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The Moral Courage to Stand Against Injustice

Thank you for coming, especially thank you to those who have been raising the visibility of those international systems of autocratic government that have been undermining our democratic processes called NAFTA and GATT, about which we speak a little bit later.

The present campaign, led by TweedleDee, TweedleDum, Republican and Democrat, increasingly demonstrate that our political choices are becoming extraordinarily narrow, but even more important, that the narrowness of the choice itself reflects the increasing domination over both parties and our government of multinational corporations.

Corporations always quest for power. They don't just quest for market profits, they quest for power against all forces that might counteract them, whether it's government, law and order, regulatory agencies, whether it's trade unions, whether it's consumer groups, whether it's the churches, whether it's the environmental groups, or whether it's people who can take them to court and product liability and medical malpractice and financial fraud cases. In fact, much of the benefits that have come from corporations in our country's history have flowed precisely because they weren't allowed to follow the logical conclusion of their greed, the logical conclusion of their will to dominate, the logical conclusion to bringing consumers to their knees, and bringing government to its position as supplicant and welfare dispenser to corporations.

And we often forget that because the corporations like to take credit for everything that happens to our economy, it's as if the workers didn't build this economy, as if the slaves didn't build the plantation economy, it's as if consumers didn't make it by their buying the products. Of course, everybody's involved and building an economy.

But what we must recognize, is that in any society -- and this goes right back to 2000 years ago -- any society that lets the profit-seeking mercantile value system dominate itself against other values of humanity -- justice, opportunity, health, safety, respect for future generations, the intangibles of civilization -- any society that allows the mercantile, the profit-seeking system to dominate gets into trouble.

That was described in the Bible, of course, and nothing is very much changed. And we have to learn this lesson every few generations. When slavery was a scar, the shame of our nation, a few people called themselves "abolitionists," started the drive to abolish slavery.

Slavery was the making of human beings into property owned by businesses, plantations owners, to maximize their profits and minimize their losses. They had no boundaries in those days to the prevention of slavery. And, you know, those citizens who started the abolition movement, it was pretty lonely, and they struggled for decades and they prevailed and our country's a lot better off as a result.

And the women who stood in that farmhouse in 1846 in Seneca Falls, New York -- and they started the national drive for women's right to vote and it wasn't just men who opposed that: businesses didn't like women's increasing protest against child labor and other exploitation. They didn't want to give women the right to vote.

Six women. Farmhouse. 1846. Pretty lonely. But they prevailed against overwhelming odds over the next 60 years. They were beaten, dragged off to jail, arrested, right in front of the White House on the eve of their final victory.

How about the workers in the early Industrial Revolution? Terrible working conditions, six, seven days a week. Pittance for salary. They didn't have pensions or unemployment compensation. They didn't have worker's compensation. They didn't have any voice. They were flotsam and jetsam.

I remember reading in my law books cases back in the mid and late 1800's when the railroads were getting underway, and there'd be thousands of deaths a year because trainmen would get between the cars, the railroad cars and try to couple them. And at that time, an inventor developed the automatic coupler, but the railroads didn't want to invest in the automatic coupler which didn't require a human being to risk being squeezed between two large railroad cars. Why? It was cheaper for those workers to die than it was for the railroad companies to invest in that new safety technology.

And those workers who were part of the sit-down strikes against the auto companies in the 30's before they formed the United Auto Workers and the detective goons were hired by the owners of the auto plants to harass and block them -- pretty lonely. And they prevailed.

The United Mine Workers was formed out of the blood, sweat and choking coal dust in the mines, some of the cruelest conditions in the history of our country, and the workers organized and before they were through, they had more safety in the mine and they had some of the highest wages of blue collar workers in the country with about the best health and pension plan. But it started out in the 1890's very, very lonely in the coal fields of West Virginia, and Pennsylvania and Kentucky. But they prevailed.

What do all these people have in common?

They have in common moral courage. They have in common self-confidence. They have in common the willingness to take on the odds, the unwillingness to say to themselves "you can't fight these powerful people. You can't fight these omnipotent corporations. You can't fight those odds." These are not people who went through life saying to themselves, "you can't fight City Hall", or you can't fight some big coal company or some big auto company. They fought and this country was a lot better as a result. They were not cynical people. They were not despairing people. They weren't people who wrung their hands. They weren't people who thought that being a dropout from democracy was cool or was some form of elegant indulgence or self-indulgence.

And sometimes we forget our history, especially the young generation that grew up on MTV and the new young generation that's growing up on Beavis and Butthead and watching and gazing at the worst kind of television that communicates violence as way of solving lives, low-grade sensuality from junk food to soft porn and addiction as a way of life, hour after hour, sitting, watching the videos, and watching the television and watching the kind of demeaning and intellectually stifling appropriation of the childhood of millions of youngsters.

They don't even know who the heroes were in our country any more. Their heroes are Chester Cheetah, Tony the Tiger, Power Rangers, Ninja Turtles. They don't inherit the stories from their ethnic background or their grandparents anymore. They don't inherit the stories that had the morals to them, from the books. They get it from the violent programming on television, or video, or now, computer screens, or down at the arcades. And now they're told they can participate in the slaughter directly through interactive video.

When you compare the history of struggle in the world for justice -- and "Justice is the great work of human beings on Earth," Daniel Webster once declared, and how right he was -- when you compare that kind of reality struggle with the virtual reality of sensual and violent exploitation of our youngsters by these commercial corporations who know no boundaries in their pell mell drive to separate children from their parents, teach the children how to lay the guilt trip on parents who are working and commuting and not at home as much as they would like to be and showing how these children can have corporate parents, commercial surrogate parents to fill their time and their loneliness with the commercial videos and programming that too many parents buy but never look at.

The first lesson of striving for justice is to look at the historical record. All of these examples I gave and many more have one theme through them: They took on concentrated power in too few hands and took away some of it. They deconcentrated some of it. They said to the slave-holding plantations, "No more are you going to have the power to hold whole families into slavery."

And the unions told the industrial corporations, "No more are you going to have the power to tell us what our working conditions are going to be and what our pay is going to be, and what our health and safety deterioration is going to be like. No more."

And the women who got the right to vote, same thing: deconcentrating and distribution power.

Once we understand that, and obviously all we need to do is just be refreshed in our memory, then we look at the problems today and we say to ourselves, why, oh why, do we, in a country of massive wealth, intelligence, science, technology, constitution; in a country that is reporting gigantic corporate profits, even more gigantic executive compensation packages for the bosses, and a record stock market day after day; why in the world do we have people -- 80 percent of the workers in this country with declining wages adjusted for inflation over the last 20 years -- anywhere from 15 to 20 percent decline, according to the U.S. Department of Labor data -- why in the world do 23 out of every 100 children in this country live in dire poverty with all the brutalization that that entails?

Why in the world are our public works, the basic public infrastructure that makes private profit possible, crumbling and decaying, from our bridges to our sewage systems, to our drinking water systems, to our schools, including our public universities?

Why in the world do we have 17 countries in the world who have lower infant mortality levels? Why are we the most, the only western country that doesn't have universal health insurance coverage with 42 million people, including children, uncovered, 20 million grossly under-covered, and the rest of the Americans who have coverage worrying sick about getting sick and losing their coverage, since as cancer survivors, and diabetic survivors, or losing their coverage when they change their jobs, or being told they have preexisting conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease or asthma, and therefore are excluded for insurance coverage for those ailments, and then they're beset increasingly with corporations drowning in their own profits, drowning in their own mega-millionaire executives telling the workers that they've got to engage in more co-payments for their health insurance, they've got to take more exclusions, they've got to take more deductions and they better lump it, because if they don't like it they can either leave, and if they decide not to leave and fight back, why, these bosses can threaten to close down the plant and threaten to go to Mexico or Malaysia, or East Asia or South America, encouraged by our tax system and encouraged by NAFTA and GATT?"

