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To our Honorable Members of the Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee:

I urge your support for HR 74 that calls on legislators at the state and federal level and other communities and jurisdictions to support an amendment to the United States Constitution that would abolish corporate personhood and the doctrine of money as speech.

I am not here to discuss particular laws, but rather how laws in Ohio and the nation are determined. Which laws have priority? Whose positions dominate? Hands down, the response should be the People, and yet it is no secret that multinational corporations – declared persons by the U.S. Supreme Court – hold large sway over legislation.

For instance, though corporations do not get sick or die, they decide much of our health care policies. With them in charge, healthcare in Ohio is rapidly declining, especially for minorities. As the *Columbus Dispatch* recently reported, Ohio’s infant mortality among African Americans ranks “next to last among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.”¹ Even during our current opium crisis, pharmaceutical companies have more say in how we deal with this disease than do actual human Ohioans. In this, I agree with Senator Bernie Sanders’ assessment that our healthcare system is designed “to make enormous profits for insurance companies and drug companies.”² As documented in *Open Secrets*, correlations exist between “contributions received from the health insurance and pharmaceutical industries.”³

The same is true in other areas of legislation, and with disastrous consequences on the lives and futures of Ohioans. Our state ranks 28 in terms of economic opportunities, 35 in Crime and Protection statistics, and 40 in the state of our infrastructure.⁴ Our education system is faltering at breakneck speed. According to another *Dispatch* article, “Six years after ranking fifth in the nation, Ohio’s education system has tumbled to 23rd.”⁵

On one score, we rank quite high: human trafficking. We are fourth in the nation.⁶ Meanwhile, our state focuses on tax breaks for the wealthy. For God’s sake, keep that money in our public coffers to locate, release, and help these people. What human being could, in good

¹ According to the news report, Ohio has “13.46 deaths for every 1,000 live births to black mothers from 2013 to 2015. *The Columbus Dispatch*, <http://www.dispatch.com/news/20180104/ohio-near-bottom-in-black-infant-mortality>, January 4, 2018.

² “Lobbying Database, Open Secrets,” *Open Secrets*, <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2018/01/campaign-funding-from-health-insurance-and-pharma/>, accessed February 12, 2018.

³ *Ibid.*, according to A Center for Responsive Politics.

⁴ “Best States,” *U.S. World & News Report*, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/ohio>

⁵ <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2016/01/07/rankings-slide-in-national-report.html>

⁶ “Ohio ranks fourth in the nation for human trafficking.” <http://www.cleveland19.com/story/37287986/ohio-ranks-fourth-in-the-country-for-human-trafficking-cases>, Wednesday, January 17th 2018.

conscience, feel otherwise? This comparison alone offers proof that corporations are not people. Unlike us, their only concern is for profits, profits, and more profits.

Ohioans know that this is not how our system should work, and yet work this way it does. We have entered a dark period in which corporations, not the People, dominant legislatures where they seek to enact policies that favor their interest, not ours. This is evident in every level of government though the battery of laws that have reduced environmental and employment protections, local rights, and access to the ballot across the country.

Ohioans depend on you, our state representatives, to represent us, the real people of Ohio. Furthermore, we do not want to have to compete with corporations and their powerful lobbyists and endless wealth to get your attention.

Perhaps I should not put this so starkly, but the statistics are clear, and they are frightening. You know it, too, better than many of us. No matter how valiant your efforts to work for the people, you must spend precious time every day meeting with well-paid lobbyists. ALEC is alive and well! Surely, you would rather have fair and free campaigns where all candidates may run on an even footing and, once in office, legislate based on what is best for Ohioans, not big donors. So would we!

I will put this to you plainly. At this critical juncture, we must take a hard look at the structure, operation, viability, and future of our republic. HR 74 is about returning the government to the people. This is why the people of Ohio want you to pass HR 74 – and why powerful corporations do not want you to pass it.

So, which will it be? Will you vote yes on HR 74 so that our state and nation is ruled by the people, or reject it in favor of corporations? I trust that you will vote yes for a constitutional amendment to abolish the subversive concepts of corporate personhood and money as speech.

Sincerely,

Sandy Bolzenius