

## WHO WE ARE IN CORVALLIS



(See photo credits below\*)

Over the past 15 years, a variety of gatherings have been held of Corvallis citizens, following scripts carefully crafted by the City Council, developers, and corporations to ensure things don't "get out of control". These have been waved subsequently by politicians claiming them to be "the voice of the people". But over the past three months, Occupy Corvallis has been posting the answers of Corvallis residents to the question of "What do you think needs to be done to make the country whole again?" The texts of those answers are beginning to be made available at [owscorvallis.com](http://owscorvallis.com). Below are the answers emerging as priorities from the population, along with excerpts from the above mentioned web site. This list is not all- inclusive, but is likely representative of the feelings of the city's residents.

1. We Need **Legislation** Which Nurtures, Rather Than Destroys, **Local Economies**
2. We Need **Legislation** Which Nurtures, Rather Than Destroys The **Middle Class**
3. **Corporate Citizenship** Is An Outrage That Needs To Be Addressed In State Law:  
Corporations Are Not People And Money Is Not Speech
4. We Need To Invest In Our **Infrastructure**, Including The **Education Of Youths**
5. We Need Laws Which Clearly **Punish Deceptive Banking Practices** And Punish All Those Involved In **Unlawful Foreclosures**
6. We Need A **Single Payer Health Care System**
7. We Need To Support The **Smaller Family Farms** And **Encourage Crop Diversity**
8. The Failed **War On Drugs** Needs To Be Ended, And **Mental Health** Issues Need To Be Addressed As Mental Health Issues, Not Crimes
9. Protect the Public's **Environment**

10. The State of Oregon Needs to Cease Cooperating on the Military Use of the **National Guard** Except Where Congress Has Declared War
11. The State of Oregon Needs to End Cooperation with the Federal Government on Issues of Patents and Copyrights Until the Law is Made Rational. Strict **Privacy Laws** Need to be Legislated and Enforced.
12. The Dominant Role of Corporations in **Culture**, Including **Athletic Playoffs**, Needs to Be Ended Immediately

### 1. WE NEED LEGISLATION WHICH NURTURES, RATHER THAN DESTROYS, LOCAL ECONOMIES

“We need to level the playing field to discourage off-shoring. We need to eliminate the incentives for corporations to ship manufacturing jobs abroad.” (43-year-old meteorologist)

“The future of the country looks like it’s gone out the window. The jobs have been outsourced and the gap between the rich and everyone else is huge. Democracy is gone without a strong middle class. The job issue is all about outsourcing overseas” (49-year-old contractor)

“Restrictions on companies shifting work abroad need to be introduced.” (61-year-old retired millworker).

“Outsourcing of jobs should begin with the top, where the elimination of CEO positions could each save the equivalent of 1000 employees. “ (33-year-old lab technician)

“Tax subsidies and tax breaks should be reserved only for firms creating value in our local economies. That is a NET value – it does not mean creating 25 longshore jobs at some port to ship timber to mills abroad which rely upon substandard wages, safety practices, and environmental laws to generate inflated profits, when those same resources could employ 2,500 mill workers in the interior, if retained here. It does not mean spending millions to accommodate a Target warehouse so that Target Inc. can distribute goods from sweatshops abroad, goods that could just as easily be produced locally by workers earning a living- wage. The end to subsidies means, for example, an end to dredging ports for the sake of exporting those critical resources or importing the finished products. If Walmart wants a port dredged so they can import cheap machines for sale locally, rather than purchasing them from local suppliers like Freightliner, Walmart needs to pay for it. Not Freightliner workers from their taxes. Not the public. No more subsidies of any kind for off-shoring.”

