



# Supreme Court uncaps individual election spending

By Mary Kuhlman

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Another important campaign finance decision handed down Wednesday by the U.S. Supreme Court is provoking both celebration and consternation across the country.

Paul Ryan, senior counsel with the Campaign Legal Center says the 5-to-4 ruling in [McCutcheon v. the Federal Election Commission](#) means the voices of most voters will continue to be drowned out by the wealthiest few.

"That's the real impact of today's decision," he says. "Removing the \$123,000 cap and now, allowing contributions in excess of \$3.5 million to go to candidates and parties, combined."

Groups applauding the ruling include the Cato Institute, which says restricting the total amount a donor can give violates First Amendment rights and does not prevent corruption.

But following the decision, at least 140 protests were held in 38 states and the nation's capital.

Ryan says the McCutcheon ruling, combined with the Citizens United ruling of 2010, opens the floodgates wider to give the wealthy more influence over politicians.

However, he does see a small silver lining.

"The court did in fact leave the door open for more narrowly tailored corruption-preventing policies that Congress might pass, and that state legislatures and city councils across the country could certainly pursue."

Marge Baker, vice president of People for the American Way, says the McCutcheon decision, which she sees as a major threat to democracy, is bound to generate a wide range of responses.

"From amending the Constitution to small-donor public financing proposals," she points out.

Other critics of the decision say the Court is ignoring previous laws passed by Congress, past presidents' decisions to sign those laws, and even the Court's own precedents.