# Opinion: First Amendment hijacked by moneyed interests

**By Robert Reich**

A funny thing happened to the First Amendment on its way to the public forum: It was hijacked.

According to the Supreme Court, money is now speech, and corporations are now people.

Yet when real people without money assemble to express their dissatisfaction with the political consequences of this, they're treated as public nuisances – clubbed, pepper-sprayed, thrown out of public parks and evicted from public spaces.

The Supreme Court's Citizens United decision last year ended all limits on political spending. Now millions of dollars are being funneled to politicians without a trace.

The limits were eroding even before Citizens United. For years, large corporations have been flooding Washington with lobbyists who bundle individual contributions into a formidable war chest, bankrolling more and more lawmakers' campaigns.

And a revolving door has developed between official Washington and Wall Street – with bank executives becoming public officials who make rules that benefit the banks before heading back to the Street to make money off the rules they created.

Other top officials, including an increasing proportion of former members of Congress, are cashing in by joining lobbying powerhouses and pressuring their former colleagues to do whatever their clients want.

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