

Mayor Stephens stated, "Good evening and welcome to the Cleveland Heights City Council's Democracy Day meeting. It is an evening where we will listen to and examine the impact of our City, our state, our nation of political influence by corporate entities and big money in connection with the most recent election, that being the 2016 general election. Corporate entities including business corporations, political action committees, super political action committees (or PACs) and 501(c)(4) groups and unions. Just a little background - this hearing is established by Chapter 183 of the Codified Ordinances which is a citizens' initiative ordinance passed in November 2013. Many times Council passes ordinances on the city's behalf, but this one was generated by a dedicated group of citizens. They brought it to Council, asked to move it up and let the voters decide. We did that and the voters overwhelmingly adopted Chapter 183 under which Council shall hold this hearing annually and take public comment. We will make a record of the meeting and it will be up on our website no later than March first. We will be sending a letter to our elected representatives at the state and federal level about this hearing. This letter will state that the citizens of Cleveland Heights voted in November 2013 in support of a citizens' initiative calling for an amendment to the US Constitution declaring only human beings, not corporations, are legal persons with constitutional rights and money is not equivalent to speech and therefore regulating political contributions and spending does not equate to limiting political speech. We are here to listen to you tonight. We will record your comments given to us tonight or if you have anything in writing and want to submit it on record. You can do so as well as you can make comments out loud tonight and submit the rest in writing, however you would like to do it as an individual.

One other thing is - Chapter 183 specifies that we must limit comments to five minutes so that we can have as many people speak as possible. Without saying any more. I would just ask that you would give your name, address and comment, and if you would be kind enough to speak less than five minutes, everyone in the room would enjoy it and appreciate it. Your comment has to be related to this ordinance, not to any other City business and to limit once again your comments to five minutes. Our Community Deputy City Manager has two signs. She and the Assistant Law Director will be giving you guidance just in case you don't have an eagle eye for time. Yes, you see these. When you see that one minute sign, please sum up your conversation and comments with us and when you see just stop, please stop within five to 10 seconds of that flashing at you. Thank you for coming out tonight and in a minute, we'll begin those statements, but at this time I'm going to take a point of privilege related to citizens having their own right to speak.

This hat was made by Tina Emancipation who is a citizen of Cleveland Heights. This hat was worn in DC by other citizens of Cleveland Heights: Claudia's Zalensky, Julianne Cox, Claire Taft and Sarah Dietrich. All five of them are my people, our people. They were among hundreds of Cleveland Heights residents who were in Washington DC and hundreds of Cleveland Heights residents who were in Public Square on Saturday. It is with pride that I say we believe in diversity, that as one of our citizens, Alice Lissie, said to me, 'We want to be a diversity free zone,' and we believe that every American... I'm sorry, 'a bigotry free zone,' everybody. God I become a Trumpette. We want to be a bigotry free zone. Thanks for the coaching and that on your behalf, the members of Council and myself want to let you know that

we always believe in the freedom of speech and that we represent you. So thanks for your sense of humor and allowing me a pink moment.

I believe there's an opening statement, but first I'd like to ask my colleagues if there's anything any one of them would like to share at the beginning or would like to wait 'til the end."

Councilwoman Roe stated, "I would like to wait 'til the end."

Mayor Stephens stated, "Okay. Then we'll reserve a point of privilege for Councilwoman Roe at the end. Anyone else? Okay, without further ado, who's starting out this year?"

Sally Hanley stated, "Hi, my name is Sally Hanley. I live at 2577 Overlook Road in Cleveland Heights and this is my fourth public hearing and I've never seen so many people and it's really great. I'm going to give a brief introduction and then talk about the progress of the Move to Amend movement. As far back as the 19th century in the US, big corporations have been using their money and power to overcome various constraints placed on them by law. Over time, the courts granted them personhood status and the protections of the First, Fourth, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments and the Commerce Clause. The founders of our country, of course, meant these only for real people. In 2010, the infamous Citizens United case held that corporations have First Amendment rights to free speech and to spend unlimited money to support it, oppose candidates for elected office. More than ever, our elections are awash in money. Those with the most money have the most speech and now everyone who wants to run for office has to spend most of their time just raising money instead of doing what we elected them to do. The Move to Amend arose as a grassroots movement to combat this usurpation of our democracy. There's a groundswell of people of all political persuasions that have joined the Move to Amend to organize campaigns, to get resolutions and ordinances passed at their local level like Cleveland Heights did it in 2013 telling their federal and state leaders that they want an amendment to the US Constitution as Mayor Stephens was mentioning.

Let's see. I'm going to give a status of what's happening across the country. Over 300, mostly municipalities, and five states have already passed resolutions or ordinances saying that they want a constitutional amendment. In Ohio, there are 23 municipalities that have already done this including in our area Brecksville, Mentor, Newburgh Heights, Kent, Lakewood, Oberlin, Chagrin Falls and most recently in 2016m Cleveland, Shaker Heights, South Euclid and Oakwood and I understand that University Heights is gearing up for a campaign. At the state level in September, there was a news conference held by two Ohio Representatives, Nickie Antonio and Kent Smith, announcing that they're sponsoring a bill at the Ohio level and Senator Mike Skindell also announced at that same hearing that he is introducing one in the Ohio Senate. Since that time, 11 more co-sponsors have gotten on board including Jeanine Boyd who used to be a Cleveland Heights Council person. And I'm really happy to say that at the United States level, our resolution was introduced in 2015 by six representatives and there are now 24 sponsors and this includes the Marcy Kaptur and we're working on Representative Fudge.

Now more than ever, we need to get active. We've taken many steps back since this last election. The swamp has never been swamper. One of things that I wanted to mention is that not only

governments can pass resolutions and let their representatives know what they want, but many church groups, political groups, peace groups, all kinds of groups are letting their representatives know that they want that they want an amendment to the Constitution. So, please get active with whatever group that you are in and, well, keep up the good fight. Thank you.”

Lois Romanoff stated, “Good evening everyone. I'm Lois Romanoff. I live at 12802 Larchmere Boulevard in Cleveland.”

Lois Romanoff's statement as submitted in writing: “I'm going to talk about the privatization of the public schools.

\$6 Million continues to come out of the Cleveland Heights- University Hts. School District's Education budget every year... to pay for charters and vouchers ... About half of the \$6M goes to students who go to charter schools and the other half goes to students who get vouchers usually to pay for religious schools. It is important to remember that CHARTER SCHOOLS are CORPORATIONS. They receive public money from your tax dollars, but the minute that money is transferred to them... it is owned by their corporate business, a charter school. (And 1/3 of Ohio's charters are for -profit schools.)

\$6 Million is a huge amount of money for a school system to loose every yr. which has resulted in teachers being laid off and services being cut. In addition, in Ohio, 3 out of 4 charter schools are failing, so often, the children who go to them are getting an inadequate education.)

In Cleveland Heights a group of concerned community members including parents, teachers and concerned citizens have formed the **Heights Coalition for Public Schools**, (4 yrs. ago, to educate themselves and take action about this issue.)

This year, the Coalition convinced the CH-UH School Board to join 80 other Ohio school districts and INVOICED the State Legislature for the total amount of money taken out of the school District's Education budget for charters and vouchers. No response has come as yet from the Legislature.

Last week the Coalition had a speaker, Dr. Karl Wheatley, from Cleveland State University, whose topic was, "Taking Back Our Public Schools: Escaping Market Myths, & Doing What Works Best for Children, Democracy, and the World". Wheatley discussed the 'corporate , so- called 'education reform' practices,which are market-based and competitive ... Where parents CHOOSE which school is best for their child.

Wheatley explained that **Think Tanks** have worked hard to REFRAME LANGUAGE.....to come up w/ words and phrases that convince the public that the corporate/business model is a more efficient educational approach than the public system.

For example, the word ACCOUNTABILITY"we need to hold teachers, administrators and students more **accountable** for student achievement". Here '**Educational accountability is a clever trap....**a term that allows corporate policymakers to take greater control of education ... while selling

more commercial standardized tests and test- aligned textbooks. It is simply another word for TESTING & STANDARIZATION.

The other meaning of ACCOUNTABILITY in this context, is a "primitive carrot-and-stick motivation... married to primitive high-stakes standardized tests. High-stakes... because teachers are evaluated and fired and schools are closed and given or sold to charters according to the outcome of student test scores. This is how our public schools become Privatized. And we know that children whose academic performance is generally low usually come from low-income families, not poor performing schools.

