

# 50 YEARS

of People. Power. Progress.



# Public Citizen's 50th Anniversary People. Power. Progress. Fund

We can tame the corporations that are driving us apart. We can deepen our democracy and build community. We can advance justice and equality. We can face the existential threat of climate chaos.

Your support enables us to tackle the great challenges facing our country and the world and to make a profound difference:

## For Democracy

- Hold accountable the perpetrators of the January 6 insurrection.
- Shine a light on Dark Money campaign contributions.
- Win transformative democracy legislation that protects the freedom to vote, ends extreme partisan gerrymandering and establishes a system to enhance small donors and public financing for elections.
- Win a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*.

## For Health and Safety

- Establish health care as a right and win Medicare for All.
- End Big Pharma price gouging.
- Get dangerous medicines off the market.
- Protect workers from hazards on the job.

## For Justice and Accountability

- Ensure that victims of wrongdoing can hold corporations accountable in court.
- Protect consumers from rip-offs and corporate abuses.
- Promote government openness.
- Break up Big Tech, protect our privacy and tackle AI bias.

## For Environmental Sustainability

- Speed the transition to 100% renewable energy.
- Hold Big Banks and financial institutions accountable for funding Dirty Energy.
- Demand the auto industry transition to electric cars.
- Track and publicize Dirty Energy contributions given to elected officials.
- Ensure equity in the transition to a clean energy future.

None of this will be easy—but it's definitely doable. For 50 years, Public Citizen has had unparalleled success in restraining corporate power and improving our country.

That history fuels us as we bring people together, build power, and progress forward. People. Power. Progress. Together, we can do great things!



# Message from the President

By Robert Weissman

**Democracy. Justice. Health and Safety. Environmental Sustainability.**

Concentrated corporate power threatens the values we hold most dear.

That was Ralph Nader's insight that led to the founding of Public Citizen 50 years ago. It's the central idea that drives our work now. And it's the core truth that orients our work going forward into the next century.

With this perspective, for half a century, Public Citizen has chalked up real wins for democracy, justice, public health and environmental sustainability.

Our work has led to the withdrawal of more than 27 dangerous medicines from the market, the installation of seatbelts and air bags in vehicles and the creation of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

We have litigated 57 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, establishing far-reaching precedents in diverse areas of the law—united by our vision of justice.

We have played key roles in winning increased vehicle fuel efficiency standards, reducing subsidies to Big Oil and King Coal, and spurring the development of a thriving wind power sector in Texas.

We helped force Nixon from office and curtailed the worst abuses of the Trump administration. We have saved consumers and taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars.

These victories are the product of hard work, but much more than that. Ralph Nader built into the organization's DNA an understanding of corporate influence over our democracy, a strategic mindedness about how to build countervailing power and a savvy about how to advocate and win.

Now, as we look forward, we see a nation at a crossroads.

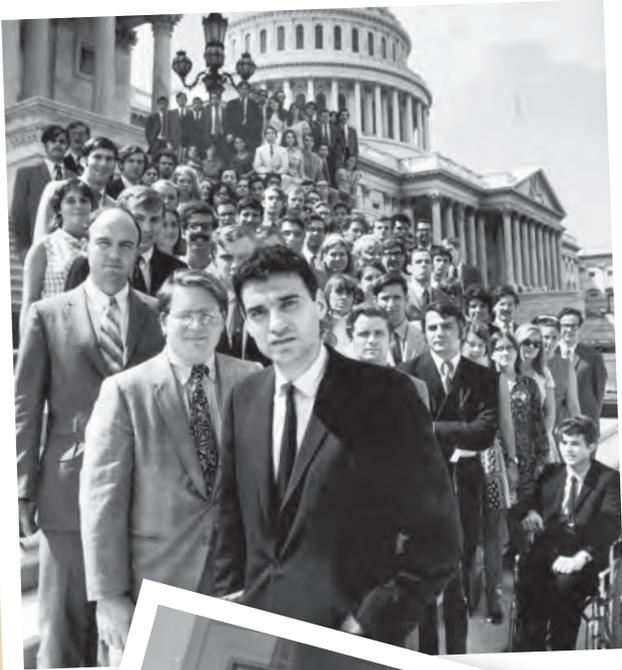
Disillusion and despair are spreading across the country. People feel left out of a corporate-dominated economy, fearful of a corporate-created planetary crisis spinning out of control and drowning in a corporate-monopolized online world that too often rewards hate and anger at the expense of love and community.

We can tame the corporations that are driving us apart. We can deepen our democracy and build community. We can advance justice and equality. We can face the existential threat of climate chaos.

Or we can risk a slide into political violence, authoritarianism and ecological catastrophe.

For 50 years, Public Citizen has shown that it can tackle the great challenges facing our country and the world and make a profound difference.

Now, we're ready to catapult forward and win the transformative changes that our time demands.



