**Beat: Politics**

# U.S. Supreme Court strikes down overall limits on political donations

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**USPA News -** The overall limits on the total amount private donors can contribute to federal election campaigns are unconstitutional, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday. The 5-4 ruling in the McCutcheon vs.

Federal Election Committee decision written by Chief Justice John Roberts eliminates limits on how much money donors can give in one election season. Prior to Wednesday`s ruling, a single donor could give up to $123,000 per election cycle. The 88-page decision came after it was first argued at the beginning of the court`s term in October 2013. It is a follow-up to the 2010 Citizens United vs. Federal Election Committee case, the ruling that reinforced the loosening of campaign finance laws which allowed corporations and unions to donate unlimited funds independently. Roberts said the most recent limits aiming to limit the influence of big donors had to be struck down in order to uphold the statute of the First Amendment. The decision has no effect on the base limits on how much money can be given to each individual campaign, which remains capped at $5,200. "The government has a strong interest, no less critical to our democratic system, in combating corruption and appearance," Roberts said in the ruling. "We have, however, held that this interest must be limited to a specific kind of corruption - quid pro quo corruption - in order to ensure that the government`s efforts do not have the effect of restricting the First Amendment right of citizens to choose who shall govern them." The case was brought by Alabama businessman Shaun McCutcheon and the Republican National Committee (RNC) to challenge the biennial limit on individual contributions. McCutcheon wanted to contribute more than the biennial limit permitted and the RNC wanted to receive contributions like McCutcheon`s that would exceed the aggregate limits. The plaintiffs argued that the limits violated the First Amendment and asked for a preliminary injunction to enjoin the Federal Election Commission from enforcing the aggregate limits. Campaign contributions were capped following the 1976 Buckley vs. Valeo Supreme Court decision, which ruled that independent spending in politics was protected under the First Amendment but added that it needed to be capped in order to prevent corruption.

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