

## Citizen Groups Form Alliance To Fight Corruption And Rescue Democracy

Written by Blue Jean Nation

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MADISON - Three Wisconsin-based democracy reform groups – the Wisconsin Grassroots Network, Wisconsin United to Amend and Blue Jean Nation – announced the establishment of a partnership to maximize their collective impact.

“Separately, each of our groups possesses valuable assets and makes a difference,” said Mike McCabe, founder and president of Blue Jean Nation. “Together, our strength can be greater than the sum of its parts.”

All three groups share a mission of enabling Wisconsin citizens to work together to advance their ability to exercise the right to self-government against the corrupting influence of money in politics.

“There are many critical issues we face at this time in history,” said Jim Crist, from Wisconsin United To Amend, “but little can be done until we eliminate the institutionalized government corruption which is in our electoral process today. We look forward to working with Blue Jean Nation and Wisconsin Grassroots Network in this joint effort to build a stronger state network of community activists.”

McCabe, former director of the nonpartisan government watchdog group Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, organized Blue Jean Nation last April to “house the politically homeless and transform parties that are failing America.” The group pursues its aims through community outreach, civic education and engagement, grassroots organizing, and public policy advocacy and social action.

Wisconsin United to Amend, formerly known as Wisconsin Move to Amend, is a nonpartisan state network working for a constitutional amendment that will overturn U.S. Supreme Court decisions relating to corporations’ rights and money in politics, including Citizens United vs. FEC. The group has organized citizens’ groups in more than 60 communities throughout the state in support of referenda and resolutions that money is not speech, and that constitutional rights are reserved for natural persons, not corporations.

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“United to Amend has done amazing work organizing communities, cultivating broad bipartisan support, and winning votes to rein in big money in politics by near-unanimous margins in community after community. We want to help find ways to keep those neighborhood activists engaged after their local vote is won. We want to knit them together with the activists in the other communities that have done the same thing,” McCabe said.

“Wisconsin Grassroots Network is ideally suited to help us make this happen,” he added, “since it has been acting as the connective tissue for a wide range of different organizations and causes, and specializes in pulling together diverse interests into multifaceted local grassroots groups.”

Wisconsin Grassroots Network facilitates and sustains the development and growth of community-based grassroots groups that are devoted to enhancing democracy, justice and equity for all. WGN provides communication platforms, training, issue education, resources, organizing examples and networking opportunities for urban and rural grassroots organizations, their leadership and members.

“Strategic alliances are key to this effort. We must stand united in our resolve to change our society’s course, community by community,” said Nate Timm of the Wisconsin Grassroots Network. “We are inspired to be working with United to Amend as they mobilize communities to say unequivocally that corporations are not people and money is not free speech and Blue Jean Nation as they educate communities on the divisive tactics of the two political parties when the real issue is the undemocratic concentration of wealth in a few people. We look forward to playing our role in our partnership as a resource for developing community centered grassroots groups.”

Through the new alliance, the three groups intend to provide mutual support, avoid duplication of effort, and accentuate the respective strengths of each group.