Now what's the answer to all those questions? Why? Why?

The answer is there is too much power and too much wealth in too few hands and the few control our government and the few create the problems and the injustices for the many and have less and less interest in doing anything about it because they can get away with it.

If you want to find out what corporations are able to get away with, go over the border in Texas to the maquiladora regions and you'll see those blue chip corporations like GM and Ford and some Japanese major corporations setting up shop, exploiting their workers -- there isn't even a living wage paid, especially now, given the inflation in Mexico -- the massive toxic, the pollution dumping, the bribery, the simple disregard for human rights, and they wouldn't dare do that in our country, although they're getting ideas that they can get away with it, they wouldn't dare do that in our country, but right across the border they do. Why?

Because they're nestling next to an oligarchy and a dictatorial regime that is full of corruption and needs only to be paid off in order to smash labor union organization and any kind of human rights and any kind of access to judicial justice. That's why.

You want to see how far corporations will go if we let them in this country? Look at the history of World War II, where going into World War II, General Motors and Dupont still had commercial deals and relationships with the giant German chemical company I.G. Farber, and with the Kruppworks and with the Nazi regime that was so intertwined with them. And there's plenty of documentation on that and even more coming out shortly in a major book on the subject.

If you want to see how they behave, go to Indonesia and see the Nike shoe subcontracted companies where for a \$1.80 -- used to be \$1.67 -- \$1.80 a day, not a living wage, women are manufacturing Nike shoes. And they manufactured 19 million pairs in 1993 and all of their pay together, of all the women who manufactured all the shoes was less than what the chief executive officer of the Nike Corporation got that year.

The top 350 richest people in the world, their total wealth equals the bottom 3 billion people in the world. The disparity of wealth and income in our country has grown to historic extremes. It is now more widely disparate than in countries in western Europe, and we were way ahead of them in more equitable distribution of wealth and income. The bottom 90 percent of the American people, their total wealth is equal to the one to two percent of the richest people in America, depending on which study you want to rely on. Just imagine: 90 people here, all their wealth, one or two at the most people here equal the wealth of the 90 people here.

You know, if I described that without mentioning that it was in the good old USA, you would think it was in some third world country that we have contemptuously have called banana republics. But it's right here.

Take the stock equities that are booming now. They call it "people's capitalism." Let's look at the record: the bottom 80 percent of the American people, including their pension stock holdings own 1.8 percent -- 1.8 percent, less than 2 percent of all stock equities. The top 5 percent of the richest people in this country own 77 percent. This is not healthy for our country. It's not good eventually for widely distributed markets. But who ever accused corporations of being farsighted?

Now comes their deliberate drive in the last 15 years in particular to basically bring our democracy to its knees by dismantling our democracy installment by installment.

One way they dismantle it is by increasing the power of their money in political campaigns. Seventy percent of all money poured into campaigns for Congress and for the Presidency come from business interest, 70 percent, that's one of the highest on record. It used to be that labor money would be a third of business money, or maybe half. It doesn't come close any more.

Now, what does money in politics do?

It knocks out the meritorious evaluation of issues by elected representatives. It makes them think, well you know, if I vote for this safety standard; or if I vote to close these tax loopholes for the corporations; or if I vote against eliminating a huge debt that these corporations have to Uncle Sam for uranium enrichment services; or if I vote monitor more clearly the pension plans that are being looted by too many corporations; I'm not going to get as much money for my next reelection campaign.

What's more, they may set up a primary opponent to me. What's more they may start sounding the drums with the local TV stations and the local newspapers and spreading rumors about me. And what's more, they just make life miserable for me.

And so, the non-meritorious calculation of the political antennae intent on reelection, what happens? They cave in and Congress becomes the best that money can buy. And they become, also, the best that money can rent. They're getting very versatile, these days.

That's one way to dismantle our democracy. Why do half of the people not vote? Some of them just don't care. But others say to themselves, "What does my vote mean? What does my vote mean?" There's no difference between the two parties when it comes to the really big issues of power in our country. What difference is there between the Republicans and the Democrats on the power of the Federal Reserve which keeps a permanent unemployment rate of five and a half to six percent? An underemployment rate of even more millions of Americans because it wants to make sure that the creditor classes -- the people, the banks and others who lend the money -- don't get nicked by inflation. And some economists even dispute that kind of policy on those grounds.

But Clinton and Dole are the same. The Republicans nominated Alan Greenspan out of Wall Street years ago as chairman of the Federal Reserve, which is a prisoner of the banks, a willing prisoner of the banks, and Clinton just reappointed him.

What's the difference between the Republicans and Democrats on cracking down on corporate crime which is at epidemic levels? If you want to document it, you don't have to read The Nation magazine or the Multinational Monitor, just read the Wall Street Journal, outside its editorial pages, that is. Almost every day they're documenting it.

Three years ago, for example, in a very memorable page one story, they said that the Defense Department has obligated itself under Congressional demand to clean up the toxic contamination in California of the military defense contractors, even if the contractors dumped the toxic waste in your water and on your soil in criminal violation of state law. And you the taxpayer pay to clean it up.

What has Clinton and Dole ever said about law and order against corporate criminals? They talk about personal responsibility? Isn't that safe? Sometimes I think Clinton ought to talk about his own personal responsibility. But they talk about personal responsibility? What about corporate responsibility? They talk about street crime? What about corporate crime? Corporate crime and violence destroys more lives, causes more injuries, causes more disease, damages more property, loots more savings, than all street crime put together, bad as it is.

Bad as street crime is, it is a small fraction of the looting by corporations of people's savings. You're spending half a trillion dollars -- half a trillion dollars -- to bail out the crooked savings and loan between the years 1990 and the year 2020, including capital and interest. Half a trillion dollars. Have any idea how much bank robbers stole from banks? Maybe \$150 million a year. Every day, in the financial press there are big scandals, big money looting policy holders, looting holders of annuities, pension holders, savers, stockholders. The Prudential securities racket -- hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars. Metropolitan Life and its deceptive sales practices. Hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, Towers Financial, that was only 400 million of dollars.

After all, you add them up it comes up to real money, real money. We're talking tens of billions of dollars a year of corporate crime and fraud and the people don't get five cents on the dollar back, which is why Proposition 211 is on the ballot and being attacked by the Silicon Valley moguls who don't want to be held personally responsible when they engage in egregious insider trading and manipulate the stock leading to severe losses for innocent shareholders or pension trusts that are invested in those companies. How about corporate violence? There are 28,000 homicides in this country every year. Far, far, far too many. There are 80,000 people in this country who die from medical malpractice just in hospitals every year. That figure's a conservative estimate by the physicians at the Harvard School of Public Health who did the study. The number of people who die from medical malpractice just in hospitals -- we're not talking about Medicaid mills in the inner city, et cetera -- is greater than the total fatality figure from fire, motor vehicle deaths and homicides. That's for starters. Criminal negligence, gross indifference, or worse.

60,000 Americans die prematurely from air pollution diseases. 100,000 die from occupational toxics in the workplace and trauma.

