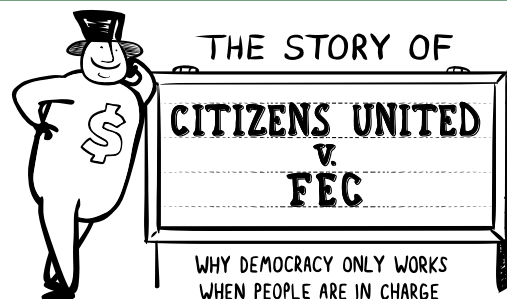

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Trailer & Previews Available



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VIRAL VIDEO: Story of Stuff Project takes on corporate political influence in new online movie, joins calls for constitutional amendment

The Story of Citizens United v. FEC: Why Democracy Only Works When People Are in Charge

Washington, D.C. — March 1, 2011 — The crisis of corporate influence over American democracy is the latest subject of award-winning Internet filmmaker, Annie Leonard, who on March 1st will release ***The Story of Citizens United v. FEC***, an animated short.

Leonard, who directs The Story of Stuff Project, was inspired to make the film by the disastrous 2010 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* that permitted corporations to spend freely to influence American elections. The 8-minute film, available on March 1st at www.storyofcitizensunited.org, places corporate influence—not bad politicians—at the heart of Americans' low confidence in the political process.

The movie explores the history of the American corporation and corporate political spending, the appropriate roles of citizens and for-profit corporations in a democracy and the toxic impact the *Citizens United* decision has already had on our political process. It ends with a call to amend the U.S. Constitution to confirm that people—not corporations—make the decisions in a democracy.

"Getting corporations out of our democracy is critical to making progress on a huge range of issues that we Americans care about, from good jobs to clean air to safe products," said Leonard. "Unless we act, those concerns will take even more of a backseat to the concerns of Walmart, Exxon, and Dow than they do now."

A Hart Research Associates poll released in January found that nearly four in five Americans (79 percent) support the passage of an amendment that would overturn the *Citizens United* decision and make clear that corporations do not have the same rights as people, thus giving Congress the authority to limit the amount of money corporations can spend on elections. *The Story of Citizens United v. FEC* is being released to support the growing movement for a constitutional amendment.

"A year after the Supreme Court's abominable *Citizens United* decision, we have overwhelming evidence of the damage

THE STORY OF CITIZENS UNITED v. FEC

done to our democracy — and clear signals of worse threats to come,” said Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen, and a content advisor on the movie. “In the 2010 elections, corporations and the super rich funneled a reported \$300 million through so-called ‘independent’ organizations to run attack ads and advance corporate agendas. And 2010 was just practice for 2012. If we are going to rescue democracy and re-establish the principle that corporations shouldn’t be able to buy elections, we must have a constitutional amendment to overturn the heinous *Citizens United* decision.”

On the evening of release, The Story of Stuff Project will hold over 500 house parties around the country for participants to learn more about the Supreme Court’s decision and to organize in support of a constitutional amendment.

The Story of Citizens United v. FEC companion website (www.storyofcitizensunited.org) will serve as an interactive launch pad for information and activism. The site offers viewers additional educational resources, including an annotated script and FAQs, as well as ways to get involved in the constitutional amendment campaigns of Public Citizen, Free Speech for People and People for the American Way.

Kicking off Season Two, *The Story of Citizens United v. FEC* is the first in an anticipated series of three new movies from The Story of Stuff Project in 2011. Season Two will tell the stories behind *The Story of Stuff*—what makes our economic system tick, who pays, who benefits and how can we turn it around. The Project’s three Season One movies—*The Story of Bottled Water*, *The Story of Cosmetics* and *The Story of Electronics*—have together been viewed more than 2.3 million times online. The original film *The Story of Stuff*, released in December 2007, has been viewed more than 15 million times.

The following spokespeople are available for comment:

Annie Leonard is the Director of **The Story of Stuff Project** and author of *The Story of Stuff*, released in paperback in late February by the Free Press imprint of Simon & Schuster. Annie co-wrote and narrates *The Story of Citizens United v. FEC*.

Robert Weissman is the President of **Public Citizen**, a national, nonprofit consumer advocacy organization founded in 1971 to ensure that all citizens are represented in the halls of power. Robert was the lead content advisor on *The Story of Citizens United v. FEC*.

John Bonifaz is the co-founder and Director of **Free Speech for People** and the Legal Director of Voter Action, a national voting rights and election integrity organization.

Margery Baker is Executive Vice President for Policy and Program at **People for the American Way**, which is dedicated to making the promise of America real for every American.

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