Does the United States Supreme Court decision on *Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission* affect the voluntary departure of United States Senators?

**Hypothesis**

The Supreme Court decision to recognize associations as persons and allow them to use unlimited funds as political speech will increase the number of Senators who choose to voluntarily depart from Congress in anticipation of a contentious election, therefore there should be a difference in the rate of departure and the departure profile of Senators.

**Method**

The research spreadsheet covers the 108th Congress-113th Congress within the time frame of January 1st, 2002 to the current 2013 Congress. The sample set is made up of 600 different entries - 100 Senators for each of the six Congresses. The data was organized into the categories: Senator, Party, Voluntary Departure from Congress, Year of Voluntary Departure, Senate Years of Service, Numbers of Years in the Senate, and Last Re-election Margin. All of the information entered is public, and the statistics can be found reported through multiple online sources. The information on voluntary departure from Congress and the year of departure were found at [http://www.rollcall.com/politics/casualtylist.html](http://www.rollcall.com/politics/casualtylist.html). Subtract the years of service in the Senate and their birth year came from [http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp](http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp). The data on each Senator’s last retirement year from their year of birth to find their age at the time of retirement. The departure were found at [http://www.rollcall.com/politics/casualtylist.html](http://www.rollcall.com/politics/casualtylist.html). Subtract the online sources. The information on voluntary departure from Congress and the year of departure were found at [http://www.rollcall.com/politics/casualtylist.html](http://www.rollcall.com/politics/casualtylist.html). Subtract the years of service in the Senate and their birth year came from [http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp](http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp). The data on each Senator’s last re-election win margin came from the Wikipedia page “United States Senate elections” or [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate_elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate_elections) for the years 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012. Calculate the win margin by subtracting the runner-up's percentage of the vote from the winning Senator’s percentage.

**Conclusion**

The rate of departure has increased after 2010, which suggests that elections are more competitive. With more Senators departing from Congress, we will likely see the years of service decline. This will also make for less career Senators. However, there was not a significant difference in the age of non-leaving Senators which suggest that, although elections have become more competitive, incumbents still retain the advantage. Another finding that stood out was that the retirement rate only slightly rose but the number of resignations greatly increased. This is partly due to the 2008 presidential party change and the appointments that followed, but there are also Senators that are cutting short their service to the public in order to work for private business. If the trends from my research continue, it can be expected that more Senators will be resigning and that more incumbents will be beat out than in the pre-Citizens United period.