And the tobacco companies, to keep their business booming, have had to hook 10, 12, 11, 13-year-olds, 14-year-olds, in a lifetime of addiction. 420,000 deaths a year from tobacco. And you know, not 10 percent of the people who are hooked on cigarettes start smoking after 19. This is what the head of the Food and Drug Administration called a "pediatric disease." But he could have called it a corporate crime of child molestation.

What about the people burned to death in sidesaddle fuel tanks on millions of GM cars? there are hundreds of people who have burned to death because of the exposed nature of the fuel tank. Side impact collision incineration. They refuse to recall those trucks. They've paid over \$100 million in secret settlements for that purpose, to keep it secret.

What about the thousands of American who've had the Shiley-York heart valve implanted in them? The company knew that it was defective after a few years and they covered it up. And hundreds have died when the heart valve broke. And it doesn't take much time for the death to follow.

What about the people who were exposed to the Pinto fuel tank. The hundreds of thousands of women who were mutilated by the Dalkon Shield? The company knew about it. The insurance company, Aetna, knew about it. If it wasn't for the litigation against these companies like GM, if it wasn't for the litigation against the Ford Pinto, if it wasn't for the litigation against A. H. Robbins of the Dalkon Shield, none of this information would have come out, none of this trauma and death and injury would have been stopped, and none of the victims would have gotten any compensation.

Is it any surprise that the corporations and the insurance companies have mounted a massive propaganda drive here in Sacramento, in state capitols and in Congress to restrict the right of wrongfully injured people to go to court against the perpetrators of their harm, and they have the gall to call it "tort law reform?" Now do you know?

It's as if they say, "There's too much justice in America." Nine out of 10 wrongfully injured people never file a lawsuit. It's so hard to win these cases against the manufacturers. We've just written a new book which is out tomorrow called "No Contest -- Corporate Lawyers and the Perversion of Justice in America" to document, with my coauthor Wesley Smith, how these corporate lawyers, the masterminds of power, are moving not just to obstruct, delay and harass people who are injured who sue their corporate clients for hazardous products, for defective devices in the medical area, for toxic pollution -- they're not satisfied with delaying, obstructing, destroying evidence, and then settling with a gag order on the plaintiffs so the rest of America wouldn't find out about the evidence regarding millions of defective vehicles, or thousands of defective medical products.

They're not satisfied with that. They're going to the legislature, greasing the palms of the lawmakers at the state and federal level, to in effect say to you, no matter how badly your children, or your friends, or relatives were injured by wrongdoing, by criminal negligence, by cover ups, in these defective and dangerous products, that you can only get a certain amount in a court of law decreed by lawmakers who've had their hands greased, lawmakers who never see their evidence, never hear the testimony, are not even in the courtroom week after week, and they are tying the hands of the judges and the juries in a biased fashion against the wrongfully injured people, not against the perpetrators.

And here in California you've had an example of something called the micro law, which in 1976 was passed and signed and which said no matter how serious the brain damaged infants' problems will be for the foreseeable future, no matter how serious the incompetent physician rendered a person a paraplegic or a quadriplegic, no matter how serious the injury from the wrong transfusion of blood types, or the wrong pipe down the wrong part of the anatomy, or the wrong organ being surgically cut out, that you in

California can receive no more than \$250,000 for pain and suffering, apart from your medical expenses, for a lifetime.

Now, let's say it's a 40-year lifetime expectancy. Divide that by \$250,000, make sure it doesn't adjust for inflation, and see how far it takes you. Now the same insurance companies that are pushing for Congress to pass the same law as this draconian one in California, I checked on some of their salaries. The executive chief of the AIG Insurance Company in New York, in 1994, one of the companies pushing for the \$250,000 lifetime cap for a horribly injured person's pain and suffering, made, in 1994, \$250,000 a week, every week, without any pain and suffering and it comes from the same pot of money -- your premiums.

Now you know why it was necessary to defeat the insurance industry here in California in 1988 through Proposition 103.

Now you know why it's important to take on the HMOs and the health insurance industry with Proposition 216. With Proposition 216, which among other provisions, will establish a consumer watchdog group open to any consumers to join with their full-time investigators and attorneys and economists and organizers to make sure that these hospitals and these HMOs do not marginalize you out of the minimal health care and health care stay in the hospital that you all deserve.

You've heard of drive-thru births, 24 hours and out? Well, in my state of Connecticut the banner headline in the Hartford Courant a couple months ago was another drive-thru. Listen to this one. Listen to the vicious profit mentality that's involved in this: a drive-thru in and out mastectomy, not even one night in the hospital.

And that's just the beginning of what managed care, driven by the profit motive of these giant insurance companies have in store for you, unless we stop them.

Now to stop them we have to look at our recent successes. The motor vehicle companies were into style over safety 25 years ago. They sold you dream boats, they sold you rust-prone, repair-prone, junk. As a matter of fact, I had a meeting a year and a half ago with an executive from Chrysler who calmly said to me, "We have really improved our products. We're no longer selling the junk we sold a couple of decades ago."

I said, "What did you say? Would you please repeat that?"

They've also gotten rid of some of their tail fins, whose principle function to protect cars from pedestrians, apparently, impaling them. They've got air bags. They've got seat belts. They've padded dash panels, collapsible steering columns. Stronger door latches so you're not spilled out on the highway in a moving vehicle that's been struck. There's still more to do -- strong side impact, stronger rollover protection.

But do you know what the fatality rate has decline to from 1965? It was 5.6 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 1965. It is 1.8 now.

I guess that was so impressive, that the Republicans in Congress and George Ronald Clinton in the White House decided to get rid of the federal speed limit, even though the Department of Transportation said it will be another 6,500 fatalities a year, another 20,000 total permanently injured Americans, another \$20 billion in health care and other losses, more auto insurance hikes, more fuel inefficiency, and more air pollution. Mr. Clinton had a chance to veto it, send it back, have it sent back to him with the highway construction and repair parts of the legislation. He signed it.

Right now we're getting the figures from Texas. Forty more people every month from Texas lose their lives. Higher speeds.

Where were our politicians? They literally destroyed a successful, lifesaving program for over 20 years, and now they're going to say to us, "You're on your own folks! It's going to cost more health costs, more wage loss. It's going to cost more on your auto insurance; you're on your way."

Why didn't Dole criticize Clinton for that? Because Dole voted for it, too. When you have two look-alike candidates, how can they criticize each other for surrendering to corporate crime, corporate power, corporate payoffs, corporate fraud and corporate maliciousness? How can they possibly do that?

One very important part of the realization here that we have many solutions we don't apply, and many problems and injustices that we don't deserve in our country is to stop growing up corporate and we all grow up corporate.

Growing up corporate is a many unsplendored phenomenon. I first realized it when I used to look at cars as a youngster and check out the make and model by the ornamentation around the car, the grill pattern, the chrome strips, the hood ornaments, et cetera. And then a few years later I began studying automotive design technology and the absence of legal safety standards. And those were the years that we call now the "Juke Box Era" of automotive design.

Some of you remember the '59 Cadillac with the three-pronged tail fin like the dinosaur Tregosaurus' tail. And you remember the Impala that impaled you on a dagger-like hood ornament. And you remember the names of the cars: the Cougar; the Cutlass Supreme; the Barracuda; the Fury; the Marauder, which literally means one who lays waste and pillages the countryside.

Remember the ads in U.S. News and World Report? Those full-page cover ads that say, "Buy this B-52 Buick, you'll have your own nuclear deterrent!" Or you will become "Your own human thunderbolt!" True tranquility transmitted through those pages, eh?

