

For: LeClairRyan, Richmond, Va.  
From: Parness & Associates, Aberdeen, N.J.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LeClairRyan attorneys discuss new corporate political free speech rights in webinar**

*--Supreme Court decision allows direct advocacy by corporations in federal elections*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (1/28/10)—The upset victory in Massachusetts by a Republican candidate in the race for the U.S. Senate seat left vacant by the death of Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy is ramping up interest in what already promised to be heated 2010 Congressional races. With the recent Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, things become even more interesting. Attorneys from LeClairRyan's Political Activity Law team will explore the decision's implications for expanded free speech rights for corporations in "Corporate Political Speech and Activities Post-*Citizens United*: New Opportunities and Familiar Pitfalls," a free webinar on Friday, January 29, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. EST.

"For corporations, the implication of *Citizens United* is a clear right to use general treasury funds to advocate for the election or defeat of candidates for the office of the presidency of the United States and for seats in the U.S. Congress," says Lee E. Goodman, a shareholder in LeClairRyan, based in the firm's Washington office. "The decision also frees corporations to contribute to other organizations, such as non-profit advocacy groups and trade associations, for use in such efforts. It overturns 30 years of restrictions on corporations from engaging in such express advocacy in federal elections. Prior to *Citizens United*, corporations were barred from even referring to clearly identified federal candidates during certain 'blackout periods' before primary and general elections."

Chris Ashby, a partner in the firm, notes that many state laws restricting corporate political expenditures will likely be repealed or struck down in the wake of the *Citizens United* decision. "However, until that happens, corporations should continue to plan and review their state-level expenditures carefully," he warns. Additionally, Ashby stresses that the decision does not overturn other provisions of federal election and campaign finance law. "The ban on direct and in-kind contributions to federal candidates remains intact," he points out, as do the disclaimer, disclosure and reporting requirements that apply to corporate-funded political advertisements and independent expenditure campaigns.

While opening the door for increased involvement by corporations in political races, the decision also raises significant questions, many of which will be explored at the webinar. Among the issues the LeClairRyan attorneys plan to discuss are:

- What corporations can do now that they couldn't do before?
- What registration, reporting and disclaimer obligations still apply to corporate political expenditures?
- What impact is the decision likely to have on state and local restrictions on corporate political participation?
- How do the implications of *Citizens United* differ for tax-exempt and for-profit corporations?
- Can corporations make contributions to candidates?
- How will the role of political action committees (PACs) be affected?
- How can corporations avoid "coordination" and other pitfalls?
- What remains of the Bi-Partisan (McCain-Feingold) Campaign Reform Act?
- What will be the new front in the battle to roll back federal regulation of political campaign finance?
- How are Congress and reformers likely to respond?
- Other practical implications of the new political freedom.

To register for the free webinar, go to <https://leclairryanevents.webex.com>

### **About LeClairRyan**

Founded in 1988, LeClairRyan provides business counsel and client representation in corporate law and high-stakes litigation. With offices in California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington, D.C., the firm has more than 300 attorneys representing a wide variety of clients throughout the nation. For more information about LeClairRyan, visit [www.leclairryan.com](http://www.leclairryan.com).

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