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VOTERS DISAGREE WITH HIGH COURT: LIMITS ON MONEY DON'T RESTRICT FREE SPEECH

American voters by a wide margin disagree with today's ruling by the Supreme Court and say that Congress *can* limit how much an individual gives to a political group. In the most recent national poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind, three-fifths (58%) of voters say Congress can limit donations to a political group so "other people's free speech is not overwhelmed by some peoples' money." Just a third (35%) say limiting contributions is limiting speech--in violation of the Constitution.

"Every politician knows money is the mother's milk of a campaign," said Bruce Peabody, professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University. "But our results show that most voters do not equate free speech with the free flow of money," Peabody continued. "The Court is stepping out on its own in saying that giving campaign cash is an important constitutional right on par with being able to speak out about political matters."

Democrats by wide margin of (65-28) say Congress can limit such contributions, and independent voters by similar 2-to-1 margin agree. Republicans split on the question (49-44), slightly in favor of allowing Congress to limit contributions.

The case of [*McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*](#) was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in October. Shaun McCutcheon, a big Republican contributor, contended that the FEC rules about how much he can donate in a two-year period to parties and campaigns (set at \$123,000) is too low. A written decision was released today which struck down the limit.

The university-based research center at FDU conducted the national poll as part of its *Project on Popular Constitutionalism*, designed to tap voter attitudes about the Constitution and its competing values. The Project focused on three prominent cases considered by the highest court this year: *Michigan v. Bay Mills Indian Community*, *Town of Greece v. Galloway* and *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*. Fairleigh Dickinson University's national poll of 883 registered voters aged 18 and older was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from December 9 through December 15, 2013, and has a margin of error of +/-3.3 percentage points.

Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032

Methodology

This national survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from December 9 through December 15, 2013 using a randomly selected sample of 883 registered voters. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.3 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

Tables

<i>There is a case about how much money people can give, not to candidates, but to other political organizations. Have you heard about this case, or not?</i>												
	All	Party			Gender		Race		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Wom	White	Non white	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Have heard	36%	38	31	37	42	31	37	34	31	33	41	40
Have not heard	62%	60	67	62	57	68	61	65	69	65	58	59
DK/Ref (vol)	1%	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	2	1	1

<i>Some say...[rotate]...Congress cannot limit how much money you give to a political group because such a limit is a limit on your free speech. Others say Congress has to limit how much money you can give to a political group so other peoples' free speech is not overwhelmed by some peoples' money. Which comes closer to your view?</i>												
	All	Party			Gender		Race		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Wom	White	Non white	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Congress can NOT limit contributions	35%	28	32	44	35	34	33	39	38	32	36	35
Congress CAN limit contributions	58%	65	60	49	58	58	59	54	53	62	58	56
DK/Ref (vol)	8%	7	8	6	7	8	8	7	9	6	6	9

Exact Question Wording and Order for U.S. Supreme Court Series

USSC 1A One case is about allowing Indian Tribes to buy land to build casinos. Have you heard about this case or not?

- 1 Have heard
- 2 Have not heard
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

USSC 1B. Some say...ROTATE... since Indian Tribes are nations and have the right to run casinos on their own land, they can also buy new land and have the same right. Others say...ROTATE... Indian Tribes are nations and have the right to run casinos on their own land, but they can't buy new land and claim the same rights. Which comes closer to your view?

- 1 Can buy new land and claim the same rights
- 2 Cannot buy land and claim the same rights
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

USSC2A. There is a case about how much money people can give, not to candidates, but to other political organizations. Have you heard about this case, or not?

- 1 Have heard
- 2 Have not heard
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

USSC2B. Some people say... ROTATE... Congress cannot limit how much money you give to a political group because such a limit is a limit on your free speech. Others say... Congress has to limit how much money you can give to a political group so other people's free speech is not overwhelmed by some people's money. Which comes closer to your view?

- 1 Congress cannot limit contributions
- 2 Congress CAN limit contributions
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

USSC3A. There is one case about praying in town councils and other meetings with public officials. Have you heard about this case, or not?

- 1 Have heard
- 2 Have not heard
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

USSC3B. Some say... ROTATE... public meetings shouldn't have any prayers at all because prayers by definition suggest one belief or another. Others say... prayer at public meetings is fine as long as the public officials are not favoring some beliefs over others. Which comes closer to your view.

- 1 Prayer shouldn't be allowed
- 2 Prayer can be allowed
- 8 DK/Refused (vol)

Sample characteristics

Gender

Male	49
Female	51

Age

18-34	26
35-54	36
55+	36
Refused	1

Race/Ethnicity

White	72
Black/African-American	11
Latino or Hispanic	11
Asian	2
Other/refused	4

Party identification

Democrat/Lean Democrat	43
Independent/DK/refused	19
Republican/Lean Republican	35