## Bold Ambition

From our founding, a guiding organizational principle is that we advocate for what's right, not what people say is "reasonable." Our job is to shift the terms of debate, so that what's right seems realistic.

Time and again **we've scored victories even our friends thought impossible.**

It wasn't "realistic" to take on the auto industry, but Public Citizen founders Ralph Nader and Joan Claybrook and team did—and millions of lives have been saved from the resultant improvements in auto safety.

It wasn't "reasonable" to think we could counter Big Pharma's influence at the Food and Drug Administration. But founder Sid Wolfe and Public Citizen did—with dozens of dangerous drugs removed from the market and thousands and thousands of lives saved.



It wasn't plausible to believe that a handful of lawyers could take on giant corporations and their attorneys at the Supreme Court and in courtrooms across the country, but Public Citizen founder Alan Morrison and Public Citizen did. Winning dozens of pathbreaking cases, establishing precedents that opened the government, we expanded and defended citizens' ability to hold corporations liable for harms they cause, and ensured government agencies delivered for the public.

With that same approach, we've built a powerful movement to win a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United* (no longer unreasonable) and win transformative democracy reform (on the precipice of victory). We've mainstreamed the idea of Medicare for All, won huge victories on drug pricing, displaced the corporate trade agenda, made banks start taking climate impacts into account and much more.

## Using Every Trick in the Book

**B**uilt into Public Citizen's very conception is that we would use every civic tool possible to advance progress and hold corporations accountable.

"If corporations can lobby Congress, Public Citizen can lobby Congress," Ralph said. "If they can attack the safety regulatory agencies, Public Citizen can challenge those attacks. If they can use the courts, Public Citizen can use the courts. If they're going to use the media or if they control the media, Public Citizen will use the media." In short, be everywhere.

And we are everywhere. In just the last year and a half, we:

- ▶ **Beat Big Pharma** and won the most far-reaching drug pricing legislative reforms in four decades (estimated savings for taxpayers and consumers: \$150 billion).
- ▶ Successfully litigated across the country to hold nursing homes accountable for **preventable COVID-19 deaths**.
- ▶ Supported the work of the January 6 Committee, with everything from nationwide vigils at the start of the Committee's work to nationwide demonstrations at its conclusion.
- ▶ **Won a commitment** from insurer AIG to stop backing or funding the dirtiest energy projects.
- ▶ Secured a decision from the Department of Health and Human Services not to spend tens of billions of dollars on an Alzheimer's drug which has not been shown to work.
- ▶ Helped persuade the Food and Drug Administration to **remove from the market a drug for pre-term labor** that does not work.
- ▶ Settled a lawsuit against the U.S. Postal Service and its apparently intentional effort to slow the delivery of mail-in ballots.
- ▶ Came within a whisker of passing transformative democracy legislation.

Consider for a moment not just the importance of each of these accomplishments, but their breadth. We are enormously proud of how far we stretch our staff and our resources. That's what allows us to claim so many monumental achievements across such a broad spectrum of work.

And we've done it every year, for 50 years.



## Organize and Mobilize

It is now conventional wisdom that America is a divided country, with bitter partisan splits over just about everything. And it's undoubtedly true that Americans have divergent views on many important topics.



But the narrative of a Divided America obscures an equally important and rarely acknowledged truth: **Americans agree on a great deal.** Americans of all political stripes believe that big corporations have too much power and are weakening the nation.

By overwhelming margins and across party divides, Americans support efforts to protect consumers, hold corporations accountable, break up big banks, expand health care and more.

And, with virtual unanimity, Americans agree that corporations have too much political power and that Big Money dominance is corrupting our elections.

On many fronts, we're blocked from progress not by a divided America but by the simple fact of too much corporate power.

To which, we know the response. Organize and mobilize the public. And so, Public Citizen has added that skill set to our toolbox.

Our creative demonstrations have held companies to direct account and shifted narratives at international trade negotiations.

Our grassroots efforts have generated more than 800 state and local resolutions for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*—putting the issue on the map. Similarly, we've helped win 100 resolutions calling for Medicare for All.

During the Trump era, with allies we mobilized hundreds of thousands of people in demonstrations across the country to forestall Trump's acute threat to democratic functioning.

**We were early innovators in using email and electronic communication to drive public participation in regulatory agency processes, so that the people's voice is heard directly, alongside that of corporate lobbyists.**

As we face the great challenges of the day and directly confront concentrated corporate power, we will continue to build our organizing capacity and grassroots power.

## Never Give Up

**S**ay this about Public Citizen: When we bite into an issue, we don't let go. We know that winning the meaningful fights requires that we never give up.

What does that mean? It means that in 2010, the Food and Drug Administration finally removed from the market a drug we petitioned to ban in 1978. It means that in 2020, we won fundamental changes in super pro-corporate NAFTA rules that we first protested in 1994. It means that President Biden, in an executive order in 2021, called for fundamental changes to the regulatory process that respond to criticisms we first raised in the 1980s.

