

TO: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs, February 18, 2021
FROM: Reverend Stephen A. Tillett
RE: SJ7 Democracy Amendment Resolution
DATE: February 18, 2021
Position: SUPPORT

A hideous Supreme Court ruling has contributed to eroding the voice and vote of the average person in the United States. The *Citizens United* ruling which equated money with speech, has allowed billions of dollars to be poured into elections for the purpose of advancing the agenda of the superrich who want to be even richer at the expense of the nation that has already showed them so much favor! The result, there are now over 300 million people whose interests are secondary or less because rich people want more money than they already have. That is obscene and it needs to stop. That is why I urge this committee to present a favorable report for the Democracy Amendment Resolution that we are supporting.

Maryland prides itself on being "the free state" I sincerely hope that the Free State will stand in favor of open and fair elections *without* voter suppression. I hope that the Free State will support limiting campaign donations by corporations and the superrich to the disadvantage of over 300 million Americans. The needs of ordinary people are becoming afterthoughts in our democracy.

I will quote from pages 108-110 in my book Stop Falling for the Okeydoke: How the Lie of "Race" Continues to Undermine Our Country. At the very beginning of our nation two of the founding fathers wrote these words with respect to the dangers to our republic posed by political parties. They both figured that parties out of control would lead to a party before country cancer that could potentially overtake and grievously wound our democracy.

Our second president, John Adams, wrote these words:

“There is nothing which I dread so much as a division of the republic into two great parties, each arranged under its leader, and concerting measures in opposition to each other. This, in my humble apprehension, is to be dreaded as the greatest political evil under our Constitution.”

Yet another Founder of our country, George Washington, shared his concerns in his farewell address in 1796 as he was preparing to leave the presidency after serving two terms as our first president. He said,

“In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations, Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts.

“You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection...The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism.”