

In conclusion, I offer Supreme Court Justice Stevens's dissent of the 2010 *Citizen's United V. FEC* decision. He argued that

"corporations have no consciences, no beliefs, no feelings, no thoughts, no desires. Corporations help structure and facilitate the activities of human beings, to be sure, and their 'personhood' often serves as a useful legal fiction. But **they are not themselves members of "We the People" by whom and for whom our Constitution was established.**"

Please contact Pramila Jayapal about being a co-sponsor of the We the People Amendment.



Move to Amend

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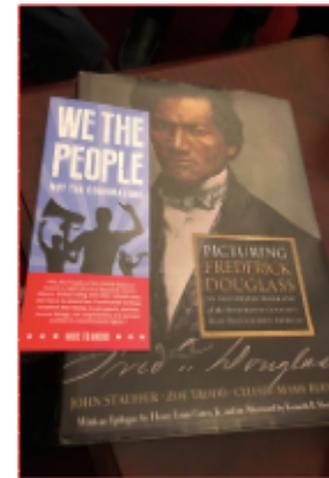
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The We the People Amendment

To the Honorable Joyce Beatty (OH-3)

from Dr. Sandy Bolzenius (OH-3)



Cover photo: The first time I visited your D.C. office, I noticed this Frederick Douglass biography on your coffee table. Struck by the parallels between Douglass's life and work and the We the People Amendment, I snapped this picture.

Overview



Move to Amend Move to Amend is a non-partisan, all-inclusive people's movement seeking genuine **democracy of, by, and for the people.**

We the People Amendment



The "We the People" Amendment declares **that the rights protected by the Constitution are the rights of natural persons only**, not artificial entities such as corporations.

Corporations are NOT people.

Since 1886, the Supreme Court has granted corporations Fourteenth, Fourth, Fifth, and First Amendment rights, thereby elevating the status of these *artificial entities* to that of *constitutional persons*. With their personhood rights and unlimited wealth, many corporations exert their influence over real people in statehouses, courts, and Congress. The result of their singular focus on profits? Unpopular policies often harmful to people and the ideals of democracy.

NOTE: Move to Amend members do not oppose corporations but rather corporations directing our public policies.

Ohio's 3rd District

Columbus is the wonderful city that, wrinkles and all, I proudly call home. Our city is a microcosm of our nation's history in which people's earnest efforts for the greater good consistently run up against age-old divisions between those with and without financial and political influence.

Poindexter Village Once a thriving community, Poindexter Village has suffered terribly from the war on drugs and tough on crime laws. For decades, huge investments in law enforcement and disinvestments in city services ravaged black neighborhoods, even the strongly bonded Poindexter Village. Residents lost homes, jobs, and healthcare while gun sales and the profits of the pharmaceutical, defense, and incarceration industries surge.

Black Lives Matter Because you know from personal experience what happens at rallies demanding democracy for all, I leave this singular message below to explain the reason for Big Money's backlash against the collective agency of We the People.

Wealthy oligarchs know that they cannot hold on to power in truly democratic elections. – Rev. William Barber

Other Examples With more examples to cite than space to write, I implore you to talk to Ohio District 3 activists and organizations *not* financed by huge corporations. I guarantee you that our struggles for We the People policies will shed light on why we need the "We the People" Amendment.

Rosa Parks

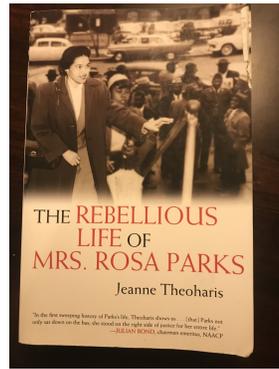
The Montgomery bus boycott illustrates the phalanx of laws required to maintain status quo inequities. To enforce segregation, city codes gave bus drivers police powers. As you know, Rosa Parks was sitting in the black area when arrested. The charge was failing to obey the driver's legal order to move for a white man. Following the outcry, government officials, working in tandem with businesses to block black citizens' rights and voices, dug out an old 1903 code prohibiting boycotts and later outlawed the NAACP.

Over the years, I have been rebelling against second-class citizenship. –Rosa Parks

The 1950s proved propitious for the civil rights movement which won its Alabama cases and then others during the 1960s, including the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts.

In the inevitable backlash, billionaires sought control of the judiciary. Since the 1970s, conservative justices have dominated the Supreme Court and increasingly many lower courts. Exploiting divisions, corporate-funded campaigns are rolling back precious civil rights gains (i.e., *Shelby County v. Holder*, 2013 and *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute*, 2018).

Douglass, Wells, Parks, and millions more fought the forces that put profits before people. When they won, the country benefited enormously. When they lost, so did We the People.



Corporations Gain Constitutional Rights

Americans have always debated who deserves “We the People” rights. When Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Rosa Parks, and millions of other grassroots activists fought for full citizenship, their successes alarmed enterprises dependent on the disenfranchised's cheap labor and lack of status. Something had to be done to protect their profits, and by 1886, corporate leaders found the solution. In the Supreme Court's *Santa Clara County v. the Southern Pacific Railroad* case, they secured constitutional rights for their corporations. As a result, these “artificial entity” persons had more rights than many Americans at the time.

How was this transformation from property to personhood possible? The plaintiffs audaciously based their case on corporations' entitlement to Fourteenth Amendment protections. Ratified after the Civil War, the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed due process to all, including black people for whom it was designed. Most had only recently gained freedom from a system

that branded them “property.”

Slavery is the legal fiction that a person is property.

Observing how constitutional protections enabled black people to break their shackles and advance their citizen status, corporate barons sought personhood rights for their corporate holdings. Ironically, the Fourteenth Amendment, that marked the rights of people over property, became the platform for property (corporations) to wield power over people. Supreme Court rulings have since ceded corporations First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendment rights, each affirming that the ludicrous idea that corporations are people.

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

Resisting Corporate Personhood

Douglass, Wells, and Parks fought the forces that relegated black people as inferior human beings undeserving of citizenship.

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born “property.” Torn from his mother’s arms, sold, rented, worked, and beaten, he knew how brutally businesses could put profits before people.

Douglass devoted his life to the fight for human rights, yet it was always an unequal contest. Douglass had a brilliant mind, grassroots support, and the truth on his side. Corporations had enormous financial and political influence and, after 1886, constitutional rights to suppress the rights of real people. The latter’s unseemly advantages are all too apparent today in the obscene wealth of the few while millions struggle to survive. During the pandemic, this has forced many to put their lives on the line to keep jobs and have food on the table.

Ida B. Wells

In 1892, investigative reporter Ida B. Wells exposed the lie that justified the lynching of black men. She discovered that black men were not coveting white women, but rather white men were coveting black businesses and land. By terrorizing black communities, whites eliminated competition and secured signed deeds.



Thirty years later, whites destroyed Tulsa’s “Black Wall Street” community, proving that little had changed. Wells was not surprised. Born the property of another and, after her lynching exposé, forced to flee for her life, she knew that businesses and their government allies recognized no boundaries when it came to keeping black people in their place.

A century later, corporations still hype lies of black violence and the need to curb it through strict laws, all the while profiting from gun sales and private prisons.