

# What You Can Do

## To Help Revoke Corporate Power and Revive Democracy!



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### RESOURCES

**The New Rules Project**  
HometownAdvantage.org

**American Independent Business Alliance**  
AMIBA.net

**MoveToAmend.org**

**FreeSpeechForPeople.org**

**Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund**  
CELDf.org

**Program on Corporations Law and Democracy**  
POCLAD.org

**Alliance for Democracy**  
thealliancefordemocracy.org

**Commercial Alert**  
CommerciAlalert.org

**Democracy Unlimited of Humboldt County**  
DUHC.org

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**  
WILPF.org

**M**ore and more people are saying, "I'm fed up with the status quo and ready to act; what can I do?" In response, we've compiled these ideas and resources for both group and individual actions you can take to create change.

This primer will be updated and improved periodically (see our website for updates), so please share your suggestions and new ideas with us!

### Individual Actions

*Don't underestimate the power of living by example--your daily actions rub off on others.*

**Write letters to the editor or commentaries** for your local publications. Search our site for our free "Guide to effective letters." We work with a limited number of committed writers to write for our publications and help break into the mass media.

**Become an expert** on an issue relating to the larger struggle for democracy, then develop relationships with your government representatives, the editorial board of your local newspaper, and other media outlets to generate public debate.

**Do business with your neighbors--patronize independent community-based businesses.** The ultimate source of corporate power is our wallets --help cut off the fuel supply! Set specific goals to shift more of your spending to community-based businesses.

**Get important books and independent media sources into your local library** where they can be read by more people. Most libraries rely heavily on patron requests. Our "Recommended Readings" primer contains a concise listing of some materials relevant to corporate power / democracy issues.

**Shift your financial support** to organizations that strive for systemic change, rather than those focusing solely on damage control. They typically do more with less and have limited grant possibilities.

**Run for local office or get involved in politics.** Whether you choose to help build a minor party or shift the dominant parties, you can raise vital issues ignored in most campaigns.

**Volunteer your time and talents.** Volunteers are essential to many grassroots organizations that lack the budget for many staff positions. Become one!

**Sharpen the focus of organizations to which you belong.** Large groups, especially those with local chapters, can become more effective agents of change with your work and engagement.

**Consciously use democratic language.** By calling attention to language that marginalizes citizens (e.g. referring to us as "consumers"), or misleads ("free trade" where *corporate controlled commerce* is the accurate term), for example, you can help awaken others to our daily immersion in propaganda.

**Inform friends and family.** Send someone you know an article or two from our site that you think best matches their interests. We often hear from people saying "I never really thought about it in this way until my friend sent me..." It works!

### Group Initiatives: Educational and Movement-building

*Don't be discouraged if you don't yet have a group to organize a targeted campaign; build a base of support through initiatives such as these (Effective grassroots education is action).*

**Present a film series in your community.** Presenting issue-oriented films with accompanying discussion can be a great outreach tool. Our "Recommended Resources" primer provides a few film ideas, but Free Speech TV (FreeSpeech.org) is a more complete resource.

**Start a democracy discussion group.** A guided group is a great vehicle for bringing together interested people and providing a foundation for local action. Many of our primers are great for this purpose (see our Primers web page). See also material from WILPF (sidebar).

**"Tabling."** All you need is good information and a capable spokesperson do local outreach. Distribute literature, generate discussion, raise funds and perhaps organize a local working group. Find an appropriate event or location and set up a table. We're happy to provide newsletters, brochures or bumper stickers. Our downloadable primers (such as this one) also are useful tools. We can customize them with your local contact information.

**Host a presentation or “From Here to Democracy” workshop in your community.** Our presentations and intensive 1-2 day workshops invariably help provoke community action.

Larger public forums or debates also can broaden discussion beyond and build a base of support for more result-oriented action. See our *Presentations* page or contact us to learn more.