This SPRING members of the Coalition will go- door to door to ask parents why they are sending their children to a charter school.... In an attempt to improve the CH schools.... And bring these children back to them.

The GOAL...of education isn't to produce higher scores...but rather to educate children to become responsible citizens...w/ well-developed minds and good character..... basic skills in reading, writing and math are important, but not enough.

About 50 participants attended the Heights Coalition meeting last week. Many were teachers from the Orange and Shaker School Districts. **The Heights Coalition is a unique and valuable group dedicated to continue the democratic tradition of 'public schools'.**"

Laurel Hopwood stated, "Good evening. My name is Laurel Hopwood, 34-year residence at 2459 Queenston. I'm going to talk about food. We all need to eat. Most people shudder when they think of the of the word 'bee,' but honeybees have a purpose in the scheme of things. Other than making honey, honey bees pollinate to the tune of 140 fruits, vegetables, seeds and nuts. So, what's the hoopla? Honey bee populations are significantly declining. There's a strong body of scientific evidence linking the honeybee demise to a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids which are called neonics. We tend to think of pesticides being sprayed on crops, but the new baby on the block is this. Huge multi-nationals discovered that when they coat, literally coat, the seeds, all the insects on the farm die. Well, that might sound good. I mean the insects are annoying, right? But wait a minute. Bees are insects. So, if you notice that the windshields aren't splattered any more with bugs and you hardly see or hear any more fireflies so I have a question for you - when you hear the word Bayer, what do you think of? Aspirin. Bayer is a multinational corporation which not only makes drugs, but they also make farm chemicals and guess what. They make neonics and in 2015, Bayer made \$46 billion. Another brief lesson in science - many food seeds are now being artificially genetically manipulated. That means that completely different species are being artificially joined together such as viruses, insects, animals are being gene spliced into the food that were serving our family every day. Enter another huge multinational corporation, Monsanto. Monsanto's bread and butter is genetically manipulated seeds. Now get this. Monsanto found that by coating their genetically made manipulated seeds with Bayer's neonics, it would enhance

the coffer of the shareholders. Bye bye, honeybees, and now Bayer is in the process of buying Monsanto.

Many say these multinational corporations will own and control food, our basic sustenance. Nice package for the multinationals, but not so nice for the creatures that inhabit the space that we share. Neonic also endanger butterflies, earthworms and birds. Many call this critical situation 'The Next Silent Spring.' By the way, Rachel Carson is being highlighted this week on PBS. She'd be rolling in her grave to see what's going on. Thanks for listening."

Robin Coslin stated, "Hi. Robin Coslin, 1618 Wood Road. I was here last week in front of Council, but I'm here to speak to this group too. I would like Cleveland Heights to become a Welcoming City. You know, as we all watch the news, we can understand every day why that's so important that we in Cleveland Heights take a stand against what's happening nationally and proactively for what we believe in. The four suggestions I have for becoming a welcoming city are these, but I don't think we should limit ourselves to that: Number one, Cleveland Heights will provide equal access to city services. City services and it will not be withheld on the basis of citizenship. Number two, Cleveland Heights will not inquire about the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses or anyone else who approaches a City needing help. Number three, Donald Trump was talking about this one today. Cleveland Heights chooses not to participate in the delegation that immigration authority Section 287 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1996. That means our police will not be... we don't want our police participating as ICE enforcers; and number four, Cleveland Heights will not single out individuals for legal scrutiny or enforcement based on the individual's documentation status or country of origin. I agree with the other two speakers and feel somewhat stymied by the political process that we're in, but actually becoming a welcoming city is something we could do here and now and I urge Council to choose to do that immediately."

Mayor Stephens stated, "Who's next?"

David Berenson stated, "Hi. My name is David Berenson and I live at 3321 Silsby Road in lovely Cleveland Heights. I think it's my fifth residence in Cleveland Heights. So, thank you, first of all to Mayor Stephens and Council members for being here and to all the citizens who have been part of this, especially all the people who gave such a high percentage of support in 2013 for the simple notion that corporations are not people and money does not equal speech.

In the past couple of years, I spoke at this event about how corporations have negatively affected health care in my family and the life of... my life, my family and in our community, especially with the people that I work with the families that work within my schools. This isn't changed. It is still a political football that is played with in ways that hurt people families, neighborhoods and our economy, but today I'm here to speak about a different corporate influence; surprisingly that of a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation known as the Commission on Presidential Debates. For those of you who aren't already aware, this commission takes responsibility for the series of presidential debates every four years. They call themselves a nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation meant to ensure that debates provide

the best possible information to viewers and listeners. However, they really are not nonpartisan and they don't provide the best possible information. They are merely bipartisan, including only Democratic and Republican parties, and answering only to those two party's leadership, often times which being far very far away from the people's voice. This limits our democracy in that they have the power to involve only those two voices, ignoring the fact that there are other candidates and other parties with differing ideas, views and positions and that represent many people, and many people may never hear their opinions and ideas because we are only exposed to those two candidates four years after four years. Now this role of the presidential debates used to be played by a truly nonpartisan group called The League of Women Voters. It is still an active group and it's an active organization, but it has had this role taken away from them by the powers that be - the Republicans and Democrats.

It is interesting to note that many people including elected officials and even including members of the press often refer to our two party system, but it's important to realize that there is no such thing in our country as a two party system. It just happens to be that right now there are the two parties that are powerful enough to monopolize our system or rather duopolize is the correct term. The last time and the only time that this Commission on Presidential Debates included more than two parties was in 1992 when Ross Perot, a very wealthy man, was polling almost as high as George Bush and Bill Clinton. However, in one of the most horrendous abuses of this so-called nonpartisan commission, one candidate in the year 2000 was removed from the audience despite, and threatened with arrest, despite the fact that he had a ticket to attend the event. This was not other than Ralph Nader. Since then, it is only been the two major party candidates every year and the result we have gotten this year seems to alarm many people.

These days I believe there are many more threats and fears of losing our democratic voice and I felt that the need that this, especially in this past presidential election year, okay, to address this issue that affects us all this year and every year and I feel strongly that we all need to keep this in mind in order to improve our democratic voice and our access to a wider source of information and I also believe that maybe we should consider a bigger venue for next year. I don't know what the legal limit is for a fire ordinance in here."

Mayor Stephens stated, "I can squeeze four or five more people in."

David Berenson stated, "Okay. And then the other question I have that you can maybe address is - how we should submit our statements for the record in the most easy way."

Mayor Stephens stated, "Just hand them to the City Manager."

David Berenson stated, "Okay, in the past I know we've given them electronically too, but you want to in writing. Okay, thank you."

Jim Miller stated, "So, my name is Jim Miller. I'm a 32-year resident of Cleveland Heights at 3251 Clarendon and what I want to talk about is privatization. The taking over by private corporations in effect of our water systems Now this may seem a little boring because we've just been through this

whole thing in Cleveland Heights and we avoided... we avoided that outcome, but with the new administration in charge nationally.

The trend which is, in this regard, which has been developing since the 1970s is going to likely intensify and we will be affected by it here in this county, this city, this county and State of Ohio. Now, I grew up as an Army brat, they say 'Army brat,' with a father who was an officer in the infantry. My life revolved around the post exchange and where I could buy comics and so on. Public schools, public libraries, hospitals where no one was worried about insurance. Now our new president and I think a fair amount of his cabinet grew up in a very different world and that is, and I'm not putting him down for this, but this has shaped his outlook obviously. He never attended a public school or university; probably never has been in a public library or checked out a book; probably has rarely if ever been in a post office; probably as an adult New Yorker has never been on the subway or a bus and rarely has driven a car himself on a public highway. So, now it's not surprising that given all that outlook that the administration's plan for national infrastructure development seems as if it will rely overwhelmingly on a tax credit for private corporations. The plan, and of course this is all just the beginning of the whole thing, but the plan was drafted by his billionaire Commerce Secretary nominee, Wilbur Ross, and a conservative California professor from UC Irvine, and the corporate tax credit that they want to get will amount to \$136 billion. The agenda includes unfettered access to tax exempt private activity bonds and other public financing resources like state revolving funds that have historically supported Public Works projects.

So water has been a public resource ever since Philadelphia established the first public water system in 1801. And since 1977, federal funding for water projects has dropped by 74%, you know, in real dollars. States, counties and cities have been under enormous pressure financially. In desperation, they have sometimes turned to private corporations for help, but usually they ended up even further in the hole with the private corporations skimming the cream and leaving an empty cup. The Trump administration plan will further encourage investment firms who are not even in the water business to buy in and then sell off to the next bidder with the local municipalities left hanging. In addition, the investment firms carefully avoid low income areas to invest in. So what is the answer? One, we have to **we** have to be aware of what is going on, and we have to let our officials know where we stand; and two, we have to fight to restore the post-World War II level of federal infrastructure funding."

