



CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

OCCUCARD #2



EXPOSING AND OPPOSING THE CORPORATE STATE

Over the last century the Supreme Court has granted corporations constitutional rights and protections that were originally meant only for individual citizens. This legal fiction of “corporate personhood,” combined with massive financial wealth, has allowed corporations to take control of our government. Through unparalleled campaign financing and armies of highly trained and well paid lobbyists, corporations have pushed out natural persons from virtually all aspects of the political process. Today, candidates need so much money to compete for office that they are beholden to corporate sponsors even before they are elected, and corporations often select and groom future politicians before they even decide to run for office. Former employees of Goldman Sachs, Monsanto and other corporations fill the House and Senate, and over the last few decades they have dismantled banking and other regulations that once gave citizens a measure of protection from corporate excess and greed.

The status of corporate personhood has been gradually granted to corporations through a series of Supreme Court decisions. In a 2010 decision (*Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*) the Court declared the corporate funding of political campaigns to be protected “free speech” under the First Amendment. This ruling has led to the overturning of federal and state campaign finance laws around the country. The subsequent loss of faith in our judicial system has led to widespread calls for a constitutional amendment to overrule *Citizens United* and make clear that money is not equivalent to free speech, and to abolish corporate personhood entirely.

Slavery is the legal fiction that a person is property. Corporate personhood is the legal fiction that property is a person.

If corporate personhood were abolished, corporations could be prohibited once again from lobbying and funding political campaigns, without curtailing the rights of any actual human being from donating or lobbying their representatives. Government regulatory agencies could once again be allowed to inspect corporate facilities for environmental and health violations without needing a warrant or giving prior notice. The labeling of genetically modified foods could be mandated. All these regulatory actions and many others are currently prohibited due to various Supreme Court decisions applying Bill of Rights protections to “corporate persons.”

With Congress in the pockets of corporations, it won't be easy obtaining enough votes for a constitutional amendment abolishing corporate personhood. However, a broad, grassroots movement of community **education, protest** and **civil disobedience** will increase our chances by bringing direct pressure on politicians and the government.

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**References / more info /
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