### 2. WE NEED TAX LEGISLATION WHICH NURTURES, RATHER THAN DESTROYS THE MIDDLE CLASS

“Everything wrong in the country is related to the lop-sided income inequality that exists.” (64-year-old retired professor)

“The middle class was no accidental creation. It needs to be nurtured to exist and at present there are

no measures being planned for sustaining it.” (University Dean)

“There needs to be a proportionate limit on CEO salaries, limiting them to a salary based upon the base wage of workers in the firm.” (Interview of two 25-year-old retail workers)

“Taxes need to be increased, with capital gains not exempt from the tax rate the rest of us pay.” (25-year-old student/veteran)

“We need a more progressive tax system. The rich should pay more and there should be greater income parity.” (54-year-old microbiologist)

“The income inequality in the country needs addressed, beginning with addressing a corporate tax structure which protects the top 1%.” (45-year-old professional screenwriter)

“Disparity in income is getting out of control. The Haves are getting richer at the expense of the Have-Nots and the middle class is getting very thin. The Haves are going to have to learn to be content with less.” (57-year-old retired postman).

“The top 1% need to start paying their fair share of taxes.” (36-year-old small business owner)

“The gap in income needs to much less.” (63-year-old retired baker)

“We have a huge disparity in income which skews things. I don’t know what the end will look like and with the health care costs in this country, it could take it all. But I think we need a very steep progressive income tax in this country to balance things out some.” (70-year-old landlord)

“There is a shrinking middle class in the U.S. and a hostile society with no safety net and a sink-or-swim attitude rather than a sense of community with all working together... The top 1% needs to recognize that their wealth arose only within a network consisting of the other 99% and they owe something to this community.” (31-year-old healthcare worker)

“There has been a massive extraction of wealth from the middle class to the rich over 30 years.” (66 - year-old retired factory worker)

“Re-impose the 90% tax bracket on the upper 1% taken down by the Democrats in 1963 to appease the rich while the planned escalation of the Vietnam War in the works. “ (59-year-old software writer)

The rich need to start paying a fairer share of the taxes. The top 20% own 80% of the wealth, but do not pay anywhere close to 80% of the taxes. And the idea, that pampering the rich, by tax breaks which give them more money, will create jobs –in THIS country - is a crackhead’s fantasy. The proponents of such a view have been asleep the past 30 years.

### **3. CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP IS AN OUTRAGE THAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IN STATE LAW: CORPORATIONS ARE NOT PEOPLE AND MONEY IS NOT SPEECH**

“There needs to be a separation of the corporations from the government.” (63-year-old disabled

laborer)

“We need to divorce politics and profits, and end corporate personhood.” (33-year-old school teacher)

“We need real representation, where the rich can’t buy government and corporations are not human beings.” (55-year-old housepainter)

“Get rid of the idea that corporations are persons.”(35-year-old database administrator)

“We need “a society where big corporations do not dominate the conversation.” (55-year-old whole sales manager)

“Corporations are not people. Money is not speech.” (51-year-old engineering manager)

“Public institutions are no longer public. They have become the private domain of the 1%.” (25-year-old hardware engineer)

“Our elections process is the best that money can buy.” (66-year-old retired maintenance technician)

“Separate money from the political life of the country. Money plays too large a role.” (26-year-old forestry worker)

“The problem is that we have greedy people allowed to get whatever they want at the expense of everyone else and the political system props them up and protects them.” (43-year-old administrator)

“The people in control of the economy and the government are only interested in their personal gain, not the interests of the country. “ (83-year-old retired K12 teacher)

“Nothing meaningful is possible with this government. It’s a kleptocracy. “(23-year-old assistant retail manager)

“We need verifiable and enforced campaign finance limits.”

#### **4. WE NEED TO INVEST IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING THE EDUCATION OF YOUTHS**

“Unemployment is a huge issue, with investment in infrastructure and education essential to stimulate the economy. The infrastructure of the country needs rebuilt. High speed trains could be built, with a good start converting the \$1 billion dollars spent on a single jet.” (55-year-old Engineer/Entrepreneur)

“The government needs to curb corporate greed, as far as jobs are concerned. The focus needs to be upon creating a healthy economy locally, rather than upon generating profits in other countries, with lower costs.” (41-year-old optical technician)

“The only ways to get out of debt today are to have a public job, become disabled, die, or be a stripper.” (25-year-old hardware engineer)