Duncan Feehan stated, "I'll be timing myself just to make sure. Good evening, everybody. My name is Duncan Feehan and for the record I live at 2440 Northview Road in Rocky River, Ohio. Now, I may not be a resident of this city, but I do believe that this issue of political corruption transcends municipal borders. So, I think it's imperative that wherever this conversation happens, all, every single residents of this county should be there talking about that this dire issue. Now, before I begin, I'd like to thank all of you for attending this event for it shows that there's obviously is a great number of us who hold a legitimate concern that our democracy is being eroded by the issue of corruption. So, for highlighting this issue by your sheer numbers, I thank you for that.

When I was in kindergarten, I began learning how our system of government works and as with any subject one learns in school, you build upon what you what you've learned year after year starting with the basics. And I remembered that the first thing I learned about the United States government, its most basic principle, was that it was forged out of the fire of revolution and sacrifice to form a government that represents its people. The subjects of it came, coming from all walks of life, came together and said enough. Enough of dismissing the concerns of a country whose similarities far outweigh its differences. Our founders demanded that a country, that a country it holds so dear, represents its electorate, a government that represents its people and a government that represents us.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we all know, our political system no longer stands for those principles of democracy. It degenerates those principles with its current establishment. From our crumbling infrastructure to our troubled education system, from our messy tax code to our skewed regulatory apparatus, our voices as constituents of this country are being drowned out by the greed and influence of special interests. Now I want to government where every voice shares the same weight, not where one, not where only the powerful few control the scale of influence. Now we all have to realize that none of this is ever going to change until we are unified and committed to saying, 'Enough, no more corruption in politics.' Now I believe that we, not only as residents of this county, but as citizens of this country need to do is build a grassroots movement in this country to rid it of corruption. We need to build a movement that not only pressures the higher levels of government to pass anti-corruption legislation, but also set an example for how other communities can do the same and in order to do so, we need to start something right here in Cuyahoga County.

Now that is why I, along with several other like-minded students, plan on the forming in the coming weeks a Represent Us chapter right here in this county. Now for those of you for who are not familiar with Represent Us, it is a nonpartisan organization devoted to passing anti-corruption legislation at the local, state and federal level. In the 2016 election, cities all across the country with the help of the Represent Us Campaign passed constitutional anti-corruption measures via initiatives that only add to the building pressure that all levels of government to reform, and that is what we must do. This is an example we must follow for I do not believe that we don't have it in us. The cynics may say that it can't be done, that the powerful few through buying our elections, through undermining our inalienable voice in governments have our democracy in an inescapable bag. Well, to that I say this - we have been here before. The people of this nation ever since its birth have pushed this country to live up to its own ideals, and yes, like any road to progress, there will be bumps. There will be sharp edges and there will be obstacles in the road, but we must not despair for the words of Howard Zinn say that patriotism is not the obedience to government. Patriotism is the obedience to the principles for which government is supposed to stand and in order to defend those principles, our national conversation has to shift from left or rights and focus on what is right or wrong.

On our dollar, there is a Latin phrase that reads, 'Pluribus Unum,' out of many one. Now we can bring change to not only this county, but the state and also this nation, but we can only do it together. We as Americans, every single one of us, have an obligation to defend those principles for which our republic is supposed to stand now. This issue of political corruption, it transcends our disagreements

whether we are conservatives or Democrats, Republicans or progressives, moderates or libertarians, and we all must realize our most basic principles of democracy are at stake. So, let's once again have a nation where when we teach our children the basics of democracy, we can say with sincerity that our government represents us and I believe that this can happen and if you would like to join us and bring about meaningful and lasting change in this county. I'll be in the back of the room after this public hearing and to speak to all who are interested. After the speaker, all interested in continuing with this movement. So, with that, I yield my time, but with solace in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.' Thank you."

Valerie Robinson stated, "Hi, I'm Valerie Robinson from 3334 Berkeley Road and Stuyvesant and I have lived there for almost 50 years. The foreclosure crisis hit this area hard. More than 22,000 homes in Cuyahoga County were vacant in the fall of 2013. In April 2015, Cuyahoga County awarded Cleveland Heights money to tear down houses. The city also obtained rehabbed and sold houses thanks to another grant, the number of vacant houses in Cleveland Heights dropped from roughly 834 in 2010 to 709 in 2014. The foreclosure crisis has displaced about 10,000,000 people from more than 4,000,000 homes across the country since 2007. Blacks were disproportionately affected. Black neighborhoods were targeted more aggressively than others for predatory loans that led to mass evictions after the economic meltdown of 2007/2008. One study found that at the height of the housing boom, nearly half of all loans given to African-American families were deemed subprime. Across the nation, approximately ¼ of all Latino and African-American borrowers have lost their homes to foreclosure compared to just under 12% for white borrowers. As government officials researched the lending process to solve the huge banks, they found evidence of unmitigated racism. Loan officers of Wells Fargo called the subprime loans ghetto loans. In some places, there was a cash incentive for loan officers to aggressively market subprime mortgages in minority neighborhoods. The result of this appalling display of racism by the banking industry was that while the wealth of US families overall was reduced by 28% for blacks, the decline was an incredible loss of 47.6% of their wealth.

Meanwhile, the same racist banks and their CEOs are complicit and massive campaign spending that distorts our elections and corrupts the governing process. Notably in Ohio, during the 2011 to 2016 election cycle Goldman Sachs contributed \$144,000 to Rob Portman's campaign and Citi Group gave him \$112,000 plus. Finance Insurance and Real Estate gave Portman seven times as much as they gave Strickland, helping Portman raise \$25,000,000 plus while raised \$10,000,000 plus. This information is from Open Secrets.org. They note that the banks and corporations themselves do not donate, but rather their associated PACs. Super PACs are specially registered organizations that can receive unlimited money from corporations and wealthy individuals in order to fund supposedly independent election advertising.

How do banks work this? One way is to pay huge bonuses to CEOs who are also shareholders and who have a vested interest in swaying elections to suit the purposes of banks, corporations and the 1%. These CEOs who then make very large contributions to Super PACs. Adding to the public injury, taxpayers have to pay more in taxes or suffer reductions and services to make up for the bonuses which are tax deductible with the Wall Street CEO bonus loophole. The more US corporations hand out and

CEO bonuses, the less they pay in taxes. The loophole stems from the Bill Clinton presidency. The top 20 US banks paid out more than \$2,000,000,000 in fully deductible performance bonuses to their top executives between 2012 and 2015. The leading culprit was Wells Fargo CEO John Stumpf who pocketed \$150,000,000 or more; and this was at a time when the banks were holding some 85,000 mortgage loans from foreclosure and was facing some \$10,000,000,000 in misconduct penalties for deceptive lending. There have been several bills introduced in Congress that would do away with the deductible performance pay loophole and this would garner quite a bit of money, into the billions, that could be used to pay for higher ed and repairing infrastructure, but neither Trump nor Clinton endorses legislation in their campaign speeches in 2016. This is because, as we know, politicians today rely heavily on the counsel and campaign cash of banks and corporate CEOs. An election system in which unlimited political spending is protected speech replicates the systemic inequality found in society as exemplified by the foreclosure crisis. This is why we need a constitutional amendment that says money is not speech and corporations are not people.”

Anne Caruso stated, “Hello, my name is Anne Caruso. I live at 2273 Belfield Avenue. I think that I talked about this a couple years ago when we had a Democracy Day, but you might be aware that in 2014, Ohio passed a law that froze its renewable energy and energy conservation standards for two years and set up a commission to study the necessity of those standards. In 2016, last year, the Ohio legislature passed substitute House Bill 554 which in effect extended that freeze on our renewable energy standards. Fortunately, Governor Kasich in December vetoed this bill and as a result, our standards are now reinstated as of January 1st. Of the 29 other states that have renewable energy and energy conservation standards, Ohio has the weakest. Even so, those standards created 400 new businesses, 25,000 jobs and help to make our air and water cleaner in the six years that the standards were in place. Now consider that last year wind was the cheapest energy in America; and so far, this year, solar is the cheapest energy in America and also consider that in 2016, the planet reached an unfortunate number -410 parts per million of carbon.

