

NEWS FROM A DEMOCRATIC VIEWPOINT

Corporate Power Hurts Working Americans

If ordinary people on the right and the left could unite on things like breaking up corporate power, our world would look very different than it does.

In the last 40 years, American business has become corporate business. Three major airlines dominate the skies. 70% of beer is sold by two conglomerates.

We shop at Walmart or Amazon or Lowes. We Google for information and it's hard to avoid Microsoft unless you choose Apple.

Republicans oppose interfering with corporations through increased taxes or antitrust actions or unionization. If consumer prices are going down, they say, the system is working.

In fact, consumer prices haven't gone down, in part, because large corporations took advantage of inflation as an excuse to raise their prices even higher, resulting in bigger profits.

But this wave of corporate consolidation has had powerful effects on things besides prices. It has depressed wages, increased inequality, and slowed small business creation.

Take Walmart as an example of a large corporate monopoly we are all familiar with. (Full disclosure – I shop at Walmart and I'm not saying you shouldn't.)

Walmart has a monopoly in most rural communities, and as a monopoly, Walmart can pay what it wishes, usually as little as the market will bear. (Depressed wages.) Low wages for workers mean more for corporate bosses and owners. (Increased inequality.) When Walmart comes in, small businesses close and new ones don't open unless it's another large corporation like Tractor Supply. (Slowed small business creation.)

Corporate CEOs now make \$400 for every dollar a corporate worker makes. (Depressed wages, increased inequality.)

Keeping hands off corporations fits neatly with Republican trickle-down economics. Don't tamper with rich people or corporations because they provide (low wage) jobs for everyone else.

Thanks to that hands-off approach in 2021, AT&T earned \$29.6 billion and paid \$0 in federal taxes. (Only one outrageous example of many.)

Amazon earned \$35.1 billion and its federal tax rate was 6.1% What was yours?

The Biden administration is taking a different approach. The Inflation Reduction Act imposed a 15% corporate minimum tax on large corporations.

To increase worker power, Democrats support labor unions. Union members make higher wages and are more likely to earn critical benefits like retirement, health care, childcare, and sick leave.

With Democrats and Republicans working together much more could be done to rein in corporations in favor of workers.

We don't need to be enemies, R vs D. Making Woke or immigrants or libs or gays the enemy just distracts from real economic issues that affect us all.

Let's choose sides where we can join together. Workers or corporations.

Which side are you on?

~ Deirdre Purdy, Chairperson, Calhoun County Democratic Executive Committee