In March 2014, the Los Angeles Times ran a story on Robert Proctor, a professor of the history of science at Stanford University. According to the article, Proctor is “one of the world’s leading experts in agnotology,” the study of “the cultural production of ignorance.” By examining misinformation campaigns ranging from Nazi science to Big Tobacco and the sugar industry, these studies show how misinformation is both hard to uproot once established and also harmful to the creation of constructive public policy. The antidote, Proctor has contended, is to expose misinformation for what it is “through good journalism, good pedagogy, good scholarship. You need an educated populace.”

The individuals and organizations featured in this chapter have dedicated themselves not only to fostering a more informed public, but also to promoting direct participation in political decision-making, whether through local, state, or national government, or via non-
governmental channels in our communities. The contributors to this year’s Media Democracy in Action chapter—including OpenTheGovernment.org, Hard Knock Radio, the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, the Action Coalition for Media Education, Move to Amend, and Electronic Frontier Foundation—exemplify what Project Censored means when we say that an informed public is essential to robust democracy.

“Doubt is our product,” was the message in an internal Brown & Williamson memo from 1969. The memo advocated targeting the “mass public” as “consumers” who could be distracted by “controversy” from the mounting scientific evidence that linked smoking and disease. Today’s merchants of doubt, considering issues from climate change to genetically modified organisms (GMO foods), also seek a mass public, preoccupied by distractions and taught to think of itself first and foremost as consumers, not only of products, but of ideologies. Fortunately, however, as Project Censored has highlighted since its inception in 1976, when the public is armed with the skills of critical thinking and media literacy, as well as informed by a truly independent press, We the People become much more than a bewildered herd ready to buy whatever those in power pitch to us. That danger remains as real and consequential today as in 1969. But owing to the organizations and individuals like those featured here, the opportunities to become informed and, on that basis, inspired to participate have never been greater.

AMERICANS FOR LESS SECRECY, MORE DEMOCRACY: OPENTHEGOVERNMENT.ORG

Patrice McDermott

Ten years after OpenTheGovernment.org’s official launch, open government is having a “moment.” Talk of transparency is hard to avoid these days for reasons both good and bad. On one hand, on his first day in office, President Barack Obama pledged to create “an unprecedented level of openness in government.” The president has indeed launched a number of initiatives that are, as their name implies, focused on openness: the Open Government Initiative, the Open Gov-
ernment Directive, the Open Government Partnership, etc. On the other hand, disclosures made by Edward Snowden and the fight over the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence’s torture report have made it clear that there is not nearly enough openness in government, and that national security secrecy continues to contribute to the government overstepping its authority.

OpenTheGovernment.org (OTG) is a coalition of more than eighty groups fighting the good fight for accountable government, an informed public, safer environments, protection of civil liberties, and more. Our small staff acts as a watchman and an organizer, alerting and organizing the community to push back against encroaching secrecy where necessary and pushing for meaningful open government policy reforms where possible.

OpenTheGovernment.org exists because open government policy matters. Journalists and the public need easier access to government documents. Voters require information about their representatives—what they are doing and who is influencing them—and about legislation that affects them. Families living near factory farms, for example, need to know about those operations’ environmental impacts.

In our work, we recognize that the smallest policy decision can undercut the public’s right to know. Last summer, OTG staff and several of our partners were made aware of troubling provisions tucked away in two versions of the massive Farm Bill. Together, we successfully stripped the Senate’s bill of language that would have prohibited the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from releasing basic information about any owner, operator, or employee of a livestock operation. The House’s bill, however, entered conference with even more expansive and dangerous language that would have cut off access to information about agricultural operations as well as livestock operations. The language was so broad it would have extended the Freedom of Information Act’s (FOIA) privacy protections to corporate farms. The coalition and our allies presented a united front and pushed back. The language was dropped.