With standards giving us so many positive outcomes for our economy and our health and with the consequences of not limiting fossil fuel use, I can't help but wonder why anyone would propose a law that goes against these outcomes. Senator William Seitz, the most outspoken senator in the Ohio legislature against the standards has the utilities AEP and First Energy among his top ten political contributors. And Representative Ron Amstutz (I don't know how to pronounce his name), the sponsor of the bill that was passed and has the oil and gas association as his number four largest political contributor.

Just looking at this scenario of this legislation, it seems to me that there is a relationship between money contributed to legislators and laws introduced and voted for by them and that this relationship is not necessarily one that favors the citizens who live under those laws.”

Isaac Miller stated, “Hi, everybody, my name is Isaac Miller. I live on 3251 clone and wrote this isn't totally thought out talk so we'll see how this goes. I want to talk just briefly about the relationship between corporations and capitalism and the state. And how we have to be very, very

vigilant right now in in the Trump era because those relations may change in ways that we're not used to and we're used to thinking in politics in particular way. A lot of what Move to Amend is about is about the power of corporations over the state, over the American state, all of its different levels, local, so forth, but it's important member that the American state and specifically at its highest levels when it deals with sort of economic matters, so I'm talking about the Treasury and the Federal Reserve, what central banks do, has a relative level of autonomy to act and does. And this came out if you look at the sequence during the financial crash, they acted in the interests of the financial system as a whole, not in the interest of particular banks. This is not actually a good thing because it's designed to preserve a financial system, which as people point out, is profoundly predatory and banks that are profoundly predatory, but it operates outside of the interest of any single one. The Fed tends to do this and in the interest of global capitalism as a whole, if you look at one of the immediate things that they started do, is what are called interest. I mean big currency swaps with central banks around the world, providing dollars because the dollar is the primary currency in the world to make sure the global financial system won't collapse. This is a role that maintains an economy that is profoundly unfair and corporate power, but not being completely subservient to it. In the Trump era, this may change because we're looking at business people of more rapacious kind who are directly in charge of every single thing. So the system... we don't know, but the system has a potential to eat itself.

But there's a second part to this and that is goes back to the conversation about infrastructure. The other part about this is an economic nationalism that we really haven't seen before. Where massive infrastructure and going against free trade agreements, things that would normally associate with the left in a lot of people in this room would be happy about, we talked about last year and now it's dead as a doornail. So, these things sound attractive and a lot of our representatives are saying - well are going to Democratic representatives and well you know on infrastructure we can compromise. Maybe it's not the best thing, but it is this new sort of way of looking at the economy. It's this economic nationalism, it cannot be separated as a project from the White Nationalism, from the profound white supremacy and racism of the Trump campaign because it is a vision of American power which is very different then sort of the liberal internationalist one that we've lived under in the... in the sort of the post-war era. And I think there's a real danger. We've already seen labor unions that are all right, well, if there's infrastructure, if there's jobs, that's fine, but you can't forget it's not just that it will increase corporate power through corporate public partnerships. It's that it'll increase a different way of looking at the role of the state and it will increase power of a particular political project in which these things can't be separated - economic nationalism and sort of racial nationalism can't be separated. You can't compromise basically. Just because it looks attractive, and I think that that's the that was my main point, I think is I think there's a real danger that we're going to be running into an a potential divisions among people who normally be allies, but we can't do that. We have to have a more positive vision that doesn't allow economic issues to be separated from abroad from broader problems. Thank you."

Ari Cline stated, "Good evening. Mayor Stephens and Councilmembers, fellow community members. My name is Ari Cline. I live at 3393 Dellwood. My family moved to the area in the 20s and

hasn't left. So, I have a couple things that I'll piggyback on what Lois was saying and I was really waiting for Miller Van Cleef's song and, you know, I'm disappointed. So this is short.

2016 continued to be a wait a year where public education was threatened through myths and loss of funding. In Cleveland Heights -University Heights, we continue to have to ask for new money through property tax increases as many of you are aware if you voted in November. The new money voted in November will not cover the amount money diverted from our state allocation due to vouchers and charter schools as Lois pointed out. To me, public education is the root of our democracy. It's being threatened. Public schools have elected boards, school boards that are responsible for making sure that public funds serve public purposes. Public funds going to private, parochial and charter schools don't have that kind of oversight. They are interested in their bottom line and their image. It's nice when kids learn also, I guess, but they're not really responsible to the public in any way for using public funds.

For me, 2016 took us closer to corporate takeover an education and a threat to what I consider a basic of democracy. Of course, one of the vehicles for making sure that everyone believes the myth that public schools are horrible is through standardized testing. Large corporations make tests, sell the test prep materials, have packaged curriculums that lead to the tests, and of course the software to understand the data that's produced by the test, the test prep and the curriculum materials that everyone must buy to ensure the best results on the tests. That's the way it works. There is a profit in every step. What's lost is true education that our children should be engaging in. Through the testing machine, there is a sorting of students, schools and communities by race and economic levels, breaking down communities especially where families are impoverished compounds the problems of society. Education is a battlefield in the corporate world. Following the money and the reasons for the diversions away from the public good is not hard to do. Understanding how this threatens democracy is where we should be paying attention.

I'm not hopeful for 2017 at this point. Please join us on the Heights Coalition for Public Education. Lois invited you to attend our stuff and do things with the Heights Coalition. If you like what the position statement is of the Heights Coalition, it's about privatization and testing, please join our mailing list. You can find it at chuh.net. There's a coalition link to it and you can sign in online. Thank you very much."

Dean Sieck stated, "Good evening. My name is Dean Sieck. I have lived in Cleveland Heights for 41 years and the last nine at 2547 Bolton Rd."

Dean provided his testimonial in writing and it reads as follows. "Laws that suppress voting rights, institute school vouchers, privatize government services like prisons, curtail renewable energy, support fracking, enforce limits on public sector unions, or limit the power of cities to control the increased flow of guns have a common source in one organization. It is called the American Legislative Exchange Council, commonly abbreviated to the acronym ALEC.

In the guise of educating legislators, ALEC is actually a process for creating and disseminating model bills which are replicated and introduced in several state legislatures nearly simultaneously and

often verbatim. These bills are very largely products of business interests. Of course, business interests have a long history of attempting to cash in on government and thus have always been a part of the legislative process through lobbying and lobbyists. But ALEC is not a lobby. In fact, ALEC is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization supported by modest membership fees from politicians but mostly by corporate largesse. Its website claims lofty ideals such as "Jeffersonian principles of free markets... individual liberty, and nonpartisan public-private partnership." But its actual purpose is enabling influence of corporations on state legislators. Of course, since it is a 501 (c) (3), all of the monies contributed are tax deductible as are all the expenses of the organization. In sum, through ALEC, corporations have devised a scheme to require taxpayer support of corporate efforts to influence state legislators to pass laws that increase corporate power and enable profit from those very taxpayers. Pretty slick.

ALEC claims 2,000 legislative members throughout the fifty states and 300 member corporations. The unelected corporate representatives, who are often registered lobbyists, sit as equals with elected representatives on eight task forces where they have a voice and a vote on model legislation. But IRS filings reveal that in three years the legislators paid about one percent of ALEC's income and the corporate donors the other 99, which now, according to many sources, is born largely by the Koch brothers. The task forces cover the entire range of governmental functions, from elections to education, to health and human services to tax policy. The "exchange" between legislators and corporations occurs at conventions in posh resort areas where legislators are granted "scholarships" to be wined and dined while jointly crafting legislation with corporate agents to be introduced and ready for adoption in their home states. The rate of adoption into law of such legislation averages 17%.

ALEC has considerable influence in Ohio. In one report, 43% of the Ohio Legislature was listed as members of ALEC. Despite ALEC's non-partisan claims, only one Representative in that list is a Democrat. Governor John Kasich, who supports nearly all of ALEC's goals, is widely regarded as one of its founding members. Secretary of State Jon Husted, known for limiting voting access, and Representative Bill Seitz, who constantly pushes against renewable energy, are two others.

But ALEC's focus is not only on the state level. I found it interesting that among its members was the National Association of Water Companies. And among its members was a company called AquaAmerica, the company that could have taken over our city's water department. ALEC is an organization that is closer to you than you may think. I urge everyone here to google ALEC and see what you find. More recently, ALEC has an offspring, the ACCE or American City and County Exchange, which applies roughly the same formula used at the state level to the Municipal and County levels. It may come knocking on the door of our members of City Council. As taxpaying citizens, we'll be watching."

