

There are many opportunities for small businesses to provide goods and services to the U.S. government. In fact, at least 23 percent of all government spending is targeted to small businesses. Yet for many, the application process can seem daunting. To help Central New Jersey residents and businesses obtain federal contracts and expand operations, tomorrow, February 18 in Monroe I will be hosting a Federal Procurement Workshop, featuring speakers from the General Services Administration, the Defense Procurement Technical Assistance Center, and other agencies.

What does the government purchase? The list is extensive: clothes, catering, stationary, office supplies, telephones, furniture, transportation services, construction, and laboratory supplies, to name a few. You are welcome to attend the workshop, which begins at 9 a.m. Thursday at the Monroe Township Library. Click [here](#) for a map.

Honoring Fallen Intelligence Officers

On the morning of February 5, I attended a [memorial service](#) at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia for the seven CIA officers who were killed in Afghanistan late last year. President Obama and CIA Director Leon Panetta both delivered moving remarks. The most powerful part of the ceremony featured seven co-workers of the fallen officers, each speaking about the officer they had known and served with over the years. Some of the fallen already had served full careers in our military and had been with the Agency for a relatively short term, others for longer times. Americans can be proud of the dedication and skill of their countrymen and women who gather intelligence clandestinely to protect America and whose entire careers sometimes must be kept secret to protect others. Sometimes even their families must mourn them without knowing the details of their deaths. We can be grateful to such Americans.

What the Citizens United Decision Means

At last week's telephone town hall meeting, which you can listen to [here](#), a constituent asked me if I thought the recent [Supreme Court ruling](#) lifting the ban on direct corporate spending on campaign advertisements would change democracy in America. It could.

The five-justice majority rejected more than 100 years of Congressional restrictions on campaign spending limitations by corporations and case law to the same effect going back

decades. Concerning this departure from precedent, Justice Stevens in dissent wrote, the "ruling thus strikes at the vitals of *stare decisis*, the means by which we ensure that the law will not merely change erratically, but will develop in a principled and intelligible fashion that permits society to presume that bedrock principles are founded in the law rather than in the proclivities of [individual justices]."

Also, the decision is just wrong on the merits. The framers wrote the Constitution to protect and preserve the rights of individual persons against tyranny and oppression; the preamble to the Constitution did not start with "We the corporations of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union..." Government through the consent of the governed was not intended to be for corporations. One-person, one-vote does not refer to corporations. So the protection of political speech to make that government function is intended primarily for individual people, not corporations – or so it has been understood until now. Is the opinion of a mining company on what constitutes adequate mine safety more important than the opinions of the miners who work and often die there?

What I fear most is the impact this decision will have on the local level, even more than in Congressional or Presidential campaigns. This decision likely will increase corporate presence in municipal and state elections, where the mere threat of a \$50,000 or \$100,000 advertising campaign for or against a candidate might cause candidates to withdraw. Elected officials should represent their constituents, not spend all of their time fundraising in what will undoubtedly be a hopeless effort to keep up with corporate campaign spending. As a long-time supporter of efforts to provide public funds to candidates who forego big dollar fundraising, I am working with my colleagues in Congress to enact that and other measures to limit the damage of this unjustifiable decision.

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress

P.S. Just a reminder: I always want to hear from you, but please don't reply to this e-mail. Instead, please email me through my website at www.holt.house.gov , or call me at 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658) to let me know what's on your mind. Please also note that you may unsubscribe from this list by clicking on the "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of this email.