

Freedom to Petition Seminar Prep

Citizen's United and Campaign Finance Reform

Freedom to petition our government for redress of grievances means the ability to have our concerns taken seriously by lawmakers. It protects the right to lobby and make our views known to our elected officials. With campaign ads currently flooding the airwaves and stuffing mailboxes, we must think about who has access to political power and under what conditions. *Citizen's United v. Federal Election Commission* was the court case in 2010 that opened the door to unlimited spending by associations of people (especially corporations and unions) to influence the outcomes of elections. Whoever is elected next month in congressional elections, we must consider what petitioning our government means in era of unlimited campaign spending.

Essential question: How does the Citizen's United Decision affect people's freedom to petition the government?

After reading your seminar packet, answer the following questions. Reference articles in the packet in each answer. You will turn this in for credit (5 points) after seminar.

What is the connection between campaign spending and freedom to petition the government for a redress of grievances?

Do campaign finance restrictions strengthen this freedom to petition?

Does the government have a compelling interest in regulating spending on campaigns?

Should we afford the same First Amendment protections to associations of people as we do to individuals? Does it matter what type of associations (e.g. corporate, unions)?

What is one issue you'd like the seminar to discuss?

What is one thing where you need clarification on or for which information would be helpful?