## Group Initiatives: Results-driven

*Most of these actions involve a higher level of commitment. Please see the referenced sources for specific steps toward achieving these goals. Consider which issues can bring together a broad coalition of groups in your community or state.*

**Prevent corporate subsidies from ripping off your town or state.** Gary, IN is among the communities mandating that corporations meet all projections for job creation and other promises as a condition for receiving any public subsidy.

**Preempt corporatization of public services** with a local or state initiative. Washington D.C. virtually halted the corporatizing of public services simply by requiring solid evidence that such a move would save enough money (10%) to justify the costs. See the “governance” page at NewRules.org for more on this and preceding item.

**Prohibit criminal corporations from doing business in your community...**See Wayne Township Environmental Protection Ordinance at CELDF.org or request a print copy **...or your state.** See our model legislation for a state-level “Three Strikes” initiative to revoke the charters of recidivist corporations.

**Pass local or state electoral reform.** We collected many of our recommended policies in a 5-page primer, available on our site or by request. See also the National Civic League (NCL.org) and PublicCampaign.org.

**Stop commercialism of schools.** Corporations invade our public schools via sponsorships, exclusive vending deals, free “educational” materials, and other tactics to market themselves to a captive, lucrative audience: our kids. You can work at the school-district level to pass proactive anti-commercialism policies. See our *Corporations & Our Schools primer* and Commercial Alert (sidebar) for more resources.

**Promote legislation to preserve family farms.** Nine states and many local communities have passed ordinances banning corporate farm ownership. Contact us for references.

**Ban corporate contributions to election campaigns in your community** Humboldt County, CA passed the first modern law barring non-local corporations from spending money to influence local elections. See DUHC.org for details on that law and visit our site or contact us for other tools and resources.

**Help lead the ACLU to recognize that supporting “corporate personhood” undermines human rights.** Because we believe the ACLU board’s short-sighted view on this issue is a real impediment to progress, we’re working to incite internal debate. Contact us or search “ACLU letter” on our site for details on how you can help.

**Build local self-reliance and prevent corporate chains from undermining your community.** Independent Business Alliances unite locally-owned businesses, citizens and organizations to educate, pool resources, and advocate for localization. De-corporatizing begins at home! The American Independent Business Alliance provides comprehensive assistance for citizens and groups to launch and sustain IBAs while working toward pro-community shifts nationally.

With or without an IBA, you can support home town businesses through actions such as: banning or limiting the size of “big box” developments, enacting a “chain store tax,” or enacting local purchasing preferences. See NewRules.org/retail for these and other initiatives.

**Pass a platform statement opposing constitutional rights for corporations** in your local or state political party. Language is available on our website from such actions in Washington, Oklahoma, Maine and New Hampshire.

**Amend the Constitution** and overrule (most recently) the Supreme Court’s outrageous 2010 ruling in *Citizens United v FEC*. See our website for details an many suggested actions about how to build toward this essential goal, including model resolutions for your city, state or political party.

MoveToAmend.org and FreeSpeechforPeople.org are two national coalitions (we’re a partner in the former) working toward this common goal.

**Start a local or state ReclaimDemocracy.org chapter.** Contact us for details on how we support local organizing efforts. Accomplishing the previous goal necessarily will require hundreds of grassroots groups around the country with a shared focus.

**Help expand and improve this list.** Tell us your ideas and share your successes!



[ReclaimDemocracy.org](http://ReclaimDemocracy.org)

## Additional Resource

### Online Database

[www.dbsst.org](http://www.dbsst.org) is a searchable clearinghouse of successful organizing strategies covering a wide range of issues--many ultimately involving struggles against corporate power.

Primers cited here are available for download from the “primers” section of our website. This primer also is available online with direct links to relevant material and organizations.

### Use this for outreach!

We’ll gladly customize this primer with your local contact information to facilitate community organizing.

### ReclaimDemocracy.org

is a non-profit (501c3) educational organization working to inspire citizens to revoke illegitimate corporate power and revive grassroots democracy.

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