

VISION STATEMENT

Rockland Citizens Action Network

Dec. 2016

It is impossible to deny any longer that we're seeing a potentially catastrophic breakdown of many of our political and cultural institutions. All branches of our government, regulatory agencies, judicial system, educational system, and our so called free press, have either been captured or overwhelmed by a long list of destructive forces; among them, a global stateless corporatism, rapid environmental degradation, war, racism, sexism, income inequality, and economic turmoil. The increasing complexity and uncertainty in the average citizen's life has also led to a pessimism and apathy that obstruct efforts to work out solutions. Our institutions are unfortunately failing at a time when we face threats as serious as any in human history. Chief among them is climate change, which is already well on the way to guaranteeing that future generations will suffer great hardship. It is possible that the risk of nuclear war is as great now as at any other time. Our society is still plagued by the moral sicknesses of greed, racism, and prejudice, that allow for the marginalization of millions whose energies and talents we cannot afford to squander. Not least among our worries is an increasingly powerful international oligarchy that has at its disposal an array of awesome technologies for surveillance and oppression that could be used to create a super police state, unlike anything that's come before. In response to the dysfunction we are witnessing, many of us now recognize that we must come together to resist, and not succumb to the general apathy. We hold firm to the belief that no matter the circumstances, we are obliged to fight for the lives of our children and the planet they will inherit from us.

To effectively confront the threats against us, we must:

- 1. Restore a functioning, responsive democracy**— a government of the People; by the People; and for the People, without which we will not be able to focus the energy and resources necessary to solve our most serious problems.
- 2. Build a community that fosters engagement and optimism.** Our organization should serve as a center for action and provide a network of support, so that individuals can rediscover their power as citizens.
- 3. Fight for economic justice.** We cannot claim to be a great nation when the vast majority of Americans see their quality of life and economic security sacrificed for the benefit of capital markets and corporate profits. We must reestablish the needs of individuals as our government's top priority.
- 4. Go into battle. NOW.** We have no shortage of actions we can take immediately, and that cannot wait if we want a humane progressive society and a habitable planet to pass on to future generations.

- a. Stopping climate change is our greatest existential challenge.** Do not allow oil, gas, and coal to remain our default energy sources through the construction of new pipelines, leases for drilling and mining on public land, or through the weak regulations on extraction and transport that keep prices for fossil fuels artificially low. Renewables must be brought online as fast as possible and not delayed while the fossil fuel industry races to make every dollar it can before the clock finally runs out on climate change denial.
- b. Rebuild the electoral process, and get big money out of politics.** Push to undo Citizens United, pass additional campaign finance reforms such as mandating disclosure of corporate political expenditures, and overhaul New York State's anti-democratic election laws. Work to end restrictions on voting rights, and eliminate gerrymandering and the electoral college as impediments to fair elections. Educate the public, and help them rediscover that the key to improving their communities has, and always will be, their participation in the democratic process.
- c. Fight for a just economy.** Wealth, being the result of the combined talents and efforts of many workers, and dependent upon the infrastructure, education, and resources that our society provides to business, must be shared equitably if we are to consider ourselves a just and compassionate people. We must fight for livable wages, equal pay, unions, and worker's rights such as family leave. We must fight for universal healthcare— a single payer, "Medicare for all" system. We will oppose trade agreements that do not serve the interests of workers, that harm our environment, or that employ "corporate sovereignty" mechanisms to undermine democracy.
- d. Improve our communities in keeping with our progressive values.** Endorse and support progressive candidates at local, state, and national levels. Fight for the rights of all people regardless of race, religion, or other affiliation, and strengthen programs that will help all citizens live healthy and productive lives. Stop the degradation and pollution of our land, air, and water. End the barbaric treatment of citizens at the hands of law enforcement, an unequal justice system, and for-profit correctional facilities. And support quality education for all our kids so that they'll be prepared to meet the new challenges their generation will face.
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