. Some say they would rather have the money than the issue - but Republicans are handing Democrats both if they side with the 20 percent of people who support the Citizens United decision.

Even while President Trump became the only first term President besides FDR to defeat four opposition incumbent U.S. senators in his first mid-term, Jon Tester won conservative Montana by touting his support from a group called End Citizens United at every stop on the campaign trail to win over Trump supporters who wanted to drain the swamp.

In Virginia, Republicans were confident of holding the House and Senate last summer, but called me in the fall to tell me they could not hold against the overwhelming money against their candidates.

The Citizens United decision is bad politics for conservatives, but more important, it is bad policy.

*John Pudner is Executive Director of TakeBack.org and ran faith-based coalition efforts for Bush 2000.*

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