Gail Larson stated, "Good evening, my name is Gail Larson. I live at 3797 Montevista over in the Noble neighborhood. I'll try not to be redundant because the foreclosure issue affected our neighborhoods directly and I want to talk about my street. I belong to Noble Neighbors and the Greater Cleveland Congregation better known as GCC Housing Task Force. Corporations did swoop in and they swooped into the Noble Neighborhood before and after the housing crisis of 2008. Many financial institutions gave loans to people who should not be qualified to buy the homes. Result - foreclosures

occurred on almost every street in the Noble neighborhood. Many of these homes sit vacant today and continue to deteriorate bringing down our property values. This information has come to light in terms of how many vacancies there are because a GCC Housing Task Force has done that walking inventory of the housing, extensive research on ownership, especially houses that are owned by financial institutions. Does anyone in the corporate world care about my street? I think not. Currently, USBank is the owner of 10 to 12 of the abandoned properties in the Noble neighborhoods. These have been sitting vacant and not properly maintained for years. Out of state and foreign investment firms have purchased homes that unexplainably sit empty. What possible reason could these entities have had to purchase homes in low income neighborhoods and then leave them empty? I'll leave that to your imagination.

We've also been affected by the Lakeside Holdings purchase of the tax delinquent package six years ago as of August 2016. The house behind me was locked in that tax package for six years, nothing happened. We had to complain and the house sits empty today while the formalities progress to try to get it to a sheriff sale. We want to have homes that are full of families, that are viable. We plan to gather information on the apartment buildings along Noble Road, especially those that are being neglected by corporate landlords. Preliminary research shows that many are not owned by local investors.

And as Ari and Lois have so eloquently talked about the privatization and the testing standardization that's affecting our children. So, I would conclude with two thoughts. We must speak out against the corporate entities whose business plans leave us with far too many vacant properties or unmaintained rentals. We must stand up for the children in our public schools by speaking out against the influence that for profit charter schools and testing providers have in our state legislature. Thank you."

Suzanne Degaetano stated, "

Hi, my name is Suzanna Degaetano and I grew up in Cleveland Heights. I live in Cleveland and I'm the owner of Mac's Bookstore on Coventry. I'm the co-owner of Mac's Bookstore. So, what I'm going to read right now is an editorial that was published this week in a publication called "The Hill" by Oren Teicher who is the director of the American Booksellers Association and this is about Amazon."

Suzanne Degaetano submitted the article for the record and it reads as follows. "We all know how good Amazon is at selling things. But last week's announcement that it expects to hire 100,000 workers over the next 18 months is a snow job.

Since its start more than 20 years ago, Amazon has been a master of the persuasive business narrative, and the timing of its jobs pledge was telling, coming just before the inauguration of President-elect Trump, a prominent critic of Amazon and its founder, Jeff Bezos.

The real question is 100,000 jobs at what cost?

Amazon's business hegemony is an unprecedented concentration of retail power, and it is exacting a heavy toll on towns, cities, and states nationwide that is far higher than Amazon will ever acknowledge.

The net results of Amazon's dominance are both sobering and sad. In 2015 Amazon sales produced a net loss of 222,000 retail jobs nationwide, jobs that would have contributed to the long-term economic health and diversity of communities and Main Streets. The jobs loss figures, courtesy of Amazon and Empty Storefronts, a study issued by research firm Civic Economics, are the result of a number of factors.

In 2015, Amazon's U.S. retail sales were an estimated \$55.6 billion, a staggering sum, but the net national effect was a total of more than \$1.2 billion in lost revenue to state and local governments, according to the Civic Economics study. And that staggering loss was for one year only. In 2014, the estimated revenue loss to states was more than \$1 billion.

Just over half of that loss came from Amazon's continued refusal to collect the mandated sales tax, a strategy that played a major role in consolidating its retail dominance and that fuels almost 10 percent of its sales in the states where it does not fully collect. The remaining lost revenue is from property taxes that would have resulted had the demand for those sales been directed to, or spurred the opening of, locally owned retail stores.

While Amazon is now collecting and remitting sales tax in a growing number of states (34 and the District of Columbia, and counting), it doesn't change the fact that sales directed to Amazon are a lost opportunity for both Main Street and their communities. The consolidation of Amazon's power results in struggling local businesses, shuttered doors, and a dearth of new retail stores and vibrant Main Streets. This is significant because Main Street retailers employ 49 people for every \$10 million in sales, while Amazon, for example, employs just 23 people per \$10 million in revenue, according to estimates from the nonprofit Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR).

Moreover, it represents the lost money that is desperately needed. The revenue of half of the states was lower than budgeted in fiscal year 2016, and those weak conditions have continued into fiscal 2017. These shortfalls have resulted in fewer teachers, more students per classroom, longer waits for first responders, and shorter operating hours for libraries, among many other cuts in community services.

What is even more galling is that it was taxpayers who paid for much of Amazon's growth. It received approximately \$613 billion in public subsidies for its distribution centers since 2005, as was noted in a recent report from ILSR. More than half of the 77 facilities Amazon built between 2005 and 2014 were subsidized by taxpayers. And this significant capitalization doesn't even take into account the complex steps Amazon has implemented to shield its revenue from federal tax collection through overseas tax havens.

It is time to take a hard look at Amazon's growing dominance on commerce, the economy, and our culture. Its latest press release is just a smokescreen for the damage that it has already done."

The distribution center it built in the Columbus area received \$17,500,000 in tax rebates. So this room gets it. I recognize a lot of our customers here. The Buy Local movement is huge locally. It's huge in Cleveland Heights. We can still do a lot more consciousness raising about Amazon and it's, you know, and it's, well, and it's huge detrimental effect on all of us. Thanks."

Greg Coleridge stated, "Good evening, my name is Greg Coleridge 3016 Somerton Road."

Greg Coleridge presented his comments in writing as the following. "Move to Amend's proposed constitutional We the People Amendment has two components. One is much simpler to understand - ending the constitutional doctrine that money is equal to free speech - because the problems connecting big money to political lobbying and elections are so pervasive. The other component - ending corporate constitutional rights - is more challenging to grasp. The fundamental problems with corporate constitutional rights transcend the influence of corporate money contributed or invested in political lobbying and elections. Corporate constitutional rights have their own set of components that have in many instances over a century corrupted and perverted authentic democracy.

Beyond corporate free speech rights preventing laws limiting corporate campaign donations, those same 1st Amendment free speech rights have prevented communities from acquiring the right to know what ingredients (chemicals, GMOs) are in food products. That's due to the acquired corporate 1st Amendment right not to speak. Corporate religious rights, granted in the Hobby Lobby decision, have limited access to health care to employees. Corporate property rights, (via the 5th Amendment takings clause) have limited laws protecting communities from environmental destruction. Corporate privacy rights (via the 4th Amendment) have limited the health, safety and welfare at workplaces over decades. And corporate commerce rights (via the perversion of the Commerce Clause and 14th Amendment's equal protection clause) have limited laws and regulations on pipelines, transportation of toxic waste, mining, and landfills.

Corporate anthropologist Jane Anne Morris in her book *Gaveling Down the Rabble* states that 100's of democratically enacted laws and regulations protecting workers, consumers and the environment over decades have been overturned by the corporate perversion of the Commerce Clause and 14th Amendment. Before the 1st amendment became the go-to democratically destructive hammer of corporate agents, it was the Commerce Clause and 14th Amendment.

If all we do is overturn Citizens United or merely end money as speech, corporate agents will reach back into their anti-democratic tool kit and assault us like they did in the past - usurping democratically enacted laws. Amending the Constitution is damn hard. It rarely happens. It's not like reaching a goal through passing a series of laws one piece at a time. We only have one chance. We better make the most of it. That's why abolishing the legal doctrine of money defined as free speech and corporations defined as legal persons as reflected in the We the People Amendment is mandatory.

History shows that what seems impossible today becomes inevitable tomorrow based on the degree of internal preparedness and timing of external conditions.

Now's the time to educate ourselves and others, pass resolutions, collect organizational endorsement, organize ballot initiatives, and encourage Congressional endorsers. The right time and conditions externally will inevitably arrive."

Greg Coleridge stated, "In the meantime, in closing, if you have not had an opportunity to sign the Move to Amend organizing petition, Carla Routenberg here has it. Please do a beeline to her and for those of you who have connections with our esteemed Federal Representative Marcia Fudge, we are working on her. We're hoping that she will become an endorser of the We the People amendment. We're trying to do our part at the grass roots level. We ask you to try to do your part in assisting us. Thank you."