Those were the days when the auto companies placed the supremacy of stylistic pornography over engineering integrity, gas-guzzling monsters, huge chrome be-decked vehicles full of technological stagnation; with people in Japan and West Germany saying, "Ah-ha! There might be a market there!" For more sensible motor vehicles, for motor vehicles that are more fuel efficient, that are less repair-prone, and they took a lot of jobs from this country because of that technological stagnation, and still do.

However, the engineers in the auto companies had the answers for decades. The seat belt was invented in World War I and applied to aviators who were told to buckle up because they'd fall out of the planes when they were fighting.

The padded dash panel? That goes back to the Greek physician Hippocrates who said the human body is more likely to survive a collision against a flat yielding surface than a sharp cutting edge on the dash panel.

The collapsible steering column? Imagine, a handful of executives throughout the decades made the decision in Detroit that in a collision between your chest and a steering column, your chest was going to give, not the steering column, until 1966 when they took off the shelf a collapsible steering column device that had been patented 40 years earlier, with exactly that purpose of lifesaving in mind.

When I found that in a U.S. Patent Office I couldn't believe it. It was patented by the auto companies. They said, "Conventional steering columns have a propensity to ram back into the driver's body in a front collision. This can lead to rather serious injuries. This new innovation would make sure that when a human being hit the steering column, the steering column would telescope and reduce the peak load of the forces on the motorist's body." It didn't take any Einsteinian breakthrough.

They knew how to make better brakes, better tires. They were making them in Europe, radial tires, before we were; disk brakes, before we were. and the air bag was invented in 1952 and it didn't hit the auto dealerships until the early 1970's and then only as an option not promoted by the auto companies.

What changed it? People stopped growing up corporate and started looking at cars more functionally. They didn't look at cars the way the auto company ads wanted us to look at cars -- style, horsepower, interior decor -- they began looking at cars because more information came consumer groups and congressional hearings on the media. They started looking at cars for safety, fuel efficiency, repair costs, durability, emission control. They looked at cars ore functionally.

What happened? Voila! A law was passed! A dreaded regulatory law was passed called the Motor Vehicle Safety Law of 1966 and hundreds of thousands of lives were saved and millions of injuries prevented.

And that's when the government stood arm's length with the auto companies.

You know what the government does now in the Auto Safety Agency in the Department of Transportation? It's a consulting firm that you pay for to make sure that automobiles that are defective are not recalled; to make sure that existing safety standards are slated for repeal; to make sure that long-overdue safety standards for truck brakes and truck weights and handling and side-impact and rollover are not issued in an adequate form.

And who's the president of the Department of Transportation? Once again, George Ronald Clinton. There's no difference between Clinton, Bush and Reagan when it comes to that area of our government.

I mentioned earlier that Clinton and Dole didn't raise certain issues because they don't disagree on these issues. The Federal Reserve. Soft on corporate crime. The bloated military budget.

How about that one? There's no Soviet Union any more. What do we need a \$280 billion military budget for? Are we afraid of Ukraine? How long must Uncle Sam be a sap? We're spending \$100 million a year to keep our troops in Western Europe and East Asia ever since World War II, defending prosperous countries like Germany, France, Japan, who are eating our trade lunch, and against what adversary? I'm trying to figure it out. \$100 billion. Is it Moldave? Is it Lithuania? Is it Inner Mongolia?

And why are we building these multiple, global destruction, redundant weapon systems? \$80 billion for B-2 bombers; or \$50 billion for fighter planes; or nuclear submarines. We already have the equipment to blow up the world a thousand times. What are we going to do? Blow up the rubble? Is that what it's for?

Now look what's suffering. It isn't the budget deficit. It's the misallocation of your tax dollars, that is the real taxpayer issue.

When you blow up the Pentagon budget you increase the borrowing, because you're not going to increase the taxes. That means you increase the debt interest on the national debt, which is \$200 billion a year now, just to pay the interest on a \$5.3 trillion debt.

Look how it's grown: When Reagan took office, he had made more speeches against deficit government than any politician in American history. He took office with \$930 billion national debt and left with \$3.3 trillion national debt. So much for setting records.

There are military analysts who say we can get along very well on \$150 billion military budget. Others say \$100 billion. You know after most wars, after most hostilities, our country's converted. The soldiers and sailors are mustered out, we convert to a civilian economy. We have a permanent war, military budget

now and it's bleeding investments in critical public works and critical needs of the American people here at home.

The same is true for Dole and Clinton on corporate welfare. You know how many times Clinton and Dole say we gotta' do something about welfare for the poor? Well they never say anything about doing something about welfare for the rich and the corporations.

Just consider the figures here:

If you put aside Medicaid, which I don't consider welfare -- there's no Western country that consider health insurance welfare -- put aside Medicaid, do you know what the total Federal poverty programs means-tested amounts to as a percentage of the national budget? Three and a half percent.

The corporate welfare budget is much, much larger. Your tax dollars, to go for subsidies, giveaways, inflated government contracts, exclusive monopolies, bailouts and all kinds of assorted promotions and boondoggles and free research and development giveaways for medicines, et cetera; it amounts to \$250 billion easily.

Why do we tolerate this aid to dependent corporations and we don't even give them a five-year cut-off or workfare.

Here's an example of corporate welfare, one of many:

The Export Corporation, McDonnell Douglas, Boeing and others, they owed Uncle Sam \$12 billion in deferred taxes on export sales and it was 1979 and they sent somebody up to Capitol Hill and in one paragraph they wiped out the debt in a 1000-page bill.

Three years ago, the atomic power utilities who were running nuclear plants, they owed Uncle Sam \$10 billion for uranium enrichment service. They wiped out \$8 billion in a little paragraph in legislation that passed through unnoticed on Capitol Hill.

How about this one? From 1981 to 1983, General Electric made \$6.5 billion in profit. You know how much federal income tax it paid? Zero. It got a \$150 million refund by a "safe harbor" provision that it lobbied with other companies through the early years of the Reagan administration.

Now look at the contrast here, if you will: One worker in General Electric in those two years, in one week paid more income tax to the federal government than the entire General Electric Corporation and its \$6.5 billion in profit.

Now what did it do with this money? It was supposed to invest in new productive facilities and jobs. You know what it did with this money? It bought RCA which owns NBC. There it is. Of course!

Look at NBC. It doesn't cover the four nuclear plant shutdowns in Connecticut this summer. I phoned up NBC, I said, "Hey, this is a big story. They got four nuclear plants. They're all shut down. Three of them due to safety deficiencies ordered by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Could it have anything to do with General Electric being a nuclear power plant manufacturer owning NBC?"

He said, "Naw. No. It's just an oversight. It was too far away. Connecticut is too far away from New York. The smoke signals hadn't arrived yet."

I want to suggest to you that the misallocation of the federal budget and the reason why Clinton and Dole don't talk about these things is because it would drive you up the wall and into action if you had those particulars. Let me give you an example.

Add up the following: In the last two years the Congress has said -- they haven't quite gotten away with all of it, but they almost did -- that they don't have money for \$300 million for public broadcasting, including wholesome children programming.

That they don't have money for \$300 million for legal services for the poor, a wonderfully successful program over the last 25 years; that they don't have money for \$100 million to improve drinking water system safety in this country; that they don't have \$15 million to hire meat and poultry inspectors to keep the 4,000 fatalities and other injuries from contaminated meat and poultry down to a minimum

That they don't have \$50 million to produce examples of crash-worthy and fuel-efficient cars, which is one of the ways to get Detroit moving: you say, "Here you are, our engineers have done it. It's a model, it's suitable for mass production, doesn't cost much, do it;" and they don't have \$50 or \$100 million for infant health programs for infants born in poor families, of which there are many. Now add all that up.