We also recognize that government initiatives that seem positive on their face require the input and expertise of outsiders to be meaningfully implemented. OTG took advantage of US involvement in the creation of the Open Government Partnership (OGP)—an interna-
tional platform that requires countries to create concrete, open government action plans in collaboration with civil society—to focus the Obama administration’s attention on a number of the community’s high priority issues. In addition to pushing for the initial US plan to address these issues, we created an evaluation process intended to keep the plan from turning into a “check the box” exercise. In preparation for the second US plan, which was scheduled to be released in December 2013, we reached out to our partners and beyond to create our own plan to present to the administration. Ultimately, the second US plan was diverse and ambitious, and largely reflective of civil society’s input. It addressed many of the same issues highlighted by our organizations. Long-standing priorities included modernizing the administration of FOIA, such as bringing records management into the digital age and declassification, and also emerging topics like surveillance transparency and making it easier for the public to understand who truly owns a company. Although the commitments vary in terms of level of detail, the number of substantive commitments and the possibility that some of them will lead to real and lasting improvements in openness are both notable. The proof of the plan’s value will be in its execution. We are continuing to work with our partners and allies to make sure the promises of this plan are carried out in a meaningful way.

We believe there’s a need for open government at the heart of every issue. But not every organization has the resources necessary to have any of their staff devote time and attention to open government issues. That’s why we’re here. Thanks to initiatives like the Open Government Partnership, the president’s Open Government Directive, and the dedication of staff in the White House and Congress, the opportunities to advance government transparency are many. But the consequences of excessive secrecy are still great, as the public is still shut out from understanding all of what its government is doing in its name. The stakes are high and the opportunities are great. Together, we’re prepared to push for less secrecy and more democracy.

To learn more about OpenTheGovernment.org and the coalition’s work, see www.openthegovernment.org.
FROM DR. KING TO HARD KNOCK RADIO: THE ARC OF MEDIA JUSTICE

Davey D

For many, August 11, 1967, is probably an insignificant date, especially as it pertains to the civil rights movement. There was no special legislation being signed. There were no major marches, demonstrations, civil unrest, or social upheavals. It was a Friday, and Dr. Martin Luther King had just arrived in Atlanta from San Francisco to address the National Association of Radio Announcers at their annual convention.

Some who are up on history know this speech as one that was titled “Transforming a Neighborhood into a Brotherhood,” where King focused on addressing economic injustices and the War in Vietnam. However, it’s the first part of this speech that is truly remarkable and sadly overlooked. Here, Dr. King spoke about the power of the media—and, in particular, black radio—and the important role that the many announcers and disc jockeys in attendance played in furthering the civil rights struggle. King asserted:

I value this opportunity to address you this evening, because in my years of struggle both North and South, I have come to appreciate the role the radio announcer plays in the life of our people. For better or for worse, you are opinion makers in the community, and it’s important that you remain aware of the power that is potential in your vocation.5

King went on to add that the masses of Black folks were totally
dependent upon radio, while television—which was emerging and attractive to many—spoke to the needs and values of the white middle class. Thus, Black radio represented the heart and soul of Black folks.

King noted that some Black radio jocks like Magnificent Montague, who were shut down by the police, were being unfairly blamed for the civil unrest that was taking place in many cities around the country because folks used the DJs’ slogans and on-air sayings during riots. King noted that was an attempt to obscure the many and significant contributions that Black radio jocks had made on behalf of the movement.

He then name checked announcers like Pervis Spann, Too Tall Paul White, and Georgie Woods, among others, and noted the roles they played in Freedom Summers in Mississippi, demonstrations in Birmingham and fundraising for the work being done. King asserted that, via their on-air banter and soul music, members of the National Association of Radio Announcers helped create important cultural bridges between Blacks and Whites, which made the process of integration easier.

He concluded that their ability to impact and transform the masses was something that even Alexander the Great could not do. It’s an incredible speech that has been lost in history, even though the speech was actually pressed and released as a now hard-to-find record.

A year later, the association’s convention was marred by violence: organized crime figures descended upon the convention to disrupt plans by the group to open a broadcasting school and to consolidate their power by purchasing more radio stations.

The National Association of Radio Announcers also came under attack from Black militants who felt they needed to move away from integration and adopt a more revolutionary tone. After that 1968 convention, Black radio underwent significant changes; many of the most outspoken personalities were being silenced by consolidation or strict format changes pushed forth by white owners who stressed “More Music, Less Talk”—a concept that was heralded as groundbreaking at the time. Black radio stations dropped the name “Black” and substituted the term “urban” to make white advertisers and listeners feel more comfortable.

