

"I hope we shall... crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations, which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."
 — Thomas Jefferson to George Logan, 1816.

Giant corporations govern, even though they aren't mentioned anywhere in our Constitution or Bill of Rights. So when corporations govern, democracy flies out the door.

There is something else: when people live in a culture defined by corporate values, common sense evaporates. We stop trusting our own eyes, ears, and feelings. We doubt our own experiences.

Here in Pennsylvania, rural communities are rejecting that corporate culture and contesting illegitimate corporate acts. They're passing local laws eliminating corporations from farming, preventing corporations from dumping sewage sludge on farmland, and challenging "corporate rights." People are also confronting state and federal officials who enable corporations to govern. Become a part of this work! Join neighbors and friends building sustainable and democratic communities by eliminating "corporate rights".

Let's pick up where our revolutionary Pennsylvania forebears began. Let's define a new democracy, where we call the shots.



"ACRE" Attempts To Overrule Local Ordinances

Local Governments Succeed In Overruling "ACRE"

Sample Resolution

for Township Governments Opposing the Creation of an Agricultural Review Board

Upon review of the Rendell Administration's proposal to establish an Agricultural Review Board empowered with the authority to override the adoption by Townships of Ordinances controlling or regulating concentrated livestock operations and the land application of sewage sludge, the Township of _____ hereby:

Resolves to oppose the creation of the Agricultural Review Board, and any other State entity that would exercise authority to override local control. The Board of Supervisors authorizes the Secretary of this Township to send this Resolution to other Townships within this County, to Governor Rendell, and to the State Representative and State Senator representing the people of this Township.

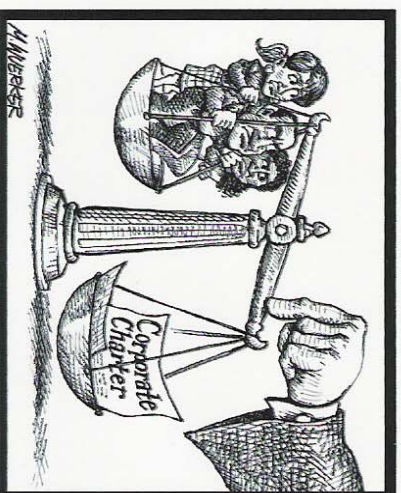
Resolved this ___ Day of _____, 2004

Pennsylvanians:
 The Rendell "ACRE" Initiative Would Give Corporations Veto Power Over Local Governments.

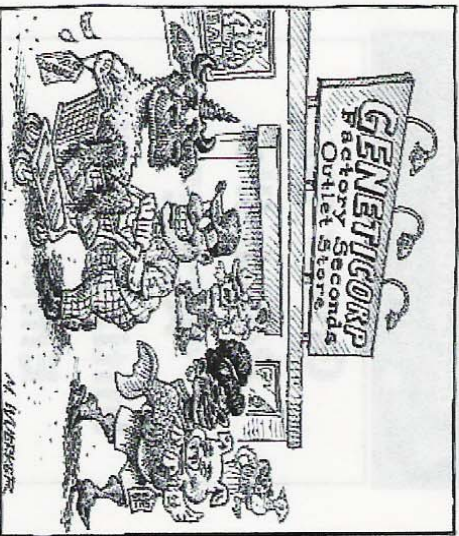
Governor Rendell's "ACRE" Initiative Will Empower Factory Farms And Void Our Local Democracy

Here's How...and What We Need to Do About It!

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The "ACRE" Initiative Would Shield Corporations From Community Control



Most people have been taught that regulatory agencies, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), were established to actually protect us and the natural environment.

But when agencies *regulate* corporations, they use the law to force corporations into unwilling communities. The Rendell administration's "ACRE" Initiative is no different

When a state agency issues a permit to a strip-mining corporation, it *legalizes* that destructive mining. When the agency issues a permit to an agribusiness corporation, it *legalizes* factory farming. Like the DEP, "ACRE" would serve as a shield - stopping communities from controlling corporations, while merely regulating the *amount* of harm inflicted by the Corporation upon our communities. It's not called *permitting* for nothing.

Our Communities Must Defend Themselves Against the Surrender of Democracy

If only the real harms inflicted on rural communities by corporate farming could be "regulated" away.

The Rendell Administration believes they can be. Their recent proposal would trade away the rights of rural communities to control corporate factory farms in return for increasing the power (and budgets) of State agencies to manage manure disposal and odor.

How will the Administration eliminate local control? Part of Rendell's recent ACRE proposal would create a Board of political appointees with the power of a Court to overturn laws adopted by local communities. The appointees? The Secretaries of the DEP and Department of Agriculture, and the Dean of Penn State's School of Agricultural Sciences.

Does anyone believe that those appointees - many of whom have publicly announced their opposition to any local control over corporate farming - would ever side with a rural community over an agribusiness corporation?

That just isn't good enough for rural communities and Township governments across Pennsylvania. Instead of merely seeking to make corporate factory farms cause a little less harm, many of those communities have decided that their rural quality of life shouldn't be sacrificed to the economic and environmental damage wreaked by corporate factory farms. Through local ordinances they are exercising their right to protect their communities.

Corporations Already Have More Rights Than Communities

Corporations have invaded our state legislature, our communities, our elections, our courts, our schools, and our Congress. They block people's ability to establish logical and sane food, energy, transportation, healthcare, finance, forestry, and manufacturing policies.

They also instruct and control the government. It's nothing personal, of course. But when they control our government officials, judges, police, and the military (all paid with our money), they make us into colonized subjects all over again.

Most citizen efforts against corporations over the past century have been focused on the *symptoms* of corporate control. They've been waged almost exclusively in regulatory arenas - under rules written by corporations. "ACRE" is just the latest version of the corporate assault on people and the right of communities to self-govern.

Under the "ACRE" Initiative, both the law and our communities *concede* rights, privileges and powers to the corporation, including the power and right to govern *us*.

"ACRE" presumes to put corporations on an equal footing with democratically elected local governments. This must be rejected. Only people have rights, not corporations. And our elected officials must not surrender those rights to arbitration with corporations, overseen by a review board.

It's time we stripped corporations of their illegitimate rights and restored rights to people and communities.