Doesn't even add to \$1.5 billion, does it?

Switch the scene.

Last year Martin-Murieta and Lockheed decided to merge. You know, these big contractors have an urge to merge, only instead of being hit with an anti-trust suit for monopolization -- there aren't that many big defense contractors for the Pentagon dollar -- the Pentagon pumped \$1.5 billion to subsidize the merger of these two companies, including \$30 million for executive bonuses to eight men at the top of the two companies.

You see the difference?

Now whenever they say to you, "We don't have several hundred million dollars for public libraries," do you know how much the government spends every year to help public libraries? What kind of civilization do we have if our libraries are decaying? If they don't have adequate books, don't have adequate facilities for children, for school, for adults, for citizen activists? It's about \$100 million and sometimes \$40 million a year. Do you know what that is in the Pentagon budget? This is a department that rounds out military contracts to the nearest \$800 million. It's nothing! We're starving our libraries. We're starving our clinics that serve 40 million people, community health clinics.

But we've got plenty of money for prisons.

Clinton says to Dole, "You're not going to turn my right flank, Bob. You're never gonna' turn my right flank. You want more prisons? We'll give you more prisons. You want to crack down on civil liberties and habeas corpus, the great Constitutional Writ in the guise of a Crime Bill? We'll do you one better. You want to reform the welfare law and throw 1.1 million children into poverty and cut food stamps for hungry children? You're on, I'll give you the signature pen at the White House."

Any of you who are worried that this Green Party candidacy might, shall we say, undermine Clinton's victory in November, have no worry -- Clinton is too unprincipled ever to lose to Bob Dole.

What he needs is a wake-up call. What he needs are people who are fed up with piling on and wasting their vote on a Clinton runaway bandwagon just because he's not as bad as Newt Gingrich! It's enough!

Every four years, I, like many of you, stood by and watched two things get worse. Every four years they've told us we have to choose between the bad and the worse, between TweedleDum Bad and TweedleDum Worse. And every four years what happens? Both of them get worse. They move to the right corporate, they move into the hands of the multinationals.

The other phenomenon we've been witnessing is that I have never seen in 30 some years in Washington the government be such a prisoner of corporate interests -- the Congress, Executive Branch and the courts -- that citizens are shut out of their own government. They're shut out of participating. They're shut out of having a chance to have a chance to take on the big guys to make this a more just, safe, healthy and prosperous society.

When that happens, you can no longer just wring your hands. As citizen advocates, we must enter the electoral arena. It may not be to our liking . It may not be to our taste, and I can assure you, I have experience with that. But we have to do it. We have to do it because our democracy, the greatest problem-solving mechanism ever devised, is being dismantled.

The access to the courts for ordinary people -- down, restricted. The contracts we sign are all printed for us, take it or leave it.

Hey! You want to sign a contract with an HMO? Sign on the dotted line.

You want to get a warranty from an auto company? Sign on the dotted line.

You want to open a bank account in the Bank of America? Sign on the deposit slip, the dotted line.

You want to get a job? Sign this employment contract if you're a non-union workplace.

You want to go to the hospital? Sign on the dotted line.

And what is behind the dotted line? And what is after the dotted line? One-sided provision after provision rigging the whole arrangement against you and you're expected to sign on the dotted line.

You see? Here's an example. What if you wanted to reverse it? Let's say you went down to Sears and you bought a major appliance, and you couldn't pay for it right away, so you wanted an installment loan agreement. So they checked out your credit, hit a few buttons here and there, asked for your private Social Security number, and then they say, "Okay, your credit's all right. Here's the papers. Here. sign on the dotted line."

And you say, "No. My Daddy and Mommy always told me to read everything before I signed it. do you have a chair, for me to sit down? And I have my magnifying glass and my felt pen."

The clerk says, "No one's ever done this before."

"Well, there's always a first time for everything."

"Well, here's a chair."

You sit down and start going through the entire contract, and there are some things you just don't think are fair. So you cross out a paragraph here, double the warranty there, eliminate the compulsory arbitration over here which strips you of your right to go to court, and then you initial it, go back to the counter and say, "Well, I think we've got a deal. Here -- you sign on the dotted line."

The fact that millions of people sign on the dotted line, think nothing of it, don't even imagine that it could be done in another, more two-way negotiated manner by having large-member consumer groups with their own negotiators sitting down in hotel rooms with Montgomery Ward, Sears, Citicorp, Metropolitan Life, and rewriting those contracts to be a little more two-sided; we don't even think of that. You know why?

Because we grow up corporate.

We grow up looking at the world the way the corporations want us to perceive it. Style in cars, instead of safety. Junk food instead of nutrition. Look at the ads to the kids on kiddie-TV: Junk food. Junk food. Junk drinks. We grow up thinking, "Well, that's the way things are."

If I were to ask you "What do you own?" and you say, "What do you mean?" and I say, "Well, what property do you own? You don't have to give me figures, just give me categories."

You say, "Well, a house, a condo, a car, a bicycle, a motorcycle, clothes, books, newspapers, VCRs, radios..." and you keep going. Then you run out and I say, "What else do you own?"

"Well," you say, "my debts?"

"No. What else do you own?" Um-m-m. You never get the answer.

You are part owner of the greatest common wealth in the United States of America, which is, one, the public lands, one-third of America; two, the public airwaves over which radio and TV broadcasts to you 24 hours a day without paying you a cent in rent; three, \$4 trillion in pension funds; four, trillions of dollars in mutual insurance assets like Prudential, Metropolitan.

Now, we're not talking metaphor. We're talking that you, the people, legally own the public airways, the public lands, the pension funds, mutual insurance assets, the public works of America, the R&D down at the National Institutes of Health to produce anti-cancer drugs, for example, which are given away free to drug companies under monopoly marketing agreements that charge you \$10 to \$15,000 per patient for a series of treatment and give back to the government nothing by way of royalties.

Now, if we went to school and learned about the commonwealth that we own; if in our economics courses, our government courses, or whatever, we learned that we are owners of the greatest wealth in this country, more than the private wealth, what would we start thinking about?

We'd start thinking, "You know, if we legally own all this wealth, why in the world don't we control it? Why do the banks, the insurance companies, other employer corporations with their government toadies in Washington, the Department of Interior, the U.S. Forest Service, why do they control what we own?"

When you hear about the 1872 Mining Act, where a foreign or domestic company can go on the federal lands, like a Canadian company did a while back in Nevada -- you know they discover \$10 billion in gold and they documented with their geologists and they sent the papers to the Department of Interior and the Department of Interior, against its will, was forced by the 1872 Mining Act to sell the acreage, 3,500 acres or so, above that gold mine, to the Canadian company, with full ownership of the gold, as far down deep as they could dig and sell, for \$30,000. Ten billion? With a "B"? for \$30,000.

Now, when I told you that, did your mind immediately react, "That's our gold!"

It didn't. It didn't for me either. It is our gold. We have to have a sense of common wealth property ownership if we're going to get riled.

If somebody stole a bicycle from your garage you would say, "That's my kid's bicycle!" And it's done all the time: molybdenum, all hard rock metals, in the coal mines, on the federal lands, in the oil and gas -- they're leased for bargain basement prices. Nigeria, Venezuela, Indonesia strike tougher deals with our mining companies than our U.S. government.