In August 1979, almost twelve years to the day after Dr. King’s
speech, at the Jack the Rapper Convention organized by renowned Black radio announcer Jack Gibson in Atlanta, Minister Louis Farrakhan addressed a body of Black radio disc jockeys. Unlike King, the minister’s remarks were scathing. He addressed the co-opting of Black radio and how many in the room had been hired specifically to exploit and mislead the masses in a one-sided conversation that prioritized un-politicized foolery.

Farrakhan noted that they were willing tools for an industry that was in the business of mind control, and he cited examples of how their listeners emulated these deejays and embraced the ideology and products that they touted. He warned the deejays that the airwaves were sacred and that, if they continued dumbing down and silencing the community, they would be held accountable and their heads would one day roll when folks rose up and pushed back.

Excerpts from Farrakhan’s 1979 speech would later be sampled by a number of rap artists pushing for change throughout the years, including the iconic group Public Enemy, who may have been the first to do it.

This brief rundown of history is important because it underscores a decades-old battle that has existed in the Black community over media and the roles that those of us who are able to speak to the community should be playing. This history takes on even more importance in the wake of massive media consolidation, which reached an apex in 1996 under the Telecommunications Act and has not slowed down since. Indeed, we currently find ourselves in battles to save net neutrality, to keep full access to the new technological media landscape.

Our daily syndicated show, Hard Knock Radio, which has just celebrated its twelfth year, is predicated on our mission to build important cultural bridges—not so much between Black and white, but among marginalized communities that have also found their voices exploited and excluded, to use the airwaves as a tool for transformation: essentially, to give voice to the voiceless. That voiceless community includes independent artists and cultural workers; political prisoners; overworked and underappreciated frontline educators who oppose the school-to-prison pipeline; citizens fighting mass privatization; and activists dealing with all manner of issues like immigration, police, and corporate terrorism. With Hard Knock Radio currently based in a region that is
home to Silicon Valley, where great technological advancements and billions are being made daily, we aim to remind all of us of our collective humanity and to lay out what that means. We build on King’s title, “Transforming a Neighborhood into a Brotherhood”; today, we would add “Sisterhood,” and any other title that denotes inclusivity.

In his 1967 speech, Dr. King took time to address the role of technology and the vast, “dazzling” advances made by “modern man” in what at that time was called the “Jet Age.” King astutely pointed out that while man had invented remarkable machines that could think for us, and vessels that could travel faster than sound or pierce the skies to reach outer space, these examples of great technological prowess were marred by a “poverty of the spirit.” He asserted that the dilemma facing America was such that if we couldn’t bring an end to racial strife and economic inequality, or learn to deal with each other as neighbors, we would one day perish as fools, in spite of our modern feats. Each day, when we crack the mics on Hard Knock Radio, we strive not to perish.

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DAVEY D is a longtime journalist, an adjunct professor at San Francisco State University, and a media justice advocate. Along with Anita Johnson, Weyland Southon, and Tsadae Neway, he is a cofounder of the award-winning, daily syndicated show Hard Knock Radio, which originates out of KPFA 94.1FM on Pacifica. His website is www.daveyd.com.

FIGHTING THE SURVEILLANCE STATE ONE CITY AT A TIME: THE BILL OF RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE (BORDC)

Shahid Buttar

A President’s Prescient Warning
Sixty years ago, a president and war hero warned the American people that the industries supplying our military were poised to one day threaten democracy in the United States. He said, in seemingly prophetic terms:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for
the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.6

President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s warning was neither radical nor misguided. He precisely predicted the course of future events, and his concerns were quintessentially patriotic. These were central themes in the final speech of a Republican president, the last to reach our nation’s highest office having also ascended the ranks of the military.

Half a century later, when the George W. Bush administration took advantage of 9/11 to mount an assault on basic constitutional principles like the separation of powers, much of the country was caught off-guard. A combination of compliant legislatures, sycophantic mass media, cultural hysteria, and deferential courts combined to enable overbearing policing and intelligence practices that dramatically eroded rights to speech, assembly, due process, and equal protection under the laws.

Even as the cast of characters in Washington changed, the war on the Constitution continued. The rise of remote robotic assassination, the revelation of mass secret surveillance, and the resignation of accountability for government torture have all happened under the Obama administration. In the long arc of history, America has spent this millennium’s first decade-and-a-half sliding in a demonstrably authoritarian direction.

**We the People Respond**

But We the People have not resigned our rights without a fight. And while we may be down, we are far from out.

