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Democracy Day Essay

I am not a politician, nor am I an activist. Simply put, I am a citizen. Some days, I feel like that title holds more weight. It is the sacred duty of all citizens to uphold the law and to revise the law when it is corrupt. A corporation is not a citizen. But through the justice system, five Supreme Court judges determined in their ruling on *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* that corporations have personhood. “Corporate personhood” grant corporations constitution rights and legal standing, something previously reserved solely by the people. These rights allow Marathon Petroleum to give \$2.5 million to politicians in Washington, D.C. The Tobacco Industry exercises its rights by slipping \$29,400 in Kevin McCarthy’s back pocket. Each back scratch and under the table handshake is legal, protected by the First Amendment right to free speech. Defined by the Constitution, freedom of speech is the ability to talk and express freely without fear of punishment. However, companies convey free speech through donations and money. Actions like these give businesses power over our elections and officeholders. Corporate America has put a price tag on our elections, and it’s in the billions. Compromised representatives threaten our democracy. The law is no longer objective, and it is the people that suffer the consequences, not corporations. All of this begs the question; Are your representatives for sale?