How about the public airwaves? We're the landlords. The radio and TV are the tenants. They pay us no rent. The license to the FCC is free. You pay more for your auto license than the richest TV station in the land.

Now look at what the tenants can do -- have you ever seen tenants like this? Anybody here like to be tenants like this?: You pay no rent, you decide who says what 24 hours a day on our property, and when we want to get in to our property they tell us get lost, and if we don't they'll call the cops and evict us from our own property. We have no audience time, no audience network, no program on citizen activity.

Many of you have worked hard to document an abuse here in California. You put out a report. You have a news conference. And then you have your fingers crossed.

Will they come? Will they show up? And if they do, will they give us a sound bite or a sound bark on the evening street crime, weather, sports and chit-chat news?

This is the land of the free, home of the brave? Let's act like it. This is our property. There's no reason why we shouldn't have an audience network, with offices and programmers, and producers and reporters, free of conscience, full of talent, without the advertising censors on their back or some myopic executive in the 80th floor of a New York skyscraper telling them what they can report and what they can't report through intermediaries.

Why shouldn't we have an hour of prime time, drive time, on all radio and TV stations? Why don't we get an hour back of the 24 that we give them free so we can begin communicating, mobilizing, lifting our morale, so we can begin communicating problem solving ways to get out of so many of our problems and injustices and abuses and deprivations and denials of the fulfillment of human possibilities/ Why can't we do that?

Because we grow up corporate!

We're told -- here's what happens when you grow up corporate: You don't like the program on your TV? You're sitting in your living room, what are you free in America to do? Turn it off! You don't like any program? Get out of the living room! In other words, if you don't like the way your property's being use, get out. Instead of get in and together with other Americans form an audience network.

Another example of growing up corporate is the cable TV in your home. We give the cable companies monopoly rights. Correct? It may break down a little bit later, but they have a monopoly to serve a community. What do we get in return?

They say we're going to get 500 channels. And we're gong to have movie rerun channels; an home shopping channels; and now we're going to have Macy channels; General Motors channels; Exxon channels; I mean, who need Orwell's 1984 when we've got Brave New World by Huxley?

Growing up corporate means we curtail our imagination. We don't even dream of what is possible, never mind impossible. Why don't we have a citizen activity channel? Twenty-four hours a day so anywhere we are in the United States we can learn how citizens are solving problems in City X, Village Y -- problems that we have in our own community; with 800 numbers and telephone numbers and addresses, and Internet formulae. Why not? Why can't we lift ourselves up by the successes of our neighbors and friends miles away?

Why? Because we grow up corporate. We don't even think of demanding it because we think in the land of the free we can shut off the TV and say "There! Take that!"

Why isn't there a labor channel for workers? Why isn't there a student channel? Why isn't there a consumer channel so we can find out information of the best shopping comparison between auto insurance companies, cars and repair and recalls? Because our imagination is not up to it.

You want to know what the greatest power of the giant corporations is? It's not their money. It's not their technology. It's not their control over what we own. It's not their political connections. It's their knowledge that millions of Americans believe that they, Americans, do not count, can't fight City Hall, can't take on Exxon and can't win, so why try. It's the public apathy which is the other side of the coin of powerlessness that is their greatest asset to further concentrate power and wealth in too few hands

Now there are many other ways that we grow up corporate. Once we stop growing up corporate and grow up civic, we will be much more focused on nutritious food, rather than junk food; we will be much more inquiring about different kinds of products; we will look at pollution as a form of violence, not just something that is nasty and dirty; we will demand the mechanism so we can control what we own and use these great resources for an enlightened, just, prosperous, happy society where the pursuit of justice is filled with such joy it itself becomes the pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of happiness becomes the pursuit of justice.

Our second President, John Adams, said something very wise once. He's not very quotable, you know. It was Thomas Jefferson who got most of the historic quotes, and it was Jefferson who said, "The purpose of representative government is to curb 'the excesses of the moneyed interest'." Today, the corporate interest. Instead, the reverse is happening. The moneyed interests have curbed the just activities and representativeness of our government.

Here's what John Adams said: "Our generation (meaning his generation) is full of politicians and statesmen so that our children can become physicians and scientists so their children can become musicians and artists."

How far distant we are from that noble progression.

Many of the claims of working people today are uncannily similar to what they were in 1896. They're still asking for the right to make ends meet. They gotta work more members per family. They gotta pay for all kinds of thing they didn't have to pay because family functions have been commercialized in the marketplace -- fast food, counselors, entertainment, repair, driving back and forth, another car, another auto insurance, all kinds of expenses. And the the economists say, "Gee, the American people are in a delusion. They think the economy is not doing very well and the macro statistics say that the GNP is going up and corporate profits are increasing."

But not purchasing power. That's not increasing, because people have to work more and more to buy more and more things that they'd never have to buy to begin with and they come home exhausted.

So the road ahead isn't all that murky, is it? It starts with the following:

Growing up civic. Thinking civic. Doing civic. Saying to ourselves we're going to take a portion of our day throughout the year, maybe not every day, but in the aggregate several hundred hours a year to our community civic responsibilities, local or state or national. We're going to work on problems that we are temperamentally concerned about, injustices. Some people may be worried about City Hall, the National Parks, children's health, the schools, the tax system, corporate crime, swindles, banks, the insurance companies, the abandonment of our youngsters, the inner city, all kinds of things are awaiting us for our justice to be applied to.

And you know, people who do seek justice -- and you know that from your own experience -- are happier people. They don't go through life on their knees thinking that they can't make a difference, that they don't count, that they don't matter, that they've got to swallow their grievances; they go through life standing

tall, self-confident, informed, with a strategic sense of collaborating with their fellow citizens, neighbors and coworkers so they can change the country for the better.

And you know when that happens, you feel better about yourself. That's why the pursuit of justice is really the pursuit of happiness. If you're not an active public citizen trying to improve the country, the country's going to decay and deteriorate and you're not going to have a very happy life as a private citizen. That's the history of dictatorships and authoritarian regimes abroad.

Then step two is to talk more to one another. Just because you can't get on TV in a sound bark age, or you can't get a spread in the newspaper, doesn't mean that each and every one of us can not have a community, an epicenter of friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers where we begin discussing the state of the public immorality, the state of public crudity and injustice and corporate hegemony, and so we can start talking, reading -- lot of great materials around -- and more talking. Then you get ideas. And you get great ideas. Ideas no one has ever had before in terms of strategic breakthroughs for justice.

Years ago we had an idea on how could we organize rate payers of electric, telephone, gas companies. We drafted a bill and got it passed in Wisconsin and Illinois. Look how simple the idea: it required each utility monopoly -- electric, telephone, gas company -- three or four times a year when they send you the monthly bill -- and they never miss -- to carry this little envelope printed by the emerging consumer group, chartered by this new state law. And this envelope -- this is from Illinois -- says "Commonwealth Edison is trying to raise your electric rates again. Dear Commonwealth Edison customer, even though the Illinois State Court overturned the rate hike, ComEd won't call it quits. They're still demanding over \$250 million more of the customer's money. And they just might get it. But, if you join this statewide consumer action group for \$5 a year in Illinois you'll have your own advocates, investigators, attorneys, economists, accountants to take on the utility company before the regulatory agency in the council of public opinion, in the media, before the courts and the legislature."