Inspired by the Bush administration’s excesses, but equally concerned about the Obama administration’s continuation of its disturbing legacy, a transpartisan, multiethnic grassroots network working to restore fundamental constitutional rights continues to grow today. Around the country, that movement finds support in resources, train-
ing, analysis, and coordination from the Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC).

After the Bush administration introduced the USA PATRIOT Act, grassroots activists from all corners of the country banded together to raise their voices to defend fundamental constitutional values threatened by government surveillance.

By early 2002, local committees formed in several cities around the country and came together to establish a national organization to coordinate their local organizing efforts. BORDC was founded to cultivate grassroots activism defending democracy in America from mass surveillance, with two guiding implementation principles: first, Americans of diverse ethnicities with wide-ranging points of view and political persuasions share interests in constitutional rights; and, second, in the face of mounting executive fiat and popular fear blinding the eyes of legislators, only together—by taking action at the local level—can those communities build sufficient power to overcome the entrenched opposition of the military-industrial complex.

Stoking a National Controversy

Resolutions affirming the Bill of Rights, and particularly repudiating the PATRIOT Act, spread like wildfire across the United States. Under the Bush administration, over four hundred cities took official action to dissent from federal surveillance policy, alongside eight states as politically diverse as California and Idaho.

When the PATRIOT Act’s dangerous surveillance powers were reauthorized in 2005, the one senator who voted against it in 2001 escalated his resistance, leading a filibuster by reading into the congressional record hundreds of local resolutions that had passed at that point. Congress did eventually submit to reauthorization, but, driven by dissent from around the country, at least insisted upon placing sunset provisions to invite recurring debate going forward.

As the PATRIOT Act was reauthorized several times under the Obama administration, Congress and the courts—driven and enabled by a litany of duplicate executive “intelligence” agencies—went on to enable even more dramatic assaults on constitutional rights.

In 2008, Congress enacted amendments to the Foreign Intel-
ligence Surveillance Act (FISA), essentially legalizing the unconstitutional mass surveillance regime revealed by Edward Snowden five years later. Undeterred by the shameful history of the Japanese-American internment, Congress in 2011—three years into the Obama administration—gave the military the power to detain Americans indefinitely without trial in its National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) beginning in 2012.

**The People Strike Back**

The 2013 Snowden revelations firmly documented that government crimes committed in secret for over a decade remained ongoing. The daily experiences of communities of color around the US—especially in low-income areas, where profiling according to either race, religion, or point of view has long subjected residents to arbitrary stops, searches, and police violence—affirm that equally atrocious abuses happen every day in plain sight.

Only by uniting the voices of all Americans who share an interest in constitutional rights can We the People overcome the military-industrial juggernaut that President Eisenhower warned us of sixty years ago. The way BORDC works to unite those disparate communities is to focus the attentions of local, grassroots coalitions on policies and practices of law enforcement and intelligence agencies, like local police departments, that abuse their rights in common.

In 2013, successful campaigns on opposite ends of the country illustrated how this strategy can transform the policy debate.

In California, we worked with a novel coalition of libertarians, peace and justice activists, and Japanese-American advocates to challenge the NDAA’s domestic detention provisions. A grassroots coalition mounted a statewide public education campaign, securing a bill signed by the governor that pledged the state to respect the right to trial. They’re back at it in 2014, with another campaign to challenge the ability of the National Security Agency (NSA) to recruit students in California and undermine the integrity of its criminal justice system.

Mere weeks after the victory in Sacramento, a coalition in Asheville, North Carolina, culminated several years of grassroots organizing with their city’s adoption of the nation’s most wide-ranging and
expansive municipal civil liberties policy,\textsuperscript{10} even in the face of active opposition from law enforcement agencies and police unions.\textsuperscript{11} Like a similar measure in New York City,\textsuperscript{12} it offered something for everyone by addressing profiling alongside surveillance.

Our nation’s founders were not scared of the many security threats they confronted. They intelligently reserved greater fear of our own government growing tyrannical. The specter of security undermining individual liberty is precisely why they wrote the Constitution as an elaborate design to restrain potential government excesses. President Eisenhower warned us that our “councils of government” would be increasingly vulnerable to co-optation. That’s what inspires BORDC to mobilize diverse Americans at the local level, where We the People still have a voice.

