



Mt. ENNON
BAPTIST CHURCH
For People on the GROW!

**Before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Hearing on SJ 2
March 5, 2020**

**Written Testimony in Support of SJ 2: Democracy Amendment Resolution
Rev. Delman Coates, Ph.D., Senior Pastor, Mt. Ennon Baptist Church (Clinton, MD)**

Time and time again we see the cost of corruption, as multinational corporations and wealthy individuals spend billions on political campaigns to influence policy decisions that will be in their best interests, but often negatively affect the American people as a whole.

The share of pretax national income going to the richest 0.1 percent has roughly quadrupled since the 1970s. Wealth inequality has reached the point of theft. African Americans and other minority groups lost much of their wealth in the financial crash, yet the political system allowed the criminal behavior in corporate finance go unpunished. Wall St. got bailed out and main street got sold out. To add insult to injury, we have more than 20 states engaging in active voter suppression to erase the voting power of minority and younger voters.

Our system is fragmented. When it is time to spend on wars or provide tax cuts for wealthy individuals, no one ever asks where the money is coming from. However, when communities need vital resources, such as jobs, healthcare, and education, the question is posed, "How are we going to pay for it." And the fact of the matter is that the deficit is just a record of our spending. We cannot truly live in a democratic society if the political pipeline is corrupted by special interests.

Our church has partnered with Get Money Out MD to sign thousands of petitions to stop big money in politics. We will continue to fight until the political system is no longer marred by the financial coercion of big companies and billionaires in the democratic process.

Respectfully,

Rev. Delman Coates, Ph.D.
Senior Pastor, Mt. Ennon Baptist Church