"Good evening. Carla Routenberg, 3065 Berkshire. Corporate power versus the City of Cleveland Heights."

Carla's Routenberg submitted her statement as it follows. "Rent-seeking is a term economists use often, but they are not referring to landlords or tenants.

According to Investopedia, in economics, "Rent-seeking is the use of the resources of a company, an organization or an individual to obtain economic gain from others without reciprocating any benefits to society through wealth creation, [for] ...example...when a company lobbies the government for loan subsidies, grants or tariff protection. These activities don't create any benefit for society; they just redistribute resources from the taxpayers to the company."

In 2015, Nobel prize winning economist Angus Deaton authored a study finding that inequality has led to an increased death rate among less educated middle aged white Americans. On a panel recently with four other Nobel laureates, Deaton maintained:

"A lot of the inequality in the U.S. comes from rent seeking. It comes from firms and industry seeking special protection or special favors from the government...To the very considerable extent that inequality is generated by rent seeking, we could sharply reduce inequality itself if rent seeking were to be somehow reduced."

Deaton offered the American health care system as a prime example because, he said, it "seems optimally designed for rent seeking and very poorly designed to improve people's health."

"There are around 200 thousand people who have died from the opioid epidemic, [who] were victims of iatrogenic medicine and disease caused by the medical profession, or from drugs that should not have been prescribed for chronic pain but were pushed by pharmaceutical companies, whose owners have become enormously rich from these opioids," said Deaton, who later added "I am a great believer in the market, but I think we need a single-payer health care system."²

Deaton undoubtedly would agree with me that the definition of rent seeking includes instances when corporations write legislation to their benefit and at the expense of the public -- as when President Obama and a Democratic Congress allowed the insurance and pharma industries to write the Affordable Care Act.

Investopedia gives this example of rent-seeking that is quite relevant to our city government right now:

"Lobbying for occupational licensing requirements represents a perfect example of rent-seeking... Often, these regulations exist as a result of lobbying efforts from existing industry participants. When licensing requirements prevent newcomers from competing, the revenue generated within an industry is divided between fewer players, resulting in a larger share of wealth accruing to each without any additional economic benefit." 3

So what was really happening a few years ago when the state of Ohio sharply increased the certification requirements for local building inspectors, making it very difficult for municipalities to recruit and hire qualified building inspection personnel?

Well, I've been trying to find out, but it's not easy.

SAFEbuilt, the company that currently operates the Cleveland Heights building department, has expanded from operating in 200 communities "across the country" in Dec. 2014 to over 500 cities today. This kind of growth would be difficult, if not impossible, without broad standardization of building codes. In fact, in a trend not unique to our state, Ohio has adopted the International Commercial and Residential Building Codes established and maintained by the International Code Council. 4

*What Is ALEC?

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is a pay-to-play operation where corporations buy a seat and a vote on conservative legislative 'task forces' to create model bills favoring corporate interests. They can get tax breaks for donations, thereby passing these lobbying costs on to taxpayers: yet more rent-seeking. ALEC claims over 1,000 of these model bills are introduced by legislative members every year, and 20% of them are enacted into law. 5

I certainly wonder if ALEC created model legislation mandating the adoption of International Building Codes state by state; to date, I haven't found proof. ALEC's corporate membership list is secret, so I don't know if SAFEbuilt belongs.

But one thing I do know. There's a more precise word for rent-seeking: corruption.

1. <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/rentseeking.asp>
2. <https://promarket.org/nobel-laureates-eliminating-rent-seeking-tougher-antitrust-enforcement-critical-reducing-inequality/>

3. <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/rentseeking.asp>
4. <http://www.iccsafe.org/about-icc/government-relations/map/ohio/>
5. [http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/What is ALEC%3F#ALEC_FAQ.](http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/What_is_ALEC%3F#ALEC_FAQ.)

Carla Routenberg stated, "Thank you."

Susan Miller stated, "My name is Susan Miller. I live at 3165 Berkshire Road in Cleveland Heights."

Susan Miller submitted her statement in writing as follows. "In considering the effects of political influence by corporate entities, I've been concerned about an accelerating push to privatize municipal services, and decided to look more closely at the City's recent outsourcing of our Building Dept. to Colorado-based SAFEbuilt Corporation.

I would like to share with City Council and our fellow residents some of what I have learned about this so far:

1. SAFEbuilt was acquired by private equity firm Riverside Partners in 2014. Clevelander - and Shaker resident- Stewart Kohl, owns 50 percent of Riverside.
2. Since the acquisition, SAFEbuilt has moved into NE Ohio in a big way, taking over various building functions and in many cases, whole departments, in cities including: Bay Village, Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Village, Maple Heights, Pepper Pike, Solon, Sheffield Lake, Bedford Heights and several others.
3. According to Pitchbook, which analyses venture capital, private equity and merger & acquisition activities, Riverside Partners Fund V, open since 2012, has attracted investment mostly from public employee and union pension funds, but also includes large private foundations and university endowments. Pitchbook says Riverside Partners Fund V is losing money and is in the very bottom quartile of funds in its class¹.
4. There is a brewing scandal in the pension world because PE firms skim off huge fees to reward their partners sumptuously, and return very little to either the pension funds on which so many public and union retirees depend, or to other investors, including private foundations and university endowments.²
5. It is an article of faith that private industry does everything better than government, including provide local city services, because the stimulating competition of the private sector constantly hones the skills, efficiency, and operational effectiveness of corporations.
6. In reality, SAFEbuilt acquired LSL Planning apparently prior to its own acquisition by Riverside; since then, Riverside purchased the Waukesha, Wisconsin firm Independent Inspections Ltd. in May 2015 and the Bedford Heights company Municipal Building Inspection Solutions in July 2015. Riverside terms these "add- ons" to SAFEbuilt. This is not unique to Riverside or SAFEbuilt of course. In

municipal services as so many other sectors, companies talk a good game re: the great advantages of competition, but they often practice monopoly capitalism.

7. Municipal Building Inspection Solutions (MBIS) delivered several communities in NE Ohio to SAFEbuilt. Independent Inspections Ltd. based in Waukesha, Wisconsin, gave SAFEbuilt an entree into markets in Wisconsin, Illinois and Florida.

8. The Cleveland Heights Building Department has been a net revenue generator - bringing in more dollars than it cost to run it -from 2010 until July 2016.

9. Since the contract with SAFEbuilt was signed in mid-2016, we have not yet seen any financial reports on the revenues vs. expenses of the Building Department.

10. The City of Solon has been contracting out their Building Inspection to SAFEbuilt for the last year; Solon is currently considering terminating that contract.

11. Across the country, there is a trend to bring state requirements in line with the International Code Council standards that are developed with the help, expertise and self-interest of private industry groups.

12. On the face of it, what could be wrong with meeting International Standards? Well, maybe that depends on who developed those standards and why. Multinational corporations are facing very slow growth economies in much of the world. But cities here and abroad face dire budget challenges. What an opportunity for what corporations like to call "public/private partnerships." But let's call them what they are: a golden opportunity for the private sector to make big profits at the public's - that's yours and my- expense.

13. Thinking long term: when a private company has taken over a particular local government function in an entire region, what if decides to double its prices? What if it goes out of business? What if the institutional knowledge needed to support that function within local government is gone... what then?

References:

1. <http://cepr.net/biogs/cepr-blog/pension-funds-piled-in-as-elite-investors-bailed-aut -of-riverside-partners-funds>
2. <http://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/private-equity-fees-2016-05.pdf>."

Cathy Flora stated, "Hi, Cathy Flora, 2449 Queenston and I'm probably the newest member of Cleveland Heights. Americans seem to have lost faith in our institutions and even of our democracy. As I registered voters over the last year, I heard too often from young people that they were unwilling to vote because they had no faith that it would make a difference. In a Washington Post survey before the election, 40% of respondents said that they had lost faith in democracy and 6% stated that they had

never had any faith in it to begin with; one could hardly blame them. Studies have shown that sixty to seventy percent of policies favored by the wealthy or by business lobbies were adopted, even when they were opposed by a popular majority. There were zero cases, none, in which policies supported by a majority of citizens were enacted unless they were also backed by the rich or by organized lobbies. Our state is one of many that has continually disregarded the will of its citizens rolling back local control and overriding local initiatives in an effort to favor corporations over people.

