

THE CHAMBERSBURG DECLARATION

BY THE UNDERSIGNED IN CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA, ON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 2010

We declare:

- That the political, legal, and economic systems of the United States allow, in each generation, an elite few to impose policy and governing decisions that threaten the very survival of human and natural communities;
- That the goal of those decisions is to concentrate wealth and greater governing power through the exploitation of human and natural communities, while promoting the belief that such exploitation is necessary for the common good;
- That the survival of our communities depends on replacing this system of governance by the privileged with new community-based democratic decision-making systems;
- That environmental and economic sustainability can be achieved only when the people affected by governing decisions are the ones who make them;
- That, for the past two centuries, people have been unable to secure economic and environmental sustainability primarily through the existing minority-rule system, laboring under the myth that we live in a democracy;
- That most reformers and activists have not focused on replacing the current system of elite decision-making with a democratic one, but have concentrated merely on lobbying the factions in power to make better decisions; and
- That reformers and activists have not halted the destruction of our human or natural communities because they have viewed economic and environmental ills as isolated problems, rather than as symptoms produced by the absence of democracy.

Therefore, let it be resolved:

- That a people's movement must be created with a goal of revoking the authority of the corporate minority to impose political, legal, and economic systems that endanger our human and natural communities;

- That such a movement shall begin in the municipal communities of Pennsylvania;
- That we, the people, must transform our individual community struggles into new frameworks of law that dismantle the existing undemocratic systems while codifying new, sustainable systems;
- That such a movement must grow and accelerate through the work of people in all municipalities to raise the profile of this work at state and national levels;
- That when corporate and governmental decision-makers challenge the people's right to assert local, community self-governance through passage of municipal law, the people, through their municipal governments, must openly and frontally defy those legal and political doctrines that subordinate the rights of the people to the privileges of a few;
- That those doctrines include preemption, subordination of municipal governments; bestowal of constitutional rights upon corporations, and relegating ecosystems to the status of property;
- That those communities in defiance of rights-denying law must join with other communities in our state and across the nation to envision and build new state and federal constitutional structures that codify new, rights-asserting systems of governance;
- That Pennsylvania communities have worked for more than a decade to advance those new systems and, therefore, have the responsibility to become the first communities to call for a new state constitutional structure; and
- That now, this 20th day of February, 2010, the undersigned pledge to begin that work, which will drive the right to local, community self-government into the Pennsylvania Constitution, thus liberating Pennsylvania communities from the legal and political doctrines that prevent them from building economically and environmentally sustainable communities.

That a Call Issues from this Gathering:

- To create a network of people committed to securing the right to local, community self-government, the reversal of political, legal, and cultural doctrines that interfere with that right, and the creation of a new system and doctrines that support that right;
- To call upon the people and elected officials across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to convene a larger gathering of delegates representing their

municipal communities, who will propose constitutional changes to secure the right of local, community self-government; and

- To create the people's movement that will result in these changes to the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Founding Signers,

- Bill Belitskus – McKean County, Hamlin Township
- Mary Belitskus – McKean County, Hamlin Township
- Martin Boskenbaum – Northampton County, Lehigh Township
- Lori Cooper – Northampton County, Lehigh Township
- Bonnie Glose – Carbon County, Bowmanstown Borough
- John Liddle – Schuylkill County, Norwegian Township
- Kathleen Liddle – Schuylkill County, Norwegian Township
- John Dunphy – Montgomery County, Cheltenham Township
- Monica Liggins – Montgomery County, Cheltenham Township
- Joe Martin – McKean County, Foster Township
- Diane Martin – McKean County, Foster Township
- Joe Norley – Chester County, West Chester Borough
- Maria Payan – York County, Peach Bottom Township
- Cathy Pedler – Erie County, Erie Township
- Lisa Pignataro – Northampton County
- Kara Scott – Carbon County, Bowmanstown Borough
- Marva Simon Iano – Montgomery County, Cheltenham Township
- Vicki Smedley – Lycoming County, Nippenose Township
- Bob Stanley – Lancaster County, Mt. Joy Township
- Fred Walls – Franklin County, St. Thomas Township
- Pat Walls – Franklin County, St. Thomas Township
- John Wolf – Lancaster County, Mt Joy Township
- Ben Price – Cumberland County, North Middleton Township
- Stacey Schmader – Franklin County, Guilford Township
- Shireen Parsons – Carbon County, Summit Hill Borough
- Cathy Miorelli – Schuylkill County, Tamaqua Borough
- Chris Morrison – Schuylkill County, Tamaqua Borough
- Katherine Watt – Centre County, State College