



Corporate Personhood

"Corporations do everything people do except breathe, die and go to jail for dumping 1.3 million pounds of PCBs in the Hudson River." - Colbert Report, The Word, 9/15/2009

Pentel & Wallace Seeks To End Corporate Personhood

Because of head notes written by a court clerk of the Supreme Court in 1886 on the court case *Santa Clara County vs. Southern Pacific Railroad*, we have been told that we need to accept the decision that corporations are people.

As we embark on removing big money or central money from politics, one of the barriers that has to be removed immediately is the idea that a corporation is a person. The Pentel/Wallace campaign views the corporation as subordinate to the common people and our governance. The interference of corporations, be it Xcel Energy, Flint Hills Energy, Monsanto, 3M, Wells Fargo Bank, cannot be allowed.

A corporation can live indefinitely. They can also exist in several locations at once. A person cannot do this. A corporation can spend a pittance of their wealth to influence and manipulate the culture and our government to its own design. Meanwhile, a person, the average citizen, cannot compete; their voices are not being heard because they do not have the financial capitol to counter this power construct.

For example, Xcel Energy easily spends \$700,000-\$2,000,000 lobbying each year in Minnesota, and commands 30-50 registered lobbyists to orbit and infuse themselves into our government. This is done to guarantee policies are established and propaganda perpetuated in order to ensure we remain dependent on their coal and nuclear products and services (with few other fuels in the mix). This occurs even though *We, the People* would prefer local, efficient, and renewable energy sources.

Corporate Personhood has allowed the insidious tentacles of power to embed themselves within our legal and political systems for the last 100+ years. From this powerful position they have manipulated the methods for which we measure our society's overall health, and they have been able to externalize crucial cost measurements from the proverbial bottom line: mountaintop removal, compounded infinite nuclear waste, the black hole of sprawl, flight of capital economic planning, poisons that lead to cancer of our family members, extinction of our natural creatures, the sick inhuman practices and waste from concentrated factory farms, the dead zone in the gulf of Mexico, as well as an infinite hosts of other ills occurring throughout the world.

By allowing these practices to continue, we have now put all genetic history at risk. The general public has been coerced into complacency through the massive machines of distraction (TV, movies, entertainment and *instant gratification* compulsive consumption) and disengagement brainwashing (*you can't make a difference, grow-up, be realistic, nothing will ever change, people have no power, that's just the way it has been and always will be*, and other messages).

Many watch helplessly as the corporations run amuck and act inversely to common sense and the greater good. Proof in point—the current economic crisis and the downfall of big businesses within the insurance industry, the auto industry and the banking industry. All at a time when warrants, arrests and greater reprimands should be dispersed, instead, these corporations, and the people who hide behind them, are being, in essence, rewarded for their bad behavior by being given funds to rescue them from their own self-destructive consequences.

Corporations, unlike people, do NOT have voting rights, and yet, through the misuse of power, profits and people, they still dominate the political and economic scene. The people who work for these corporations are either unaware, in denial about the ramifications of the actions of the corporations for which they work or, fully aware. They have learned to rationalize the corporations' actions (which is fundamentally bringing about the systematic destruction of the planet) and/or to invest in green washing, charitable giving, or funding non-profits to create the illusion that these actions and groups will lead us to the solutions in proportion we need.

Here is an illustration of the perverse double standard we face: if an individual human being were to walk into an auditorium and kill ten people with a shot gun, that person would be given the death sentence in Texas or imprisoned for life in Minnesota. But, if a company like 3M, Dow, Dupont, or Xcel Energy were to contaminate a whole region, our homes, poison the Mississippi River, and cause immune deficiencies or cancer and death for our family members, all while using risk assessment as a cover as they have done for decades, the system seemly honors and rewards corporations with such things as tax cuts, increased public funding, guaranteed monopolies and liberal policies.

Even if any of the many possible applicable laws were actually enforced, they would be sporadic and minimal in their implementation. The corporation at best might receive a nominal fine, pocket change in regards to their bottom line—pennies on the dollar in regards to their ridiculous profit margin—then they continue business as usual. No additional measures would be pursued to limit their influence or change their inappropriate behavior such as enforcement on existing law, policy amendments or legal adjustments. This is highly dysfunctional and reveals that people have been conditioned to have low expectations and to accept mediocre to horrific standards for business practices. Pentel & Wallace with its higher level expectations and return on investment (ROI) standards would seek to have these corporations dissolved and the CEO, as well as the board of directors, imprisoned as appropriate in relation to their crimes.

When did people decide immediate gratification was worth destroying the planet? At what point did the masses concede the world and their lives to big business? How long do we acquiesce to the denial, deception and diversion? Time is of the essence, when do we meet the challenge as protectors of our planet, home, fellow creatures, family, and self? When? It is time for the citizens within the State of Minnesota to take the lead. This starts with ending corporate *personhood*.

To change this we simply need to add a word to the 14th amendment of the US Constitution that reads, "All 'human' persons born or naturalized in the United States..." By adding *human* before *person* there can no longer be a misinterpretation on *what person* is and what a corporation is NOT.

For example, if corporations were not "persons" then they:

- would not be allowed to lobby or use a proxy to do so (i.e. The Chamber of Commerce; the Business Partnership).
- would not be allowed to influence their employees to support or bundle money for parties and candidates.
- would not be allowed to run political ads.
- would not be allowed to control our public airwaves in general.

Sources:

- A) *The Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy*, <http://www.poclad.org/> POCLAD, P. O. Box 246, S. Yarmouth MA 02664-0246 phone (508) 398-1145, fax (508) 398-1552
- B) *Reclaim Democracy*, 222 South Black Ave., Bozeman, MT 59715, 406-582-1224, <http://reclaimdemocracy.org/>
- C) <http://www.movetoamend.org/>
- D) <http://www.commondreams.org/views03/0101-07.htm>
- E) <http://www.thomhartmann.com/2001/12/31/to-restore-democracy-first-abolish-corporate-personhood/>

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