Look what happened. When do you think the customer's peak point of interest is in the utility arena? It's when they get the bill. Out falls this little thing. It is not printed by your utility company, doesn't cost any more postage for the utility company. Two hundred thousand people joined in a year and a half. They have a budget of about \$1.2 million a year. They've saved over \$4 billion. They have monitored all the utilities and they got a \$1.3 billion refund from Commonwealth Edison in 1993 for Northern Illinois families because they were charging them for excessive capacity in a nuclear power plant which they should have charged their stockholders, not their residential customers. So they made another important point.

Now comes the California utility -- it always happens here -- and they take this rule, which a regulatory agency in Sacramento implemented for a consumer group here, all the way to the Supreme Court. They lost at the trial court. They lost at the California Supreme Court. And at the Supreme Court of the United States they said, "This requirement for a legal monopoly makes us violate our First Amendment rights." Why? "Because it forces us not to remain silent. It forces us as a company to rebut this letter and this violates our First Amendment rights." And they win, five to three, with Rehnquist dissenting. He's now Chief Justice, so it may be overturned.

But you know what the citizens of Illinois did when they could no longer get this in their bill? They passed a bill in the legislature requiring the state government mailings -- motor vehicle registration, tax mailings -- to carry this and this group is still going on. And San Diego has a group like this, too. It's called U-CAN, and it's done very well itself. It has about 50,000 members in the greater San Diego area.

This idea can work in bank statements, for bank customers. Never again a savings and loan debacle if this were operating. It can work in your insurance premium billing envelope, on your cable TV screen to invite you to join a cable viewer's group, and all kinds of ways.

It doesn't take a fraction of one percent of the people to join one or more of these groups, representing broad consumer justice values to turn the tide. Voluntary, no tax dollars, universally accessible. This is

what we mean when we talk about a tool of democracy. In this case, a tool of consumers banding together with a full-time staff, with technical, political and informational power. That is what we should do for our voters' rights, by getting rid of private money in political campaigns; by strengthening the labor laws so that more than 10 percent of the workers in this country can have a fair chance at collective bargaining and forming trade unions, and making sure the laws keep the trade unions honest and the people at the top listening to the rank and file.

(And by the way, there's a new Labor Party that's been formed, a huge convention that you didn't read about because it wasn't reported in Cleveland in late June, a huge convention, 1500 delegates from 45 states, no balloons. They worked out their constitution, they worked out their bylaws, and they're going to launch candidates in the year 2000. The era of the two-party domination of our country in the pockets of Big Business is about over!)

Imagine the gall of a Presidential Debate Commission, a private agency even though it sounds official, created and controlled by the two parties, Republican/Democrat, or for shorthand Repdems or Demreps, and who funds the debate commission?

Well, look at the disclosures recently: Ford Motor Company, Phillip Morris, RJ Reynolds Tobacco. And guess what the debate commission did: they excluded third party presidential candidates and vice presidential candidates, in my case Winona LaDuke from Minnesota. They excluded third party candidates from the national debates and 25 million people -- it would have been 50 million people if there were other people on the debate. And I can assure you that Mr. Clinton's silver tongue would have been turned to mush I was on that debate.

Someone in the White House told me in an unguarded moment months ago that they felt I was President Clinton's kryptonite, and I said, "He's no Superman!"

Now imagine what's coming. In four years from now we're going to have negotiated politics. There'll be enough third parties getting three, five, four, two, one percent of the vote, and they will begin to spell the margin of defeat or victory for the two major parties. And when the two major parties know who controls the margin, they're going to become one of two reactions.

They're either going to shape up more, or they're going to start declining entirely. Already they are fossil, hollow parties with no mass base. They don't even have store fronts any more in Presidential elections. They engage in huge money-raising from special corporate interests largely, and they engage in electronic thirty second combat over television. That's the way they operate.

Now that is not a formula for durability in a tumultuous 21st century. I might add, to President Clinton I would say, "There's no way that your Democratic Party as we know it is ever going to be a bridge to the 21st century."

Much less, the Republican Party.

Notice this, if you will: What do you want your vote to mean? I ask myself that question. If I don't like any of the candidates, I say to myself -- I never disclose who I voted for, I think voting is a private matter and should remain so, unless you want to, you know, toot it -- I say to myself, do I really want to vote for these people?

I'm being forced to vote between the bad and the worse. I'm being told that I can only go to the polls and vote yes, unless it's a referendum when you can vote no or yes. But for candidates, isn't it interesting that in the United States you can only vote yes or stay home? Half the people stay home in Presidential elections; two-thirds of the people stay home in Congressional elections; 82 percent of the people stay home in primaries.

We have the lowest voting turnout in the western world.

We're also the biggest debtor nation in the western world, when we were the biggest creditor nation in 1980.

Here's what I suggest: I submit that in two years and three weeks this could become law in California by referendum, that next to every candidate ballot line, Assembly, State Senator, U.S. Senator, Representative, there is a Binding None of the Above. Which means people are sick and tired of politics as usual and no choice. They're not going to stay home any more. They can go down and vote for None of the Above and if None of the Above wins, it cancels the election and sends the candidates packing, and orders a new election in 30 days with new candidates.

Now I submit to the Green Party of California and all supporters of the broad, profound and courageous platform that takes on corporate power, demands specific political reforms, urges a sustainable, full employment economy, urges the preservation of our environmental heritage which is inextricably linked, not just with recreation, not just with our trusteeship for future generations, but with the viability of the economy itself, I say to all those people that the Binding None of the Above can be passed by referendum in 1998 in California overwhelmingly.

You know the only time, as one Oscar Wilde, the Irish literary specialist once said, that socialism will never work because it requires too many committee meetings. Well let me tell you, democracy will not work well because it requires a lot of time and if people don't put the time into it as citizens we will not have democracy, except in name. We will have a plutocracy, rule by the wealthy, oligarchy, ruled by the powerful, and our government will become a wholly-owned subsidiary, a government of the Exxons, by the General Motors, for the DuPonts.

The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary. And what we need to say to ourselves is that democracy starts with "I, the citizen, informed, committed, self-reliant and not too self-righteous; willing to engage in options of revision when new evidence and new experience comes to the forefront."

And you say, "I, the citizen, committed in time, and my talent and my sense of justice," and you over there say "I, the citizen, committed in time, my sense of justice and my ideas," and all of you say "I, the citizen," what happens after a while? "I the citizen" becomes "We the people," a forging of the populace, a forging of people who know that throughout history a society tends to behave like a fish that is no longer alive, which rots from the head down and society is rebuilt from the bottom up.

There's no guy on the horse, no leader today in America who even if elected could deliver, given the concentration of power and wealth in Washington DC and in state capitols, unless we have mass intelligent citizen mobilization and movement, from which our leaders come in all directions, not just political -- economic, environmental, artistic, cultural, civic, educational.

We will never build an enduring, sustaining great society that can take the buffeting of the backlash of the forces of greed and power, forces of gluttony and mischief, the forces of institutions that don't see beyond their nose, that have no sense of legacy, no sense of trusteeship, no sense of passing on an ever greater society to the future generations yet unborn.

The Athenian oath of citizenship in ancient Athens said it in a very succinct way. "I pledge to leave Athens better than I entered it." that does say a lot to contemporary America.

And I leave you with one exhortation. It is not my style for 30 plus years of fighting literally day and night seven days a week for the people of this who were being exposed to threats to their health and safety in the workplace, marketplace, in the environment, fighting to make our government something we can be proud of, and at times it has made us very proud -- the environmental laws, consumer laws, the GI Bill of

Rights, the Social Security that cut elderly poverty in half, Medicare that gave elderly people health insurance, and in the old days the Homestead Act that led to the small farm economy instead of the plantation farm, and the step-by-step evolution of civil rights and civil liberties -- who else intermediate between the forces of greed and power if it wasn't a government pushed, and demanded and exhorted by the people as its backbone?

