

DUKE JOURNAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW & PUBLIC POLICY

VOLUME 9

2014

FOREWORD

The right to elect our political representatives is the touchstone of the American democratic system. Increasingly, however, people have begun to question whether that right still carries any meaning—at a time when ultra-wealthy individuals and corporations can funnel extraordinary sums to support the candidates most aligned with their interests. Since the Supreme Court, in *Citizens United v. FEC*, held that corporations have a constitutional right to spend without limit in political elections, we have seen government grow increasingly responsive to the interests of big business and proportionately deaf to the concerns of ordinary citizens. The more influence we give to the “one-percent,” the further we erode the ability of the majority of Americans to have a meaningful say in the political process. Despite the seemingly intractable debate surrounding campaign finance reform, one thing is certain: Money in politics raises fundamental questions that go to the very heart of representative democracy. One way or the other these questions must be answered, and we—together as citizens—are the only ones who can decide them.

During this year’s annual spring symposium, “The Future of Campaign Finance Reform,” *the Duke Journal of Constitutional Law and Public Policy* addressed the practical effect of the Court’s most recent campaign finance decisions. Symposium participants offered an array of perspectives as to how to dissect the issue—from considering campaign finance as a consequence of America’s deep-seated distrust of monopolies, to reading *Citizens United* as a break from the Court’s traditional understanding of precedent.

Since then, participants have continued to fight for an unbiased election. Zephyr Teachout mounted a challenge against Governor Andrew Cuomo in New York’s Democratic primary to highlight the

corrupting influence of a centralized political and financial power. Lawrence Lessig launched his own PAC, MayDay, in an effort to transform New Hampshire's Republican primary. And as a stark reminder that these issues transcend our national borders, Hong Kong, in the run up to publication, erupted in protest as students refuse to accept anything less than true universal suffrage in the country's upcoming presidential election.

The Ninth Volume of the *Duke Journal of Constitutional Law and Public Policy* provides a glimpse into the evolving, multi-faceted issue of campaign finance reform from some of the leading thinkers on this topic. We are especially grateful to our participants—students, scholars, and attorneys—for sharing their wisdom and passion. We extend our gratitude to the Duke Center on Law, Race and Politics for the extremely generous contribution, which enabled us to bring together so many great minds. We would also like to thank DJCLPP's faculty advisers, Professors Joseph Blocher and Ernie Young, for their tireless support. And finally, we are truly indebted to Professor Guy-Uriel Charles, whose vision and commitment made this symposium possible.