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Shaun McCutcheon calls for more money in politics, plans to max out all limits

By: Kellan Howell
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In a chorus of election law reformers bemoaning the corrupting influence of [money](#) in politics, one man says Americans need to spend even more on political speech.

In the recent [Supreme Court case](#) that is now being called Citizens United 2, [Shaun McCutcheon](#), an electrical engineer from Alabama, stood up for his right to free speech facilitated by political contributions resulting in the [court](#)'s 5-4 decision to strike down overall aggregate donation limits to candidates.

During a panel discussion on Wednesday, [Mr. McCutcheon](#) told audience members that the [Supreme Court](#)'s decision validates the need for more political spending.

"I'm grass-roots proof that private citizens retain some influence, and with determination, we can achieve positive change within our country," [Mr. McCutcheon](#) said during the [presentation](#) held at the Cato Institute in Washington.

The [Supreme Court](#)'s decision in [McCutcheon v. FEC](#) means that donors can contribute to as many candidates and parties as they want, as long as they do not exceed the individual base limits for each party or candidate per election.

"As far as aggregate limits go, I plan on blowing them all out, the candidates, the PACs, and the parties," [Mr. McCutcheon](#) admitted.

[Mr. McCutcheon](#), along with the other panelists, said money donated and spent on political advertising is a legitimate form of free speech and that this case should not have garnered so much controversy.

"When you look at how much money is spent advertising chocolate chip cookies, money spent on political advertising is just a drop in the bucket," said Donald McGahn, a former chairman of the Federal Election Commission.

Liberal campaign [finance](#) reformists are actually the cause of the problems leading to money's corrupting influence in government, according to [Mr. McCutcheon](#).

“PACs came into being only after campaign finance limits were imposed during the 1970s,” he said. “In one fell swoop, supporters of campaign finance laws have managed to supercharge the growth of super PACs while taking away the ability of average Americans to directly support the candidates who would actually take office in the people’s service.”

People that have been using PACs as loopholes to make political donations may now be swayed back to traditional fundraising groups whether it be the candidate’s individual campaign, national party organizations, or joint fundraising committees, a move that [Mr. McCutcheon](#) strongly supports.

While he continues to support PACs and super PACs, [Mr. McCutcheon](#) told the audience that entrusting a majority of political donations to single issue groups can be dangerous because they answer to fewer disclosure and transparency laws.

But other panelists argued that disclosure laws themselves have reached a point that is out of control and counterproductive to free speech in democracy and benefit political incumbents while hurting challengers.

“What’s becoming more common is to do through disclosure what cannot be done constitutionally through bans,” Mr. McGahn said. “What’s happened is that we have inflated the idea of disclosing political activity. People try to take this and turn it in to essentially speech licensure.”

While proponents of campaign finance restrictions argue that more limits and disclosure requirements act as an equalizing force for voters that can’t afford large contributions, the panelists said that ultimately the voters are the ones who decide which candidate wins, citing House Majority Leader Eric Cantor’s, Virginia Republican, embarrassing primary loss to tea party challenger Dave Brat last week.

“The status quo has been created chiefly by the so-called political reformers and has had the perverse, but seemingly intended effect of protecting incumbents,” [Mr. McCutcheon](#) said, adding that a system with fewer financial limits would allow more challengers to come out on top.

“Let’s see who’s out there and let’s see what their ideas are and let’s hear what they have to say,” he said.