

# We The People - Working to Take Back Our Democracy



by members of  
Corvallis Area Move to Amend  
Music by Laurie Childers

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Overview

1. The Problem
2. How it came to be
3. Examples of Consequences
4. Working for a solution

Our major resources are on your Handout

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

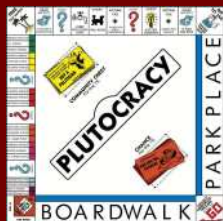
---

## The Problem

### Two-fold:

U.S. Supreme Court decisions:

- "Corporate personhood"
- Money = speech



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## We will present an argument that these 2 legal fictions:

- Have resulted in too much power for mega-corporations and the wealthiest individuals
- Is damaging our democracy, our people, & our world



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Tip of the Iceberg



- A Supreme Court case –  
*Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*
  - **Cut** Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA)
  - Allowed unlimited “independent” spending
- Growing over 125 years

(Still NO DIRECT contributions to candidate PACs or political parties from corporations, donation limits on individuals)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Tip of the Iceberg (continued)

- Was a 5 to 4 decision: Justice Stevens....
- Video Clip: *Citizens United v. FEC*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Bob Ozretich

“A Brief History of Corporations  
in America through 1900”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Karen Josephson

“Justice Lewis Powell –  
A Key Turning Point”

---

---

---

---

---

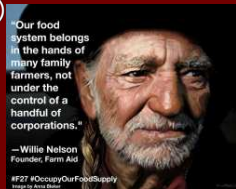
---

---

---

### Consequences: Loss of Small Businesses

- Regulatory policies benefiting mega-corporations
- Mega-corporations can't be kept out of communities who don't want them
- Can squeeze out small businesses and farms
- Loss of economic benefits from small businesses (- 45 cents v. 15 cents stay)
- Which cares more about public interests?
- Which provides more stability?



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Consequences: Small Businesses (continued)

- Small businesses poll: 7 to 1 against *Citizens United* decision
- Oregon poll by Lee Mercer of Main Street Alliance
- American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA)
  - In a Brief for *Citizens United v. FEC*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Consequences: Representative Democracy

- Audio Clip: *This American Life* (3/30/12)
- Sense of government corruption
- “Revolving door”
- Apathy, low voter turnout

---

---

---

---

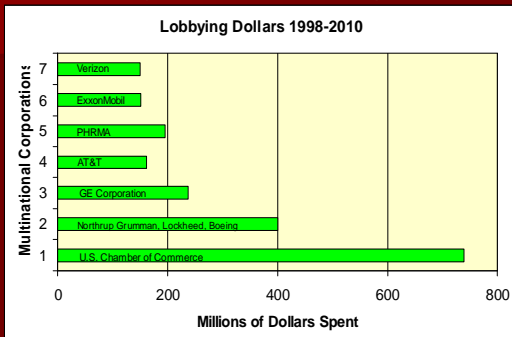
---

---

---

---

(data from Clements, 2012)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Consequences: Economic

- "Corporate welfare"
- Outsourcing of jobs
- Increased income disparity

---

---

---

---

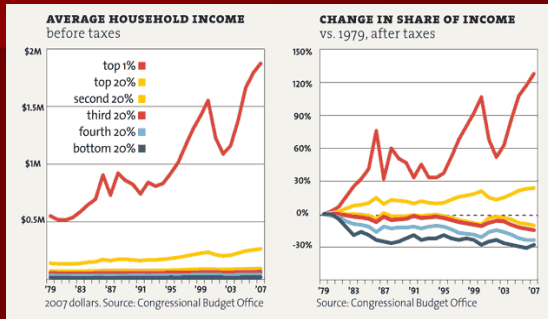
---

---

---

---

## Income Disparity over Time




---

---

---

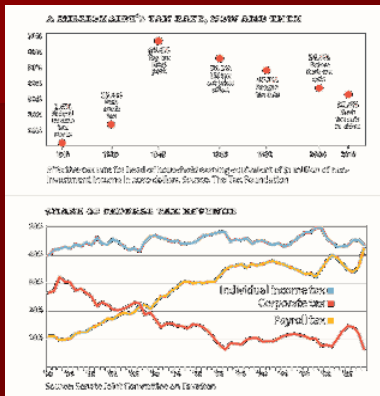
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

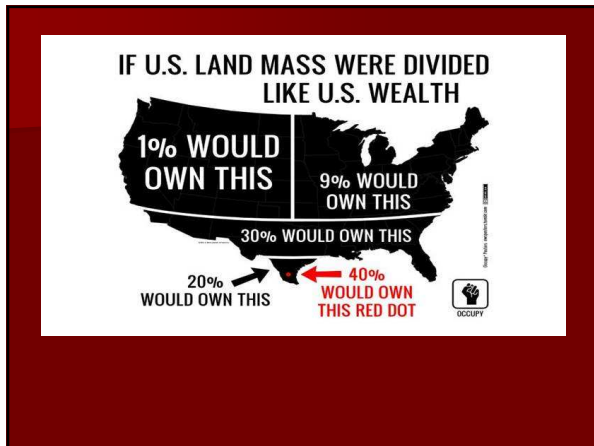
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Consequences: Economic (continued)
- Reagan years and since, unenforced antitrust laws (“competition laws”)
  - Bailouts to corporations “too big to fail”
  - Consequences for many economies – county, state, nation, & world

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Consequences: Societal and World
- Huge rise in income disparity, shrinking middle class, rising homelessness & hunger
  - Televised news media owned by a few mega-corporations – neutrality of 4<sup>th</sup> estate?
  - SECRET negotiations, agreements with governments in “trade organizations” WTO, NAFTA
  - More “suspected” consequences
- 

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Consequences for American Children

- FTC reports 44 companies: 1.6 Billions per year marketing food and beverages to children as young as 2 years
- Law passed in 1980: FTC not allowed to promulgate any rule in children's advertising

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Consequences for children (continued)

- Corporatized American Culture:
  - Embedded advertising in schools and curriculum, soft drink contracts with schools
  - Huge child exposure to programs & advertisements: obesity, consumerism, violence, impacts on school achievement culture
    - *"He who tells the stories defines the culture."  
(David Grossman)*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Working for a Solution

- Supreme Court decisions responsible
- Hope for new justices
- Amend the Constitution (Video on MTA)
  - Corporations are not people
  - Money is not speech
  - Advisory Question 02-81



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Isn't Amending too Hard?

- Two ways
- 27 amendments range: 3 mo. – 203 years
- Build the movement!
  - Amendment resolutions in Congress (video)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Q & A, Discussion



We are not attacking the corporations, but endeavoring to do away with any evil in them. We are not hostile to them; we are merely determined that they shall be so handled as to subserve the public good. We draw the line against misconduct, not against wealth.

Theodore Roosevelt  
State of the Union, 1902

Thank you for coming!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---