“The core of our Culture is Family, and the Family has become completely stretched out. “ (36-year-old electrical engineer)

“Standardized testing isn’t working well. Every child is different and the money and time used would be best spent on motivating children to learn.” (59-year-old retired K12 teacher)

“By limiting access to education, the 1% is creating a 3rd world labor force, often in prisons, which they no doubt plan to tap.” (51-year-old carpenter)

“Fees, for example “transaction fees”, are often without explanation, mysterious as to their justification.” (20-year-old Barista)

“The tax kickbacks going to corporations and the rich need instead to go toward investments in our infrastructure where these benefit the public and create living-wage jobs in the process, rather than being another corporate subsidy. A good part of that investment will be in the education of our youths. That alone would be a worthwhile process but, additionally, children will one day be the nation’s workforce. Higher education needs to be affordable. The banks, with their love of fees and interest, need to be removed from educational loans. The universities themselves may need to be decentralized. It may prove cheaper to move professors to the students than to move the students to professors. K12 education needs to be returned to local control, with families involved and with standardized testing becoming merely one option for measuring success. Assembly line models for education have not worked. Vouchers need to be considered, but only with the proviso that no public funds will continue to go to any school which turns away disabled children. Trades and horticulture, and revitalized home economics need to be re- incorporated in K12.”

## **5. WE NEED LAWS WHICH CLEARLY PUNISH DECEPTIVE BANKING PRACTICES AND PUNISH ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN UNLAWFUL FORECLOSURES**

“We need to end aggressive banking and monopolizing practices.” (33-year-old K12 Teacher)

“The power of the banks needs to be broken.” (35-Year-Old Database Administrator)

“Commercial banking and personal banking need to be separated with a resurrection of Savings and Loans – without the deregulation Reagan introduced, resulting scandals and meltdowns – to be used for home loans.” (61-year-old Retired Retail Store owner)

“The blocking of the national banking system by the nation’s founders needs to be heeded.” (25-year-old retail worker)

“We need to re-instate the Glass-Steagal laws on separating commercial (consumer savings and checking) banks from speculative investment banks.” (37-year-old engineer)

“The only debt relief went to the banks and the very rich. People are left with debt and no equity and lack confidence in their futures.” (41-year-old engineer)

“The banking system needs to be changed, including the charges applied to consumer accounts.” (66-year-old retired utility worker)

“Banks are using employees’ IRAs as their own money.” (45-year-old retail grocery worker)

“The Federal Reserve System is a scam for bankers to draw a profit by printing money.” (55-year-old sign painter)

“It was local developers who were the instruments of the stockholders who organized the banking industry’s siphoning off the money and ruining the country.” (59-year-old software writer)

“We need a law which prohibits financial firms from loaning money and simultaneously betting that the loans will fail.” (45-year-old laid-off laborer)

“The banking industry knew exactly what they were doing in issuing sub- prime loans and adjustable rate mortgages. Banking share prices rose on the volume, and the shareholders responsible for the ensuing debacle were quick to blackmail the country into making good their debts (‘we are too big to fail’). Aggressive pursuit of the culprits is essential.”

## **6. WE NEED A SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

“The health care crisis is huge: A loaded revolver with the nation playing Russian roulette.” (49-year-old contractor)

“Something has to be done about healthcare. I haven’t seen a doctor since I was a kid at my parent’s home.” (55-year-old house painter)

“Healthcare needs to be socialized with a private option.” (53-year-old disabled laborer)

“Health care needs to be freed from the market. We need single-payer universal care, affordable medical school, and an end to insurance racketeering, both patients and doctors.” (33-year-old K12 teacher)

“Healthcare needs to be affordable, with a public health insurance option so people aren’t afraid to go to the doctor because they have no money.” (42-year-old optical technician)

“Healthcare is a big issue, needs to be provided for everyone, commencing with veterans – and I mean

REAL healthcare, not the poor stuff provided at present by the V.A.” (30-year-old professional graphic artist)

“Single payer healthcare is critical.” (35-year-old database administrator)

