

## Citizens United, Political Action Committees, and Big Pharma

\* The *Citizens United* case holding has the effect of media influence on a massive scale. There are campaign contribution limits to finance the actual physical movement of campaigns (posters, travel, salaries, etc.), yet there are now no limits on what can be spent in media advertising. Political Action Committees (PACs) form and then various donors pool their money together- and then attack ads are created. Better yet, the PAC does not need to disclose their donors. Attack ads are shown with frequency on television, yet campaign budgets used to limit the amount of airspace that could be purchased. Now, since the *United Citizens* holding provides that there are **no limits** in contributing to PACs, the only limitation is how much money can be raised. None of us like attack ads and call them distasteful; however, they are proven to work because they operate as creating a mantra in association with a targeted candidate.

\* The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has banned the importation of similar pharmaceuticals from other countries- namely Canada and Mexico. It used to be such that one could, with a legitimate prescription from a U.S. doctor, fill their prescriptions from Canadian pharmacies. The difference? The drugs were much cheaper because Canada (as do all other socialized countries) bargain for the prices of their pharmaceuticals. This was seen as a threat to the pockets of Big Pharma operation in the United States, so the FDA banned all imports based upon 'safety' measures.

\* Corporations and PACs have the same protection as a person, in regards to defamation. The problem is that attack ads are considered 'opinions' of the other candidate. Since the other candidate is a public figure, the opinion is protected speech. Are the ads unethical and fraudulent? Yes, they are, yet this is considered protected unless it falls into one of the six main categories of unprotected speech.

\* A prime example of Big Pharma influence was when Medicare Part D was passed in 2005. Big Pharma provides the drugs that are covered under Medicare Part D (obviously). A provision of Medicare Part D does not allow for the government to negotiate prices; what the drug manufacturer sets as a price is what our government pays. This is a blank check for taxpayer's dollars. Every other socialized country- from Canada to Germany- purchases the exact same pharmaceuticals yet pays far less than half of what our government does because they require a manufacturer to price bargain to do business in their respective health care systems.