



**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2015, 12:00-1:30 PM
at Central Market (N. Lamar)**

Attendees

Board members present: Joanne, Diane, Mary, Dan.

Treasurer's report

As of July 2015, our balance is \$1175.83. Only expense since last meeting was \$53.74 for domain registration fees (website) and only donation was \$1 from June meeting.

September and October meeting plans

Joanne has emailed 9 faculty members to find out if they'd like to participate in a meeting about electoral college reform. Most of them are not available. There may still be a chance to get UT professor Daron Shaw. But we may have better success if the discussion happens at our October meeting. Either way, Dan is willing to moderate the discussion, or be another panelist.

We also could do our September meeting on judicial selection reform. Joanne says we might be able to get participation from Liz Wally, David Jones, and/or Wallace Jefferson. The Speaker of the House, Rep. Joe Straus, will be giving interim charges to various committees, we think in September. The Texas Fair Courts Network, of which Common Ground for Texans is a member, will request an interim charge to the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee to conduct a study on judicial selection. Depending on the timing of these assignments, it might be an action for our audience to contact their reps and support the interim study request. Joanne will find out when the charges will be made.

That and the availability of Professor Shaw will help determine which discussion we'll do in September and which in October. Joanne will let us know.

Corporate personhood

We discussed our latest thinking about the problems of *Citizens United*, corporate personhood, and the idea that spending money is free speech. We referred to an essay published in *Washington Monthly* a few months ago by Kent Greenfield; we support the view that corporations should be separate entities from their owners, and that the Supreme Court's *Hobby Lobby* decision failed to take this properly into account. We agreed that the term "entity" is preferable to "person", which causes confusion. We also agreed that the real question is which constitutional rights, if any, should be recognized for corporations. We seemed to agree that they shouldn't be entitled to First Amendment rights like freedom of religion or freedom of speech (although a possible exception is freedom of the press in the case of media companies). Mostly, as creations of the state, the rights of corporations are statutory. But

there are still some open questions, such as whether corporations should be protected under the Fifth Amendment's takings clause or the Fourth Amendment which prohibits unreasonable search and seizure.

Concerning the spending of money as free speech, Dan expressed his discouragement, having noticed that libertarians and people on the right don't seem receptive to placing limits on spending -- by individuals, at least. Full disclosure may be the best we can hope to achieve. On the other hand, he thinks there may be a better chance to get corporate entities out of the political process, and suggests that for strategic reasons we should put more emphasis on that.