We are blessed to live in a district where our state races are very inexpensive in relation to others in Ohio. Contributions to Janine Boyd were only \$15,000 in 2016 for her winning race in District 9 and Sandra Williams has raised just over \$500,000 for her five state races. Unfortunately, in many districts in Ohio, this year's campaign contributions were as high as \$1,600,000 for a State House districts and a couple for State Senator that were just over \$2,000,000. The amount out of money that needs to be raised in many districts prevents many talented, caring individuals from even considering a run for election. This harms all of us because we are not guaranteed the best and brightest. Our choices are weeded out from the start by moneyed interests. It also unnecessarily focuses candidates attention on those with deep pockets and whether it is intentional or not, the desire to please them. Once in office, the constant need to raise money for the next election and the chilling effect of threats to spend money against you may determine or at least weight a decision for the policy that a donor advocates. We have surrendered our democracy when our voices are systematically silenced by moneyed interests and amendments such as that proposed by Move to Amend may be the only way to save the values that our country was founded on. Thank you."

Nina McClelland stated, "Hello, I'm Nina McClelland, a former resident of Cleveland Heights, now living in Shaker, but I own a property in Cleveland Heights, 2924 East Derbyshire Road. I don't have any prepared remarks for speech, but I wanted to ask some questions of the Council and I see Marty Gelfand is here from South Euclid. As leaders of our local municipalities, we have been aware of and been struggling with the power of corporations, their money and political power for many years and now with the election of President Trump and his incoming administration, things are going to clearly be more and more challenging for all of us. Some of the challenges maybe we can anticipate, but I think that there may be many others that are going to just come upon us and they seem to be coming fast. So, I'm wondering - what our municipal officials like you have been discussing about what your role is and what you can do to protect our values and our institutions here at a local level? And have you been talking with other municipalities about these kinds of questions? We know that the State of California is gearing up to oppose what they think are going to be steamrolling about the environment and labor issues and immigrants and so forth, but I think that I'd like to hear more about what our local governments might be thinking of and what kind of conversations you would have with your citizens about these issues. Thank you."

Steve Norris stated, "Hi, my name's Steve Norris at 17600 Detroit, Apartment 711 in Lakewood, and I want to talk today. First off, I want to thank you Cleveland Heights for being a leader and passing an initiative and to get money out of politics. Okay, I'll just try to speak a little louder. I want to thank everyone in Cleveland Heights for being a leader in getting big money out of politics. We've seen this in

this election cycle, a deluge of unaccountable attack ads. We've seen unlimited money being poured into our elections including dark money that we don't know who has donated and this cycle newly, we've seen foreign money coming in. Jeb Bush's Super PAC Right to Rise USA had \$1,300,000 donated from Chinese nationals who are not from America. There are different ways of running elections. Bernie Sanders has shown that \$27 increments can power a campaign. We should have small donor matching funds like we've seen in New York City - has six to one matching ones, a great way to do that. I'd also recommend automatic voter registration and publicly financed elections would be very helpful for running this better. I also recommend rank choice voting as another great reform. If you can choose a second and third choice, then we won't have a need for so many attack ads. They won't be as popular if you have to appeal other voters and I think very much we need a 28th Amendment to overturn Citizens United, you know, get big money out of politics and I hope everyone here will help other cities to pass initiatives in Ohio for that. Thank you."

Joyce Rygie stated, "Hi, Joyce Rygie, 2328 Stillman Road. I've been a resident on and off since 1959 and then we have on since 1971 here. We have two children that are raising their families here using both public and private schools. We want to be informed citizens, but it's harder than it used to be since we can't rely on the Sun Press anymore to print letters about our local concerns. I encourage everyone to pick up a free copy of the monthly Heights Observer which is printed by Future Heights and is widely available in libraries and coffee shops. Besides Council and those here tonight, many of our neighbors devote their scarce free time to committees, boards and commissions in our town and they go unrecognized. If we knew which neighbors are currently involved, we might be more incentivized to join them, contribute to our expertise or at least convey our concerns to them. It's called building social capital. The more that we as citizens are involved and talking with each other, the harder it will be for big money to insinuate itself into our local government. Through the thinkers and doers who got this annual Democracy Day event going, thank you for giving our citizens an opportunity to speak out on critical issues to our City and to our nation. Maybe we can't do much on a national level, but we can make a difference here in our own cities. Thank you."

Harriet Applegate stated, "Harriet Applegate. I live it 1522 Crest Road, about 100 yards from here, less than that actually. I want to just be more general in my remarks. Democracy as we know it is more dear to us and more embattled than ever before in our history in this country. We saw today, for instance, gag orders on several of the departments of our government and I think it's only going to get worse and every day there will be dozens of edicts from on high. So, I think, you know, I think in this context, it seems very overwhelming; politics at the national level seems overwhelming. It also is pretty daunting at the state level with Republican super majorities and an unfair districting, but we are here in Cleveland Heights and this is a local level and we have a wonderful City and we all know that all politics is local and everything begins at home and I'm really proud to live in Cleveland Heights, and I was just driving up here from downtown, and just thinking how when I come up that hill, it's just great to come in to the Heights. And I'm really proud that we passed the initiative that promotes democracy and we've seen over the past few years, but in particular recently what happens when money talks; when money literally talks. And when money is speech and we lose democracy then.

And so in particular, in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, we have a democracy now. We may not have it at the state level. We may not have the national level, but we do have it here and that's something to really celebrate and I really applaud us here in Cleveland Heights. Let's give ourselves a hand. But we now have to defend a century of progress, literally a century, not just the New Deal is going to be the attempt by the new administration and the new Congress is not just to roll back the New Deal. We got before the New Deal; a progressive era report. So, we're talking about a whole century of progress that is at risk and will be attacked and will be rolled back. So, you know, we are in Cleveland Heights about that? Well, we know we are the majority. We still have the numbers and we need to use that majority now more than ever. There's a lot more of us than there are them. I think the demonstrations of last weekend really showed how, you know, people who had never done anything political in their entire lives came out and marched and I actually met a woman from Connecticut who had been in the college roommate of a political activist, but herself had not been active work for university, said, 'I've never been to a demonstration, but I want to go to a demonstration every day now.'

So, I think we're looking at a whole new ball game and I would just encourage all of us to fight this good fight. We can... we're all here in this room. We understand how democracy works. We are actually exercising it right now and so I think it's really critical that not only all of us here in this room, but all of our neighbors just do what we're doing you know. Study an issue, write testimony, come and do things like this. This is really, really critically important and so, I think just generally we need to stand up. We can't shirk or minimize. Everything we believe in, I mean everything we believe in, is threatened right now and we have to rise above or so and our past behavior. It's a new day. We need to come up with new tactics and what better way to start that and practice that than at the local level. I just want to just thank everybody thank the Council, thank especially the people who came out here tonight because this is what democracy looks like and I just want to end up with the words of Bob Marley. I guess he didn't really write this. I guess Peter Tosh wrote this, but, 'Get up. Stand up. Stand up for your rights. Get up. Stand up. Don't give up the fight.' Thank you."

Mayor Stephens stated, "Councilman."

Councilman Gelfand stated, "Good evening, Madam Mayor, members of Council, esteemed members of the public from Cleveland Heights and maybe other places and I see Judge Karpinski is here. It's great to see you again. I just wanted to tell you how impressed I am, inspired I am, and frankly, intimidated I am, and I'll tell you why I'm intimidated. I came to this meeting tonight. I wanted to see how you did it because we just passed one of these in South Euclid and in 2014, we passed a resolution saying that we support the idea. As the seven members of Council, we support the idea that the Constitution should be amended to say that corporations are not people and money is not speech, but we wanted to do more than that and I want to recognize two people in this room who were members of the committee, the petition Committee. I was on it and Linda Pagan from Parkside Road is here and Madeline Watts, who kind of singlehandedly took over. She is amazing, really a human dynamo who really took this effort and said we've got to do this in South Euclid and she really made it happen, not single handedly, but she was really the chief inspiration in the person who really took 2016, you know, by the horns and caused 77% of the people of South Euclid to this to say that corporations are not

people and money is not speech, so I think I'm glad to see both of you. I didn't know you were going to be here. I just wanted to kind of you know sit in a corner of the room and see how this is done so that we can plan and here's why I'm intimidated - because you know I sat and listened I know most of you came up here and speak, and I know most of you came up here and speak live in Cleveland Heights. This is home grown knowledge that you here, home. You've got this base of knowledge of human resource in Cleveland Heights that, you know, I mean we could take you on the road city by city, state by state."

Mayor Stephens stated, "Do not pilfer my residents. Leave them alone. No fingerprints on a Cleveland Heights resident."