There are times when the government is used as a tool against its own people. It closes out its own people. It wastes its own people's money. It further concentrates wealth and power from the people, from what they own, to a handful of fewer and fewer global corporations who have no allegiance to this country except to control it and through such mechanisms beyond our borders, as GATT and NAFTA, which are simply autocratic systems of governance that basically say that if our health and safety standards in food and in the environment and in the workplace and in motor vehicles are higher than other countries', that other countries can say, "Oh, you're safety standards are designed to keep out our exports of food to you, our exports of cars to you, our exports of chemicals to you, our exports of fish to you."

They can take us to Geneva under the World Trade Organization, and with secret tribunals, totally antagonistic to the way our open courts operate; tribunals that are closed to the press, closed to citizens, no public transcript, no independent appeal, with three judges who can moonlight with commercial firms on the side without any fear of conflict of interest standards; and if we lose, and we will almost always lose, because the mandate of GATT is to subordinate all non-trade standards of living -- health, safety, fuel efficiency, to the imperatives of trade.

So we have to get on our knees -- our consumer laws, our environmental laws, the workplace laws, our laws curtailing asbestos, for example -- and say, "Oh, they don't interfere with imports, with free trade." It isn't trade that has to get on its knees and say, "We are not going to profit from brutalized child labor abroad which displaces jobs in this country and cripples these young lives in Asia and elsewhere." It isn't trade that has to get on its knees before the tribunals in Geneva and say, "Oh, the California food and product labeling law for carcinogens is trade restrictive."

It isn't trade that has to justify itself, it's your laws. Your health and safety laws that have to justify. Your California pesticide control laws and food labeling laws, and product labeling laws are slated for challenge by foreign countries who put it in their reports, western Europe, and Japan and elsewhere, as trade barriers.

Now since when did we give up our sovereignty to secret tribunals in Geneva?

Since when are we agreeing by adhering to GATT that our front line safety standards have to be harmonized with countries having lower safety standards?

Since when we can propose stronger health and safety standards and we can never be first because GATT's mandate says we have got to have similar standards through harmonization committees that are closed to the public and not subject to our courts to review, somewhere in Acapulco, or Geneva, or Singapore.

Last year in Acapulco, the U.S. Department of Transportation and Ministry of Transport in Mexico met to harmonize truck weights standards, under NAFTA. You know, in your rear view mirror, big truck coming. Well, in California, the top weight is 80,000 pounds that a truck can carry. you know what it is in Mexico? 175,000 pounds.

Now the trucking industry wants bigger weight trucks in this country. They send their lobbyists down to Acapulco, they side with the Mexican government, not exactly a democratic regime, they side with the Mexican trucking industry, which has severe problems of ill-equipped and poorly maintained trucks now coming over the Texas border, and guess which way they're pushing?

They're pushing up toward a 100, up toward a 120. And you know when that committee makes its decision, you or your labor union or anyone else cannot sue in U.S. courts to overturn it. So when we say that our legitimate sovereignty defending our interests is surrendered by our adhering to GATT with 124 other nations, each one has an equal vote with us. St. Kitts in the Caribbean, 69,000 people, has an equal vote with the USA and we have no veto, like we have in the Security Council in the UN.

And when we say that that structure undermines our democracy, chills any progress that you might want to propose to that legislature to improve health and safety, because it's going to be attacked in Geneva and overturned. And if we lose, we have to repeal our law or pay perpetual economic fine to the winning country.

We've already lost to Venezuela on reformulated gasoline pollution control, and the EPA's going to repeal it.

We've already lost to Mexico on tuna dolphin and the congress was about to -- we just barely stopped them with citizen groups a few days ago -- was about to get rid of that part of the Mammal Protection Act in order to cater and comply with the GATT ruling in that secret tribunal.

It does seem, does it not, that we have a lot of citizen work to do. We should do it with zest, with the best of our creativity, because deep in our hearts we know that democracy, ever refined and ever all-embracing brings the best out of people. It brings the best out of people.

Dictatorships, oligarchies, plutocratic systems bring the worst out of a few people to oppress the many. And so many of the injustices of our country come because the super-rich and their power are determined to become hyper-rich. Greed, indeed, is infinite. Infinite. One of the reasons it was one of the seven deadly sins. They knew about it a long time ago.

"We Have to do More Than Just Send a Wake-up Call on November 5th"

And so I leave you with one exhortation. in my citizen work over the years, I never asked people to do anything but pursue what I think are very good policies for their own life's betterment. But on November 5th, I think we have to do more than just send a wake-up call to the two-party political duopoly.

I think we have to tell them that this is only the beginning on November 5th, that the early voters on November 5th who vote for the Green Party candidacies, or perhaps another third party, are sounding the early trumpet.

They are sounding the early trumpet when they will no longer be judged by short term results but by a long term process of building an ever stronger democracy to anticipate and solve our many problems and injustices so we can stand before the world and export democracy, if they so wish to receive it, around the world, instead of anti-personnel equipment, and NAFTA, and death-dealing weapons of mass destruction. which we as taxpayers are subsidizing in the private military arms industry -- \$6 billion a year, according to Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon.

We're spending \$6 billion a year to subsidize the exports of massive amounts of military equipment and weapons, some of which have been used against our own service personnel, and may be in the future.

Building for the future is a long distance runner's race. It's not a 100-yard dash. It's a race to appeal to the young to join in building from the grass roots up a progressive political movement. It's not always that you have that chance. It's not all Americans who have had that chance.

And doing so, means that the young will turn on politics because they will know from history that anybody who does not turn on politics will find that politics will turn on them.

And for those who have experienced the frustration of the politics of corruption and cowardliness and broken promises and betrayal, camouflaged by a machine of clever slogans and slick explanations, and dreamy scenarios that will never be achieved, for those who have experienced that year after year, November 5th can be a watershed, where the waters of justice begin flowing on the arid plains of national, state and local politics, because those waters come from reservoirs of citizen determination where millions of people will commit themselves to their public citizen duties, so that they and their children will live prosperous and happy and creative private citizen lives.

That's what November 5th means. And the press does not view this campaign as a conventional one. And they're very correct. I am not accepting any contributions and haven't. Not a cent for this political campaign.

I have gone around the country without my hand out. have not gone to a Beverly Hills Salon. I have not gone to a union hall. I have not gone to any place on Park Avenue where the so-called New York liberals reign.

What I have done, and what I have done for years, is to go around the country. connecting with people's minds first, connecting with people's arms, connecting with people's thoughts. Thoughts must precede belief systems and politics, because thoughts are much more durable. Thoughts mean self-reliant. Thoughts mean generation from within. Belief systems in politics mean follow the leader, no matter where the leader goes. Sign on the dotted line.

We're not going to sign on the dotted line any more. We're not going to stay home any more. We're going to build a democracy that will be a model for the world, a democracy that takes the best out of us, and here, as is so often the case, it can start in California and start surging eastward, as so many referendum victories have done in the past. And I think that you're entitled to be proud of what Governor Hiram Johnson did by giving you the direct tools of democracy.

And I hope that you enact Proposition 211 to crack down on the crooks and swindlers; and you enact Proposition 216, the Patient Protection Act; and that you do more than send a message on November 5th, that you send them a movement, of, by and for the people for a profound and lasting democracy.

Thank you.