**It means that we refuse to get discouraged,** whether we're in drawn out regulatory proceedings, slow-as-molasses lawsuits or giant, long-term campaigns.

We're not going to win Medicare for All overnight, for example—but we *are* going to win, so long as we keep at it. We can say that with confidence because that's exactly how we've won all of our most consequential victories.

Yet even as we make long-term commitments, we know we need to stay nimble.

And so, we react not just to breaking news—it's not about chasing headlines—but to new and fundamental challenges.



We turned on a dime to face down an authoritarian president, using lawsuits, demonstrations, deep research, ethics investigations and more.

We responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with major new initiatives, including one to facilitate global access to life-saving vaccines.

And we have built new programs to address the rise of Big Tech and new technologies that threaten to upend society in harmful ways.

We know that corporations play the long game and that corporate power morphs.

But know this: they can't wait us out and they can't hide from us.



## Public Citizen's 50th Anniversary People. Power. Progress. Fund: Charting the Way Forward

**P**ublic Citizen's 50th Anniversary People. Power. Progress. Fund will chart our way forward through the crisis moments ahead.

It will provide us the institutional backing to maintain and expand the amazing infrastructure that enables us to be everywhere, all at once, in taking on corporate power.

It will strengthen our organizing and mobilizing capacity.

It will expand our outreach, so that we can reach new constituencies and communities.

It will give us the tools we need to proceed on a long-term, dual-track advocacy plan.

First, we must confront and face down the frightening but very real prospect of American fascism.

Simultaneously, we must address the severe injustice and inequality that besets our nation and much of the world, and which not so incidentally is fueling right-wing extremism.

# Resisting Authoritarianism



Donald Trump has unleashed forces in our society that will not easily be quieted, no matter what Trump’s personal fate is.

Our first duty in taking on authoritarian movements is to acknowledge they exist. We can’t permit ourselves the mistake of laughing at them, assuming they will implode or becoming overconfident because one or another autocratic leader lost an election.

Then we must call out the plays from the authoritarian playbook: the legitimization of political violence, the scapegoating of immigrants, the denial of civil rights and civil liberties, the assault on core democratic institutions—all alongside the conferral of enormous benefits on the superrich and corporations.

We directly resist authoritarians and authoritarianism by using all the tools we know how to employ: explaining what’s happening

and its import, communicating our values, mobilizing the public and strategically using our litigation, lobbying, research and other expertise.

**We demand accountability—for January 6, as well as other crimes and abuses.**

And we steadfastly defend—and work to radically improve—our democracy.

This is a fight we must win. At stake is who we are as a people and a nation. At stake, too, is whether we can address any of our nation’s other great challenges, for none will be solved without a functioning democracy.



# Winning Transformative Change

As dangerous and urgent as this moment is, we stand on the brink of winning transformative change to make the nation fairer, more just, healthier and more sustainable.



We got a glimpse of how we might catapult forward with the Build Back Better proposals, which fell just short of passage but nonetheless led to one of the most progressive legislative packages of the last 50 years.

That glimpse validated Public Citizen's long-term approach. That is where our **50th Anniversary People. Power. Progress. Fund** comes in.

We need to expand our communications staff to place more stories on the national news, generate more videos, get our experts on talk shows across the country and expand our cutting-edge social media program to reach even more people.

We need to bulk up our lobbying presence on Capitol Hill. We're never going to match corporate America (Big Pharma alone has more than 100 times as many lobbyists as Public Citizen), but backed by expertise and public opinion, each Public Citizen lobbyist makes a huge difference.

We need more researchers documenting abuses and demonstrating solutions. **Our reports break news, shape media coverage, drive policy discussions and force government action.**

We need more litigators to take on corporate abuse and hold government accountable. The corporate and extreme tilt in much of the judiciary means we need *more* litigators to defend victims of corporate wrongdoing and to craft the creative arguments that can forestall decisions blocking government programs needed for climate, health care, consumer protection and more.

And we need more organizers—many more organizers—to mobilize the public to win the policies our nation so desperately needs but are blocked by corporate power.



# Making a Difference



## Democracy. Justice. Health. Sustainability.

These are grand notions. We translate them into reality by drawing on our deep expertise across so many fields to develop policy. These range from the big picture (e.g., expanding Medicare to cover everyone) to the focused and particular (e.g., a rule protecting farmworkers from excessive heat exposure). If there's one thing Public Citizen is not short of, it's good policy ideas!

We know that we pick big challenges and hard fights. That doesn't scare us. We like hard fights and we are ready for them.

We're talking about taking on corporate power, defending democracy and the great issues of our time. If the reforms are easily won, that's probably a sign that corporations don't much fear them.

How can we be sure of success? We know because of our history. For 50 years, Public Citizen has had unparalleled success in restraining corporate power and improving our country.

That history fuels us as we bring people together, build power and progress forward. **People. Power. Progress. Forward, together.**



# **PUBLIC CITIZEN** 50 YEARS

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