Councilman Gelfand stated, "But this is been great. I just don't know how we're going to do it in South Euclid, but I can ask you all to help us plan and Madeline, we're meeting at the library, Sunday at 1:00, the South Euclid Lyndhurst Branch County Library on Green Road across the street from Notre Dame, this Sunday, write it down. What date is that, the 26th? The 25th? No, 29th, I'm sorry, Sunday, the 29th of January. It's the second planning meeting. The first meeting was just with me and Madeline and Greg Coleridge who spoke and, you know, if other people want to come help us to figure out how we're going to do this and I know that we have some work cut out for us to plan our first Democracy Day and I would, you know, and as I listened, I was also inspired and, you know, what are these artificial city lines that we deal? I mean, you know, we have to have them.

We have - to answer the question of one of the speakers - what are we doing here in our City Councils? Well, we're passing ordinances to protect, you know, and we have an ordinance, for instance, that we passed not long ago to protect renters because if a house owner who rents their house hasn't paid their property tax, we know it because we pass an ordinance on it and then we will let them rent the house the following year, so that protects a lot of tenants who might not know that the that the landlord went into foreclosure or lost their house and they get evicted all of a sudden even though they've been paying their rent every month so we are helping to enable people who live in a home and work out of their homes to do it more openly and not have to hide the fact that they're running a home-based business because that's how business starts at, you know, you start at home and then when you grow, you go out and you rent some space. So, now we're residents are able to do that. I mean these are just a couple of examples, so there's a lot of there are a lot of things that we do - come to City Council meetings. We have them in South Euclid on the second and fourth Monday of every month except for August, come to Cleveland Heights Council meetings, be part of this this is been just as such an inspiration and I hope I can get some help from some of you so that we can have, at least partially, as good, as amazing and informative and inspiring a Democracy Day you have here in Cleveland Heights."

Mayor Stephens stated, "You have to go to the microphone, but is there anybody else who wants to speak because she's spoken once already?"

A member of the audience stated, "I have been co-chair of the Cleveland Move to Amend and we have just passed our resolution this last December. Thank you, so I'm inviting all of you to come to our Democracy Day. We don't know... we only know it's going to be in mid-May somewhere around the

18th so please come, bring all of your wonderful ideas. This has been a wonderful evening and we're going to keep going with that in a lot of different cities. So mid-May for Cleveland, Cleveland City Hall."

Dave Lima stated, "My name is Dave Lima and I'm the coordinator of Mentor Move to Amend and since you have been invited to Cleveland, I would like to invite you to our Democracy Day which will occur on February the 8th. That's a Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. located in the Civic Center at 8500 Civic Center Boulevard in Mentor where on the third floor where Council Chambers is located. So, this is exciting. We are hopeful to have a large crowd, but please come join us and hear how the folks out in the sticks will respond to this same issue. Thanks."

Mayor Stephens stated, "Thank you. One last call. Is there anyone else you would like to speak to Council and to the public this evening? Yes ma'am."

Linda Pagan stated, "I have nothing to prepared. My name is Linda Pagan. I'm 684 Parkside, South Euclid. So, I'm going to comment some miscellaneous and then end with a comment. Montesanto and food - they have bought up almost every country that stores seeds. They now control I think $\frac{3}{4}$ of the world's seeds and they patented them all or most of them.

Schools and charter schools. That's monopolies. I think that's a big issue here. Charter schools - I don't think it's an accident that there's a lot of support for charter schools and they have omitted with the test. Oh, and there's almost no support for oversight. We have one of the weaker oversights in the state. I don't think that's an accident. So, I don't think it's that they want better schooling. They want no public schools. I think that's the ultimate goal possibly. As far as standardized tests, standardized tests can be fine. I don't think there's an accident that we're doing standardized tests for math and reading without also comparing them with cognitive level because if you don't make that comparison, you have nothing. You have trash all the way down to the state level.

Corporate welfare. That's growing like mad. We keep hearing about the Keystone. Well, what about the other pipeline? There's a pipeline from Canada already in and last I heard, they've had more than one major expensive, expensive spill. Their insurance did not cover the costs, the total cost of that spill, and then they had to go into the public entity that's in charge there and they had to go and fight with them because they wanted to open up again, but they refused to get insurance that was adequate to cover the next big spill.

I think one of the goals on someone's plate in the Republican Party is to get rid of the US Postal Service, so let's look Federal Express. What's happening there? They're increasing their profits by cutting the benefit and pay package. They're increasing the workload. They now have a much higher rate of workman's compensation claims and who's going to be paying a large part of that? The public. That's again an example public welfare that's growing.

I end with Sun Press, they don't print letters to the editor, but you have to believe you can't get past that. I just call them and try talking about - are they going to censor letters? They say, 'Of course not.' I said, 'Well, I know two that just when then and you put him in the website.' They snuck them

back up into the paper the next day. So, there are things you can do and I guess that's where I'm going to end on a comment attributed to Hitler of all people. Someone who knew him said he once said people are kind of passive and that's okay with him. It's not okay with me.

And you have to ask yourself. You've heard today many things that are happening in the City, in the state and in this country and all over the world. The question is the role of passivity. I just happened to be watching the evening over Christmas time what our dear state government was doing and I'll just go to the Petland Bill. On the Petland bill, there were three other things they passed. Every single one of them, they took away a piece of home rule. So, let me throw it back to the Council and the Mayor here. Have all of you made a call or said something or set up a meeting and made a real serious discussion about this? I think there is a move, possibly coming from ALEC, who knows, but there is a move to take away home rule and I'm going to read you a little quote here from a person who was a Senate Republican, 'Stated created the federal government not the other way around said Keith Faber, an Ohio Republican State Senator who sponsored the minimum wage preemption law. So, when we talk about local control, we need state control.' That's about as clear cut as you can be there is a move to remove municipal home rule. Now, it's one thing when they take away fracking from us. They can say that's a national interest - gas. They're going to take away home rule from us to allow Petland to sell puppies from puppy mills and they took a piece of home rule there too. Cities in the state that passed ordinances to say when they found out, they didn't allow Petland to see those puppies. And that was removed from them? There's something really bad happening. If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. A publisher once said to me. I asked if you get a few letters, do you pay any attention? He says each letter represents 1,000 or more people who have the same feeling, but didn't call, didn't write, didn't say anything. So, we have this Move to Amend we're trying to do, but there's a lot of other things happening at the same time. We can't hit them all, but make a call to your Congressman or your local representative. Write a letter or do an e-mail. Do something. They wanted to remove our water. Kasich was already all ready to sign that bill. And the press, the Plain Dealer, said write or call if you have a problem with that. 95% of the calls were against that removal and they watered down the bill (excuse the pun), lowered the amount of water to get rid of. And all our legislature could say to Kasich - why didn't you want to show we're going to sign it because they thought he was going to sign it because he had indicated he would sign it. Those calls make a difference. We have a state where you there are many issues that are nonpartisan. Sorry. I concede."

Mayor Stephens stated, "Thank you for attending, but before I close this I want to recognize and give a point of privilege to my Council colleagues Councilman Roe."

Councilwoman Roe stated, "Good evening. Thank you, Mayor. I am speaking on behalf of myself as an individual Council person tonight. My views do not necessarily reflect the entire Council. So, I just wanted to me to say that I really do appreciate everyone who's come out the see evening and I appreciate the passion of the citizens of Cleveland Heights and I'm very proud to live here because of that passion. In preparation for tonight's meeting, I went back and I reviewed all of the testimony that was given last year and I thought again about what else we could do, so I would suggest that we consider some changes for the future in terms of what we're doing with Democracy Day and perhaps

even a follow-up in terms of this evening's discussion. I appreciate again everyone's passion who was here to spend the time, but I personally think that it's more meaningful if we had individual letters from our citizens rather than a letter from the City that represents what we all said. So, I would like to suggest that we do something like a massive letter writing campaign to bring other people into the process and looking at how we educate and inform more of our citizens that are not here tonight. I think that individual letters and maybe we all need to learn to tweet too and teach our citizens how to tweet so that we can make more of an impact and involve more of our citizens. Or maybe we should go canvas our neighbors and help them write letters to Representative Fudge and Senator Portman. So, think about some of those things and thank you all for being here."

Mayor Stephens stated, "It's now 9:00. I want to thank you all for coming out and this brings our meeting to a close and remember, democracy is what we make it in this country. Thank you all."

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Stephens, Mayor

Mitch Michalec, Acting Clerk of Council

/jkw