“I want to see single payer healthcare, free higher education, a safety net like that in Finland, where people pay 50% in taxes but have all they want and are happy with it, living without the financial insecurity, and in a society where big corporations do not dominate the conversation.” (55-year-old retired Wholesale Sales Manager)

“A single payer health insurance system is the only solution. Healthcare administrators squeeze healthcare workers, so shareholders profit from sickness and death. And money is more important to most doctors than the patient’s health. Most doctors are in the profession for the wrong reason. And their guild, the AMA, restricts the number allowed to enter the profession. We need to throw the medical schools wide open and train physicians, train them because they value medicine more than they value high incomes. Physicians claim that their rates are high because of malpractice suits, and yet they oppose single payer health insurance because they fear mandatory rates which might erode their income.” (25-year-old hardware engineer)

“Everyone, and especially children, needs access to healthcare.” (59-year-old retired K12 teacher)

“Priorities need to be shifted as in Canada, where I spent a great deal of time, to health care and medicine being available for all, and the strength of the Health Care Industry lobby needs to be curtailed.” (45-year-old Professional Screen Writer)

“Single payer health insurance needs to be introduced.” (52-year-old Pharmacist)

“People will not be treated as human beings so long as health care is denied.” (66-year-old retired maintenance worker)

“The toxins in the food we eat, the lack of healthcare for those of us without insurance, the justice system, everything – this is not a society organized in my best interests. Money is no longer a tool but a weapon.” (21-year-old Barista)

“Single payer, universal health care needs to be instituted.” (37-year-old Engineer)

“Universal healthcare. We all pay for the healthcare one way or another. Emergency rooms are not universal care and are much more costly to the public than universal care. The system is broken and even the best intentioned people go over to the Dark Side when appointed to management positions in the healthcare industry.” (36-year-old Healthcare Worker)

“I travel in Oregon a lot and there is a lot of rural poverty in the state, where people do not have even

the limited resources of urban areas to redress...Healthcare needs to be socialized. We need to invest in community clinics where they don't exist." (26-year-old Forest worker)

"Universal health care is essential. When I turned 40, my health insurance premiums soared." (41-year-old Small Business (Hi Tech) Owner)

"Health care access is too limited. A physician's wife told me that if the doctors at the clinic accepted Medicare, which they won't, the doctors wouldn't get paid enough. I've never known a poor doctor." (64-year-old retired Professor)

"It's a shame that the wealthiest of industrial countries lacks the basic access to healthcare shared by every other industrial nation." (31-year-old Healthcare Worker)

"Extremely aggressive pharmaceutical corporations pressure or entice physicians – in HMOs owned by the same people who own the pharmaceuticals – to prescribe the drugs manufactured and marketed by the pharmaceuticals and charged for by the Health insurance companies – also owned by the same group. The entire medical industry has become motivated by profit, not health." (55-year-old Sign Painter)

"Basic health care services need to be available for all." (33-year-old Healthcare Worker)

"Single payer Health Care only makes sense if physicians are forbidden to deny patients healthcare because their insurance is the Single Payer Plan or Medicare."

## **7. WE NEED TO SUPPORT THE SMALLER FAMILY FARMS, AND FARMWORK, AND ENCOURAGE CROP DIVERSITY**

"Abrogate free trade agreements which permit the above and destroy local agriculture and industry both abroad and at home to facilitate monopolization by a handful of corporations." (59-year-old Software Writer)

"Labeling of all Genetically Modified items in food." (69-year-old Farmer)

"Our food supply has been poisoned by the likes of Monsanto and GMOs. Agribusiness subsidies need to stop, and small farms need support." (33-year-old K12 Teacher)

"The environment needs to be respected. We need clean water, and clean food." (45-year-old Bakery Owner)

"We must fight against the spirit of unconscious cruelty with which we treat the animals." (46-year-old accountant)

“The toxins in the food we eat, the lack of healthcare for those of us without insurance, the justice system, everything – this is not a society organized in my best interests.” (21-year-old Barista)

