



The liberty of a democracy

is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of a private power to the point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself.

That, in essence, is fascism."

-Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Let's work together to build a popular movement to support passage of a constitutional amendment reinstating the primacy of human rights over corporate rights.

Objectives and Strategies

- *Grassroots Organizing* Initiate "Kitchen Table Democracy" gatherings across the nation
- *Education* Engage pilot high schools to teach our Ultimate Civics curriculum
- *Research* Partner with universities and law schools to research policy and legal issues
- *Coalition Development* Build alliances with people working across the nation to abolish corporate personhood in cities, counties, and states
- *Advocacy & Policy/Public Reform* Initiate statewide movements to pass laws to abolish corporate personhood; and engage Congress to pass a Constitutional amendment to abolish corporate personhood

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO ABOLISH CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

Human rights vs. corporate rights is the 21st century civil rights movement!



www.UltimateCivics.org
amend@UltimateCivics.org
A project of Earth Island Institute

The Democracy Crisis



Wall Street Bailout
Lobbyist Scandals
Lost Pensions
Economic Meltdown
Oil Dependency
Mortgage Foreclosures
Climate Crisis

WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT



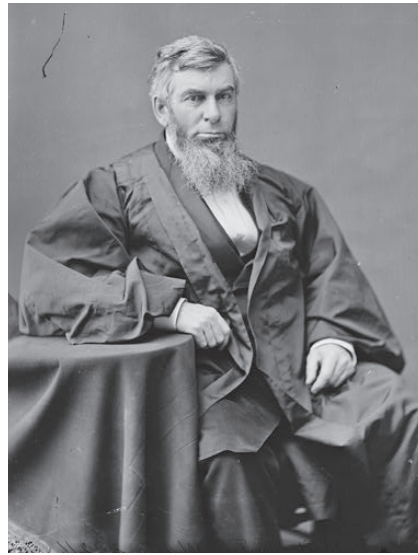
The Evolution of Corporate Persons

U.S. law recognizes corporations as “artificial persons” that can own property, make contracts, sue or be sued. After the American Revolution, people were wary of corporations seizing power. So people retained tight control and limited corporate power through their state legislatures. As time passed, state legislatures, then courts, began to blur the distinction between real people and artificial persons by giving corporations more and more privileges.

In 1886, the U.S. Supreme Court decided corporations were entitled to equal protection under the law. This created “corporate persons” – artificial persons with human rights. Armed with human rights and legal privileges, corporate persons have amassed fantastic wealth and power, which was used by some to undermine our sovereign self-governance, thus creating a democracy crisis.



“[Judges] created corporations as persons, gave birth to corporations as persons. There could be an argument made that that was the court’s error to start with... [imbu]ing a creature of state law with human characteristics.” —Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, September, 2009.



Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite presided over the Supreme Court hearings in Santa Clara vs. Southern Pacific Railroad, which granted artificial persons human rights.

The Demise of Democracy

Corporate personhood is undesirable because it allows an artificial entity – property! – to usurp the rights of people. Corporate power now trumps human rights.

For example, “corporate persons” are assured the 5th Amendment protection of due process, 4th Amendment search and seizure protection, and 1st Amendment protection of “free” speech, which the U.S. Supreme Court decided was equal to money. The latter decision allowed “corporate persons” to contribute large sums of money to political parties and candidates to influence our decision-makers.

Corporations control nearly every aspect of our lives, because they masquerade – under the law – as one of us. Corporations have become our invisible government – and most of us don’t know it.

It’s Time to Change the Rules

It is time to abolish corporate personhood through people-made law. We must affirm that only real people have constitutional rights. What would change if we did this?

FREE SPEECH – We could stop corporate political activity such as campaign contributions and lobbying. We could require truth in advertising and the labeling of food that is harmful to health instead of using corporate negative speech “rights” to NOT inform consumers of, for example, the addition of Growth Modified Organism (GMO) products to foods.

EQUAL RIGHTS – We could stop corporations like big box stores, mobile phone providers, agri-farms, mining companies, or bottled water companies, from forcing themselves into communities that do not want them.

SEARCH & SEIZURE – Federal agency inspectors could do their jobs and not be turned away if they hold unscheduled searches for worker health or food safety violations, or air or water quality violations. We could impose “sunshine laws” to require corporations to disclose what they are doing – as we require federal agencies to do.

PROPERTY PROTECTION – We could defend private property against corporate “takings” such as constructing oil fields in the midst of cattle ranches. The government can’t demand access to private property – yet courts have allowed corporations to do just that.