BORDC works with grassroots activists from all walks of life and political persuasions by providing materials, campaign platforms, training, guidance, micro-grants, and introductions to diverse local allies to amplify their respective voices. To learn more about the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, or to deploy these resources in your own community, please visit www.BORDC.org.

\textbf{Shahid Buttar} leads the Bill of Rights Defense Committee. He frequently writes and speaks about surveillance, detention, torture, as well as the constitutional rights and checks and balances they each offend. Shahid’s work at BORDC also includes guiding grassroots coalitions in a dozen cities mounting resistance to abusive policies and local police practices. He graduated from Stanford Law School in 2003. In his individual capacity, he organizes artist collectives, and performs around the country as an electronica DJ and MC.

\textbf{ACTION COALITION FOR MEDIA EDUCATION (ACME): SMART MEDIA EDUCATION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY}

\textbf{Rob Williams} and \textbf{Julie Frechette}

Welcome to the twenty-first century.

A century in which we need Smart Media Education, funded and operated independently of state and corporate interests, \#morethanever.

Big picture? We not only live in the most mediated society in world history, but the world’s most “connected.” “The Machine Is Us”—and
“The Machine Is Us/ing Us,” as Kansas State University digital anthropology professor Michael Wesch explains in his much-watched YouTube video.¹³ New digital media’s double-edged sword helps sharpen our minds as we confront the great Media Paradox of our time.

To wit: as we blithely email, Facebook, Tweet, Instagram, and Pinterest our way into our “LinkedIn” twenty-first century, publishing personal stories of meaning and power built on our digital demographic data, the Lords of the Cloud are busy surveilling, sorting, sifting, aggregating, and sharing our personal information with the world’s most powerful corporations and government entities, often without our informed consent (#readthefineprint).

A decade ago, we media educators were working in the midst of a media-saturated world of 3,000 commercial messages daily, a world in which 90 percent of our media content was ultimately owned by six transnational media corporations with “nothing to tell but everything to sell,” as George Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School for Communication, famously observed.¹⁴ Instead of promoting health, wealth, and wisdom, powerful corporations designed their media stories to put profit and the interests of global for-profit media networks above all else, promoting disease, debt, and distraction. “We live in the most media-saturated society in world history,” explained veteran author, activist, and media critic Jean Kilbourne. “ACME’s approach to media education is critical for us all, giving us the tools to make sense of our media culture and to engage in changing it. This is vital for our students, our schools, our communities, and ultimately, for our democracy.”¹⁵

In the twenty-first century, the stakes are even higher. Our media stories are now “shared” through an ever-growing network of social media channels. The world’s most powerful for-profit new digital media corporations—Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple—built and manage these proprietary digital networks to aggregate our personal data, surveil our social networks, and condition us to be better buyers.

How do we challenge the Lords of the Cloud and Big Media interests, who care more about building brand loyalty, mining our data, and separating us from our cash than they do about our children, our classrooms, our communities, and our commons? It begins with the kind of media education ACME has been organizing and prac-
ticing since 2002. “The problem we face with a hyper-commercial, profit-obsessed media system is that it does a lousy job of producing citizens in a democracy,” noted media scholar and author Robert McChesney. “A solution is real media literacy education that doesn’t just make people more informed consumers of commercial fare, but makes them understand how and why the media system works so they may be critics, citizens, and active participants. This is the type of media education ACME is committed to doing.”

Independently funded media literacy education plays a crucial role in challenging Big Media’s monopoly over our culture, helping to move our world toward a more just, democratic, and sustainable future. Free of any funding from Big Media, ACME is part of the emerging Smart Media Education network, a global coalition run by and for media educators that champions a three-part mission:

1. Teaching media education knowledge and skills—through keynotes, trainings, and conferences—in classrooms and communities to foster more critical media consumption and more active participation in our democracy.
2. Supporting media reform. No matter what one’s cause, media reform is crucial for the success of that cause, and since only those who are media-educated support media reform, media education must be a top priority for all citizens and activists.
3. Democratizing our media system through education and activism.

“As the online media environment becomes more ‘personalized,’ commercial interests literally choose the news, information, opinion, and products we have access to. ACME’s approach to media education helps us understand that these choices are being made for us in the name of profit—not democracy,” concluded community cable TV maven Lauren-Glenn Davitian. “Armed with this knowledge, we can insist on public access to all kinds of information, media production, and distribution. Otherwise our hands are tied and our communities are doomed.”