“There needs to be a major overhaul of immigration ... It would solve the housing crisis if we insist on a living wage for immigrants. Our standard of living is threatened if we don't have labor for food and housing industries.” (31-year-old healthcare worker)

“I think people should be more compassionate about animals. I don't think people should be killing for fun, and for those who kill animals for food, I think the killing should be quick and humane.” (13-year-old Middle School Student)

“End the patenting of life and force the labeling of genetically modified food.” (66-year-old K12 Schoolteacher)

“Abrogate free trade agreements which permit the above and destroy local agriculture and industry, both abroad and at home, to facilitate monopolization by a handful of corporations.” (59-year-old Software Writer)

“Subsidies and services for Agribusiness need to end and the encouragement of yeoman farming increased dramatically. Genetic modification in foods needs to be labeled, chemical additions to crops and cropland needs to be discouraged and the humane farming of animals needs to be compulsory.”

#### **8. THE FAILED WAR ON DRUGS NEEDS TO BE ENDED, AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES NEED TO BE ADDRESSED AS MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, NOT CRIMES**

“The focus on alcohol and DUIs has made people less likely to frequent places where alcohol is served, and there is distinctly a minimum of all-ages venues.” (21-year-old Baker)

“The War on Drugs has become an industry itself, with a murderer on financial aid eligible for continued assistance and a pot smoker not.” (23-year-old Assistant Manager)

“The drug war needs to be dismantled.” (41-year-old Small Business Owner)

“The war on drugs needs to be ended, with legalization of pot essential.” (55-year-old Engineer/Entrepreneur)

“Law enforcement has degenerated into a means of controlling people.” (53-year-old Disabled Laborer)

“People are turning to substance abuse because of the destruction of culture. It's a rash, but what is the underlying disease? The core of our Culture is Family, and the Family has become completely stretched out.” (36-year-old Electrical Engineer)

“There is a criminal industry which perpetuates anti-social behavior with imprisonment for those whose only crime is self-harm. Pot needs to be legalized and mental health treatment for addictions substituted for prisons in the case of other, more dangerous drugs. Police officers need to be focusing on neighborhood issues rather than being the first line in treating the mentally ill.”

## **9. PROTECT THE PUBLIC’S ENVIRONMENT**

“Our environment needs better care. Stop the over-use of fossil fuels and invest in a truly clean energy future.” (33-year-old K12 Teacher)

“Forbid outsourcing of factories with high tariffs for those using plants abroad to get around child labor laws, and trying to flout laws governing minimum wages, working conditions and environmental safeguards.” (59-year-old Software Writer)

“The environment needs to be respected. We need clean water, and clean food.” (45-year-old Baker)

“The job issue is all about outsourcing overseas [to] countries where people are beat down and care less about the environment.” (Contractor)

“Animals need to be left in their natural environments, with those environments protected.” (13-year-old Middle School student)

“Environmental regulations need to be strengthened to avoid severer costs in healthcare down the road.” (33-year-old Healthcare Worker)

“There needs to be more congruence between our economic philosophy and our practices. Since the 1980s, corporations have sold out on quality standards and as a result, we have junk for houses, for cars which fall apart. The search for short term profits results in long term losses. The wasting of natural resources and the reliance upon oil is an example.” (22-year-old Student, Childcare Worker)

“The ignoring of global warming is catastrophic.” (41-year-old Engineer)

“The degradation of the environment on behalf of corporations needs to cease and the pursuit of environmental criminals stepped up.” (59 yo Software Writer)

## **10. THE STATE NEEDS TO CEASE COOPERATING ON THE MILITARY USE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD EXCEPT WHERE CONGRESS HAS DECLARED WAR.**

“We need major cutbacks in spending on the military, which should be only defensive in nature. Lobbyists in D.C. should be hung out to dry. They get too much money to get Congress to support this

massive weapons industry. (55-year-old Engineer, Entrepreneur)

“The military budget needs drastically cut to levels of other nations, like China.” (61-year-old Retired Retail Store Owner)

“End war profiteering and American Imperialism.” (33-year-old K12 Teacher)

