

Corporate Power Has Gone Too Far!

A Call for Action from Rural Minnesotans

YES, I agree – corporate power has gone too far. Major corporations now dominate the decisions that impact the American economy and American democracy, and it is hurting our communities, our country, and the land. For example:

- Corporate-backed lobbyists and legislators make repeated attempts to take away local control in favor of corporate control.
- Big oil and gas corporations drive frac sand mining in the Midwest, extracting wealth from rural communities and laying waste to the land.
- Wall Street bailouts and major tax shelters mean big money corporations take huge amounts from the public till and don't pay their fair share. They then push for major cuts in conservation, education, beginning farmer programs, roads and bridges, and more.
- Insurance corporations manipulate our health care system to maximize profit, leaving huge numbers of rural and urban Minnesotans either without health care, or paying high costs for minimal coverage.
- Corporations now claim they are people, and now have more rights than actual people. That's wrong and it is hurting us. It is time to rebuild democracy – “a society in which the people hold the power to govern.”

We call on our elected officials to:

- Stand up for local democracy and stop all attempts by big business to weaken local control.
- Pass policies advocated by their constituents, not corporate interests—such as local ordinances, zoning and permitting that protect the rights and interests of communities and neighbors when frac sand mines or factory farms come to town.
- Pass and collect taxes on corporations that raise the revenue we the people need, and that meet basic standards of fairness.
- Reform the health care system so people have more power and get better care, and a better price – like in nearly all other developed countries. A people-controlled Minnesota Health Care Exchange is a first step (no insurance corporations on the governing board).
- Recognize corporations are not people. We need them to be good, profitable and socially responsible businesses, but not to manipulate our elections, our laws, and our markets.

Name (Please Print)	Address, Town, State, Zip	Email address	Phone
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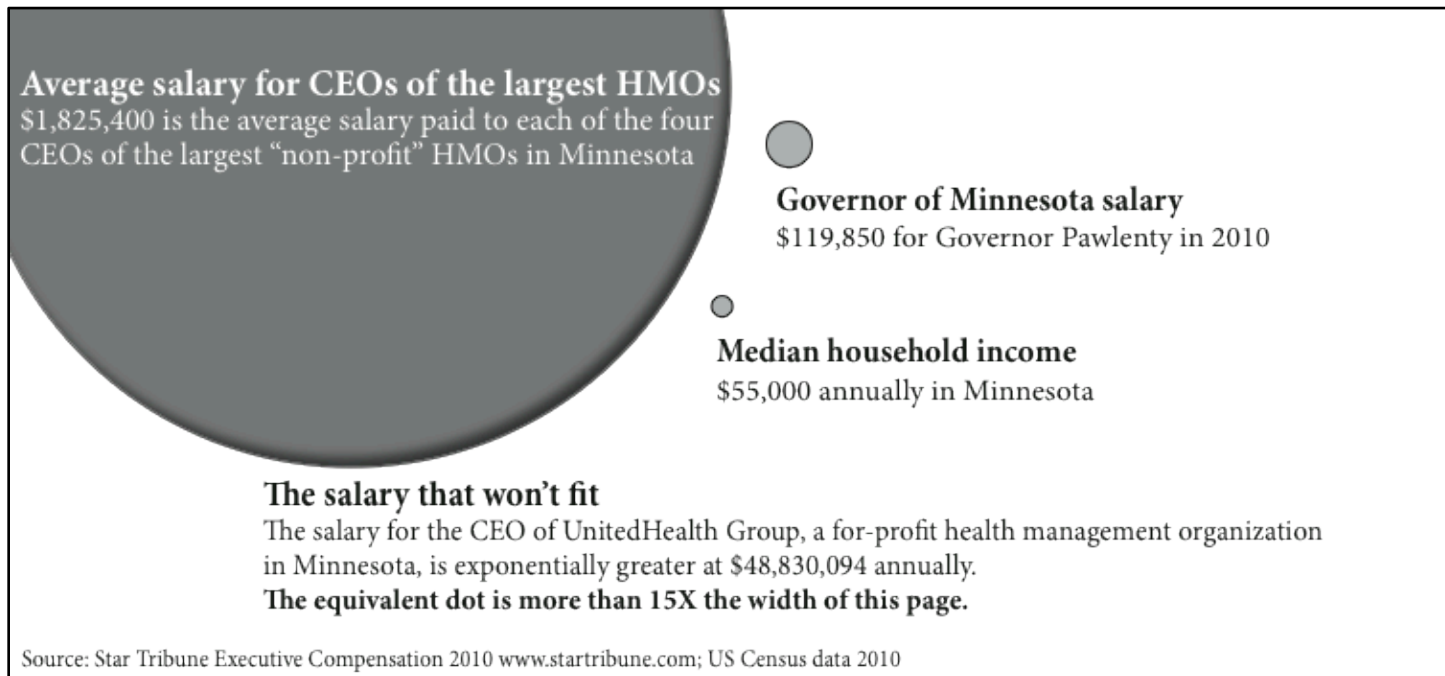
Return to: Land Stewardship Project 821 E. 35th St., Minneapolis, MN 55407 Phone: (612)722-6377

Corporate Power Has Gone Too Far — *Some Examples:*

Favoring Corporate Control over Local Control. For the last six years the Minnesota legislature has considered legislation that would limit citizens' rights to enact moratoriums—which allow local governments to quickly put a temporary freeze on major development. This power is essential when the community is caught off-guard by unanticipated proposals, especially those from corporate interests and outside investors, such as frac sand mines or a large-scale factory farms. **Whose rights should the state protect—the people's right to local democracy or corporate 'rights' to slide in under the radar?**

In the fast growing frac sand industry, big oil & gas corporations are using dirty tactics to grab more power and money. Texas-based Enron Oil and Gas makes millions more each year by mining and processing frac sand in Wisconsin before transporting it to oil & gas fracking sites in North Dakota, Pennsylvania and other states.

Citizens for Tax Justice analyzed the effective taxes paid by 12 major Fortune 500 corporations— Exxon Mobile, Fed Ex, General Electric, Wells Fargo, American Electric Power, Boeing, DuPont, Honeywell, IBM United Technologies, Verizon and Yahoo. **From 2008-2010 these 12 major corporations reported huge profits totaling \$171 billion but collectively they paid NO taxes.** In fact, these 12 corporations took \$2.5 billion in subsidies from the public in the same period of time. Meanwhile, we are told that there is no money for the \$18 million/year Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program or for the popular and effective Conservation Stewardship Program. How does that add up?



9.1 % of Minnesotans don't have any health insurance coverage—a figure that doesn't account for the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans who have inadequate coverage. In 2010, 44% of Americans were uninsured or underinsured according to the Commonwealth fund. In 2009, just a year before, health insurance industry profits grew by a massive 56%, and then industry went on to make record profits again in 2010.

Money in politics is hard to track—harder than ever now that “corporations are people” and “money is speech” under the 2010 *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* Supreme Court decision that advances corporate interests by allowing **unlimited corporate contributions** in our elections.