

## The PUNDITALIA 2014 Political Platform

Punditalia has published its platform for American politics in 2008, 2010 and 2012. Although 95% or more of our suggestions have not yet been taken, we believe they remain valid.

It may be too late to contemplate realistic political improvement in the United States since the country has sunk into passive acceptance of fascist oligarchy, from which escape will be difficult. Nevertheless, hope is always the last to die and hey, things can always get worse if nobody does anything.

There is one dim but ongoing ray of light in the continuing, if thus far vain, efforts to undo the Supreme Court's legalization of bribery in its landmark Citizens United decision. The most grotesque travesty of justice since the Dred Scott decision, Citizens United effectively ruled that corporations are people and money is speech. For those of you who may not remember the Dred Scott decision, in 1857 the Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, ruled that African-Americans, whether free or not, could never be citizens and therefore had no standing to sue in court. It went on to hold that slaves taken by their owners to states where slavery had been abolished, did not become free.

The Dred Scott Decision, coming at a time when slavery was being challenged, attempted to solidify its legal basis and insure that the rights of slave owners would be secured. Citizens United, like Dred Scott earlier, went far beyond what the Court was asked to decide, in a similar attempt to promote property rights over human rights.

Even Antonin Scalia, no slouch himself at tarnishing the image of the Court, has written that the Dred Scott decision tarnished the reputation of Justice Taney and aggravated the tensions that led to the Civil War. John Roberts will bear that burden for Citizens United. It remains to be seen if it will take an insurrection, another civil war, or just a Constitutional Amendment to rid the country of this aberration.

While the threat to democracy posed by the Citizens United decision is obvious to anyone who gives it a thought, new so-called "Trade Agreements", most notably the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), which are currently being negotiated in relative secrecy, would effectively establish rules barring the exercise of democracy, not only in the US but throughout the countries joined by those treaties. While the negotiations are closed to members of Congress and the public at large, these provisions are being written by trade associations and corporations seeking power and unlimited profits. The guiding concept is that any government, local, state, provincial or national, which enacts legislation which might limit or reduce profits of a corporation, could be sued for damages in a special court, set up by the corporations and responsible to no elected body.

While we may hold a minority view here, the enactment or proposal of any such trade agreement would meet our standards for treason. Although these negotiations are being conducted by a theoretically Democratic administration, make no mistake, the only hope of stopping these diabolical "agreements" is to make sure that both houses of Congress have Democratic majorities. Many Democrats have sold out to the big corporations too but the Republican Party is a wholly owned subsidiary of the US Chamber of Commerce and allied subversive groups. If you're eligible to vote, we urge you to do so but please, make sure that anyone you vote for is committed to opposing TPP.

For those of you who are not US citizens, we hope you've read this far. TPP is not just a threat to Americans or to American democracy. It is a very real threat first to all the member countries, but if this goes through, its effects will spread. Your phone calls and emails are already being monitored by the NSA. Perhaps that doesn't bother you. You have nothing to hide. But things can

get worse. You may wake up one day to find that you're forced to eat foods that meet US Government standards. Forget Ebola, forget ISIS, but be very, very afraid. TPP is worse than both of them. It won't kill you in seventeen days. There are no clauses in it, as far as we know, authorizing beheadings of people who reject corporate dogma, but it will eviscerate elected governments, everywhere. Your vote will serve as a pacifier. We all complain that our elected governments don't get very much accomplished. The idea behind TPP is that our elected representatives will be prohibited from doing anything in the public interest. So get out there and raise a little hell with your politicians before it's too late.

Many other issues need to be addressed, from climate change and ending the permanent state of war to dismantling the surveillance state and demilitarizing the society but if Citizens United isn't overcome and TPP canceled, we're cooked.