“The nation’s defense is too much in the hands of corporations, leading to increases in funding for weapons of mass destruction which then beg to be used.” (66-year-old Retired Maintenance Worker)

“There needs to be more congruence between our economic philosophy and our practices. Since the 1980s, corporations have sold out on quality standards and as a result, we have junk for houses, for cars which fall apart. The search for short term profits results in long term losses. The wasting of natural resources and the reliance upon oil is an example.” We need an increase in income taxes, and I think it should be across the board. People would be less likely to support military adventures if they knew it would mean they’d have to pay increased taxes.” (62-year-old Retired Production Worker)

“The country has been ruined militarily by people wanting to use military power to play global chess.” (27-year-old Forestry Worker)

“The “military-industrial complex” that President Eisenhower warned us about has come to threaten the security of citizens of the U.S. by perpetually exporting arms to the rest of the world and encouraging military solutions and to upholding anti- democratic systems like that of Saudi Arabia--ill will threatens us as a result.” (31-year-old Health Care Worker)

“The National Guard is the Constitution’s “public militia”, and needs to be called out only when war has been declared by Congress, not on the whim of some politician at the beck and call of corporations who stand to get lucrative contracts by waging war on others.”

#### **11. THE STATE NEEDS TO END CO-OPERATION WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON ISSUES OF PATENTS AND COPYRIGHTS UNTIL THE LAW IS MADE RATIONAL. PRIVACY NEEDS PROTECTED.**

“People can copyright the basic ideas that are absolutely ridiculous. For example, the article about the man patenting a snowman. Based off of this logic, I could patent the idea of eating Pizza in slices and earn \$5 billion a day from anybody who eats pizza. I haven’t done anything, and yet, I am now the richest man in the world. A hobo could do this and have enough to buy Microsoft in no time (assuming that he gets paid, and he won’t. Nobody would ever agree to pay for this, yet the law would agree). In the tech world, there are so many things that can only be done so many ways, and patenting it is ridiculous. Patenting products can be useful to prevent stealing of your hard worked goods, but patenting ideas just doesn’t work as well.” (17-year-old CVHS Student)

The absurdity of federal patent laws is a direct result of international corporations trying to claim ownership of things they had absolutely nothing to do with developing, for the sake of generating profits. Even the language and the musical scale, let alone the fundamental building blocks of Life itself, were developed over eons without the assistance of, thank you very much, Warner Brothers or Monsanto. And we don't even allow governments to enter our home and seize information without a warrant. Yet, corporations do it daily, gleaning - without permission - from our computers whatever information they want, in order to increase their profits. Strict privacy laws need invoked and enforced" (49 yo Software Writer)

## **12. THE DOMINANT ROLE OF CORPORATIONS IN CULTURE, INCLUDING ATHLETIC EVENTS, NEEDS TO BE ENDED IMMEDIATELY**

"I see everything in terms of Stories. For example, we have the story of Democracy, of the Free Market, of Capitalism. I'd like to shift those to the story of Humans, of Nature, and we have to include Families in those stories. There are places offshore where parents are working and living in bunk beds 500 miles from their children, who are being raised by grandparents. Where is the culture in that? It's destructive. Everything has become subordinated in the name of a Higher Good, of Moving Money, which is not really even something 'good'." (36-year-old Electrical Engineer)

"Cultural support is missing in K12. Lack of emphasis on the role of culture, and specifically music is missing, resulting in a decline in the number of venues and musicians, as well as in the number of those patronizing the community. There is even a lack of open microphone space in the city." (21-year-old Baker)

"The rule of money is everywhere. Even the National Championship for college football, the BCS, needs overhauled, maybe junked altogether in favor of a playoff based upon merit only, not on greed." (59-year-old Software Writer)

"State institutions need to be instructed to no longer cater to corporate demands. That includes the PAC-12's participation in the BCS scam, whose sole purpose to appease the demand of corporate sponsored Bowl venues for money. Athletic playoffs should be based upon talent, not corporate greed."

\* photo from Flickr (birdie1925)