

Action Alert

Abolish Corporate Personhood is the theme of national actions by WILPF's Campaign to Challenge Corporate Power, Assert the People's Rights. One of our goals is to influence the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to abandon its position that corporations deserve the right of free speech.

We believe that the Constitution's Bill of Rights exists exclusively to protect the rights of living human beings. Since 1886, however, U.S. courts have adopted the premise of "corporate personhood"—the claim that corporations, as a type of legal "person," deserve the protections of our Bill of Rights. Armed with the right of free speech, corporations have legally corrupted our political system through lobbying and virtually unlimited campaign donations; thwarted citizen efforts to inform the public about products by exercising a corporate "right" not to speak; and monopolized public discourse with the corporate perspective through control of the mass media.

The ACLU defends free speech for corporations. In fact, it filed a brief this year in a California lawsuit supporting the free speech of the Nike Corporation! The case, *Kasky v. Nike*, may be heard by the Supreme Court in the upcoming year. We want the ACLU to change its position, so we are urging WILPF members and branches to act now. The ACLU and WILPF have long been colleagues and allies. We respectfully believe that the ACLU can, and should be able to, distinguish between actual human beings and corporations without compromising First Amendment protections for their intended beneficiaries — We the People.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- WILPF members who belong to the ACLU can initiate or join efforts in their local ACLU chapters to reverse the ACLU position.
- Write to the ACLU asking that it change its position on corporate speech and corporate personhood. Consider telling them that you will reconsider (or re-evaluate) your membership if they continue to hold and defend this position. The address is: American Civil Liberties Union, 125 Broad Street, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10004-2400; (212) 549-2500.
- Legal briefs requesting the U.S. Supreme Court to inter-

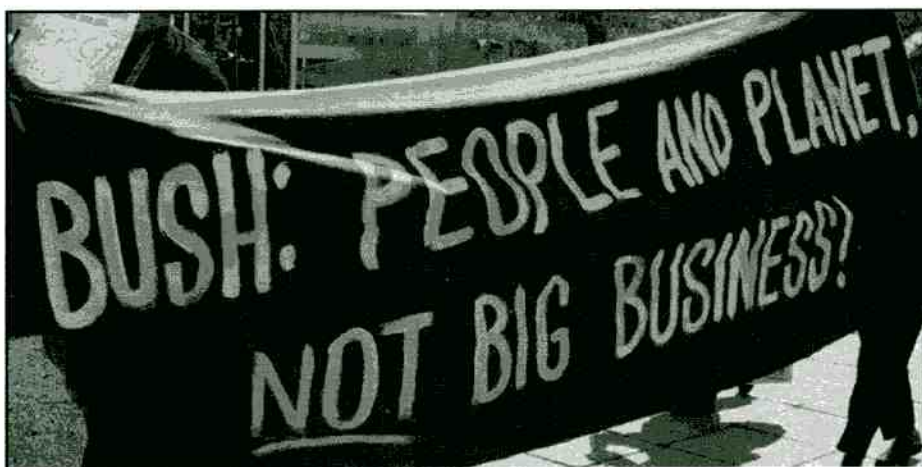


photo: Yuki Kidokuro

vene in *Kasky v. Nike* were due at the end of October 2002, so it is urgent that you let the ACLU know immediately how you think they should act. Please send a copy of your letter(s) to Jen Geiger at the Philadelphia office (1213 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19107) so we can track WILPF's efforts in this campaign.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Details and analysis about *Kasky v. Nike*, corporate personhood, and corporate free speech can be found at www.ReclaimDemocracy.org
- The contact person for WILPF's Abolish Corporate Personhood legal/research working group is Doug Hammerstrom, who can be reached at (707) 884-1826 (in California) or via email at thehahas@mcn.org
- For any other information, contact WILPF's program coordinator, Jen Geiger, at the WILPF office: (215) 563-7110, or via email at jengeiger@wilpf.org

➤ STATISTICS *continued from page 7*

- An example: In 2000, the United States sold 80 F-16 Fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates for \$6.4 billion.
- G. Where are weapons exported to?**
 - 68% of weapons sold are to developing nations—a large number of which have poor human rights records.
 - The top five recipients of U.S. weapons and training in 1997 were Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, and Egypt.
- H & I. What weapons or weapons components are imported for use in the armed forces in the U.S.? Where are they imported from?**
 - The U.S. incorporates components from other countries including Israel, South Africa, India, Brazil, Argentina, South Korea, and Egypt and collaborates in the development and manufacture of weapons. ♦