



BEN COHEN
191 Bank Street, Third Floor
Burlington, VT 05401

"If the spirit of liberty should vanish in other parts of the union and support of our institutions should languish, it could all be replenished from the generous store held by the people of this brave little state of Vermont."

– President Calvin Coolidge (inscription at the Vermont statehouse)

To Vermont Speaker of the House Shap Smith;

I am writing to you today to enthusiastically urge your support for JRS 27, which would restore free and fair elections in America by amending the US Constitution.

Whether it is through Congress or a convention of the states, it is clear that only an amendment can solve this problem. Through a series of disastrous decisions, most notably *Citizens United v FEC*, the Supreme Court has erased a century of campaign finance regulations and eliminated any semblance of separation between wealth and state.

At the same time, the U.S. Congress has become so dysfunctional and detached from the will of the American people, with a 9% approval rating, it has become increasingly clear to me that the current Congress is incapable of taking action on this issue. So, it is up to the states and state legislators like you to take action on this most important issue.

Vermont can lead the way on solving this national problem, as it has on many other issues throughout our state's history, and you can lead on an issue that has the support of 9 out of 10 voters. Every American knows that elections should be free of the corrupting influence of excessive spending by outside interests and fair enough that any citizen can run for public office.

This is the most important issue of our generation – the one that affects all others. It is popular, proactive, and progressive to push for an amendment that will make America more democratic, more inclusive, and a more perfect union.

As a citizen, I appreciate you doing everything in your power to pass JRS 27. Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is anything more I can do to help ensure the passage of JRS 27. Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben". The letters are stylized and connected.

Ben Cohen, Co-Founder
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream

CC: Members of the Vermont House of Representatives