

Washington, DC – U.S. Representative Rush Holt (NJ-12) today called the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Committee* – which ruled that corporations may spend freely to support or oppose state and federal candidates – a “blow to democracy” that overturns a century old doctrine that restricted corporate money in campaigns. Holt said Congress would need to take a number of measures to get big money out of the campaign finance system.

“Today’s decision gives corporations a big megaphone and drowns out the voice of the people,” Holt said. If Americans are concerned that their elected officials aren’t listening to them now, just wait if this new corporate friendly doctrine takes effect and the special interest megaphones drown them out completely.”

Holt urged Congress to pass the Fair Elections Now Act, legislation he is cosponsoring, which would offer candidates the choice of accessing public funds for their campaigns if they reach a certain threshold of support and forego big dollar fundraising in exchange for a grassroots small donor effort. The program is completely voluntary – no candidate for Congress would be compelled to use it. Candidates would have to a minimum level of small individual contributions to qualify for the program. Once they qualify, candidates would abide by various restrictions and disclosure requirements. Qualified candidates would receive an up-front grant based on the average costs of winning campaigns in recent elections for their primary campaigns, and if nominated, another grant for their general election campaign.

“I would hope today’s decision is a wake-up call for those who want to ensure that all Americans have an equal voice in our democracy,” Holt said. “Passing the Fair Elections Now Act should be one step we take to increase the power of the voice of the people, rather than giving corporate interests more influence.”