

## Why POCLAD Supports The Move to Amend Commitment to an Anti-Oppression Organizing Framework

POCLAD was formed over 20 years ago with the premise that transnational corporate CEO's did not merely exercise power, but that they had become de facto rulers. We argued that the Constitution was created by a ruling elite of propertied white men to protect their property rights over the human rights of "the rabble" (never mind the rights of ecosystems), and that Supreme Court decisions granting corporations constitutional rights and misinterpreting the commerce clause had created an entire legal system that allowed a predatory class to wield the power of law and culture to subvert the will of the people. We began using the phrase "corporate rule" to try to describe this illegitimate usurpation. We also argued that the systems of male domination, white supremacy, European imperialism and the exploitation of the working and non-working class was the toxic interconnected foundation upon which corporate rule was built.

We provoked lots of good conversations, and grappled with many people. We know that many of you reading this have been part of those conversations from the very beginning. We are proud of the role that POCLAD played (along with MANY others) in helping to nurture what has blossomed into an actual democracy movement in this country. And not a moment too soon! As we witness the ecological, economic and

political collapse being caused by corporate rule and the widening political influence of the super rich, it is clear to us that only a broad, deeply conscious and educated mass movement can create the just, peaceful, ecologically sustainable society we so desperately need, and so richly deserve.

We are thrilled to see that our work has helped to inspire so many people, including the founders of Move To Amend. (As a matter of full disclosure, all of us still active as POCLAD now support Move To Amend in one capacity or another). We are such avid members and supporters because we believe that Move to Amend is one of the premiere examples of groups doing the deep grappling and political education necessary to understand the social, legal, and historical basis for corporate rule.

It is in that spirit that we offer our praise, support, and appreciation for the Move To Amend commitment to an anti-oppression organizing framework that understands and accepts that it will take a broad and deep social movement to win real democracy in this country. Because they know what we know and what you know-- there is not some mythological age of American democracy to "restore" or to "reclaim."

In order to create real democracy, the phrase "We the People" must include all of the people. (D'uh). But let's not forget or sweep under the collective rug of our political consciousness that when the Constitution was originally drafted only wealthy, white land-owning men were understood to be legal "persons." It took broad and deep social movements to drive other human persons into the definition of "legal personhood."

Let us be crystal clear – corporatism can't exist without white supremacy and racism; it depends on a 'throwaway' class of people who must suffer to maintain the comfort of the rich and powerful elite. We know this is nothing new. "Divide and conquer" is the oldest game in empire's playbook. It has been—and still is—used by elites to retain their privilege and maintain minority control over the majority.

It's not out of some sense of altruism that we promote these ideas. Yes, it is the "right thing to do." But in addition, it **MUST** be done. Quite simply, the only way our movement will have the power needed to make such revolutionary change is if we commit ourselves to doing this work.

We literally cannot have a successful democracy movement -- let alone a real democracy -- without centralizing

the economic and political realities of people of color, and following their leadership in changing these realities. Those realities include mass incarceration, police harassment, beatings, and murder.

That is partly because the rules of law and culture have been historically applied unequally by race. The objective reality is that white males are treated with privilege, and punishments are harsher for crimes committed by people of color. In order to win a democracy movement, systemic racism must be uprooted from both law and culture.

Since the most critical barrier to organizing an effective mass movement is race, Move to Amend has engaged in an ongoing study for the past year among its local leadership to examine race in our country. They have been studying and learning the way race was manufactured historically in the United States to prop up corporate rule, and how it continues to prevent us from winning the world that most of us want.

People bring with them the social constructs they learn as innocent children. No one is immune to the biases inherent in their upbringing and culture-- including you the reader and we the collective members of POCLAD writing this essay.

American society divides us into status groups and attaches different values to each. Typically, white people rank higher than people of color, and the deeper the color, the

lower the rank. Men have a higher rank than women, youth is valued over age, physically and mentally challenged people are marginalized, and Christians rank above other religious groups. Non-heterosexuals are seen as flawed, and poor people are treated as lesser no matter how hard they work. Wealthy people are admired and catered to regardless of how they accumulated that wealth. Though these generalizations do not always hold, in most cases they are the norm. This is a shocking realization to confront for many of us, but it is absolutely essential to do so. These different valuations show up as personal prejudices and are woven into the fabric of our culture and our organizations, and they impact the ways we experience and understand the world.

Diversity is a key factor in producing high quality work as a team. Along with differences come a variety of perspectives, which give a richer base for understanding situations and coming up with successful solutions. At the root of many institutional problems in U.S. culture is our history that decisions are made by a homogeneous group of middle- and upper-class white men. Today's world is far too complex to be negotiated by a homogeneous group, no matter how many credentials they possess. If our goal is a society that is just and that maximizes human potential, it is also necessary to reject the oppressive programming that ranks some groups of people higher than others.

Move to Amend is building a multi-racial, multi-generational movement

demanding real democracy, an end to corporate rule, and justice for all with two central goals as an organization:

1. Amend the Constitution to read that corporations aren't people and money isn't speech
2. Create genuine, justice-driven, participatory democracy in the United States.

POCLAD supports and endorses Move to Amend's efforts, and we share their belief that building a democracy movement requires a commitment to dismantle the structures of exploitation and a dedication to building just structures and cultures in their place.

So we of the POCLAD collective invite and lovingly challenge our supporters to join us in not only supporting Move To Amend, but to also participate with their Movement Building Internal Education Project (<https://movetoamend.org/education>).

With respect and commitment,  
David Cobb  
Greg Coleridge  
Mike Ferner  
Lewis Pitts  
Jim Price  
Virginia Rasmussen  
Mary Zepernick