Given the urgent need for viable media literacy initiatives as part of a pluralized digital pedagogy, ACME unites us in our cause for smart media education grounded in democratic principles and advocacy. Ultimately, by collaborating with other media literacy educators
and activists, we can improve the lives of young people and our global citizenry by providing resources and support to those who champion the goals of media reform by diversifying media production, media narratives, and audience engagement.

Learn more about ACME at www.smartmediaeducation.net.

ROB WILLIAMS, PHD, is the board copresident of the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME). A musician, historian, journalist, and professor of communications/media studies, he lives and works in the once and future Vermont republic.

JULIE FRECHETTE, PHD, is professor of communication at Worcester State University in Massachusetts, where she teaches courses on media studies, critical cultural studies, media education, and gender representation. She recently coauthored the textbook Media In Society, published in 2014, and, in 2002, her book, Developing Media Literacy in Cyberspace: Pedagogy and Critical Learning for the Twenty-First-Century Classroom, was among the first to explore the new “multiple literacies” approach for the digital age. She is the author of numerous articles and book chapters on media literacy, critical cultural studies, and gender and media, and serves as a board member of the Action Coalition of Media Educators. She earned her PhD at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst.

MOVE TO AMEND: THE FASTEST GROWING MOVEMENT YOU’VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF

David Cobb

Corporations are not merely exercising political power today—they have become de facto ruling institutions. Über wealthy individuals and unelected, unaccountable corporate CEOs make the fundamental public policy decisions in this country. They decide the levels of toxins and poisons that will be in our air and water, what work we do and how much we get paid to do it, what kind of health care we get, and what our country’s energy policy will be. “We the People” get to decide between Coke or Pepsi and paper or plastic at the grocery store. Citizens are treated as consumers or workers but rarely as sovereign human beings with the right to decide how our society will be organized.

Indeed, a peer-reviewed scientific study conducted by Princeton University professor Martin Gilens and Northwestern University professor Benjamin Page concluded that the United States operates
more like an oligarchy than a democratic republic. “The central point that emerges from our research is that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on US government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence.”

Two lynchpins for understanding how this happened are a pair of illegitimate, court-created legal doctrines. The first is corporate personhood and the second is that money equals political speech.

Corporate personhood is shorthand for the notion that a corporation must be treated as if it were a person with inherent unalienable rights. This means that corporate lawyers can argue to overturn any law that attempts to control corporate harm and abuse on the basis that the law somehow violates a corporation’s “constitutional rights.” That means laws designed to protect the environment, worker safety, public health, and welfare, or to regulate campaign finance—literally any democratically enacted law—can be challenged. And many have been. To see the depressingly long list, check out the amazing timeline created by Jan Edwards of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

That money equals political speech is the equally odious court-created doctrine that holds that making a political contribution or spending money to influence an election is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment. This doctrine has been used to gut even the flimsiest campaign finance laws and has allowed the wealthy to control the electoral process of this country.

The egregious 2010 Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission combined these two doctrines. In essence, the Supreme Court has allowed a ruling elite to steal our sacred right to self-government and fundamentally perverted the notion that the United States can be a democratic Republic. Even worse, they have used the legal system to legitimize the theft.

Happily, there is a growing grassroots movement in this country that says loudly and clearly “Ya basta! Enough already!”

Move to Amend is a coalition of groups and individuals that has exploded on the political landscape calling for a constitutional amendment to abolish both of these doctrines.

Despite being virtually ignored by corporate media, during its short existence, Move to Amend has:
Grown to over 340,000 supporters,
Assisted in passing over 500 city or county resolutions in support of the amendment,
Helped 16 state legislatures pass resolutions in support of the amendment,
Created 150 local affiliates working locally on passing the amendment, and
Passed referendums in support of the amendment at the ballot box in over 200 jurisdictions, many of which are politically conservative.

Of particular note, the leadership of Move to Amend looks a lot like the United States. The National Leadership Team is gender balanced and has strong representation across racial and ethnic lines. The members are also spread out across every region of this country, with folks in urban, rural, and suburban communities.

The leadership has studied successful movements of the past—abolitionists, women’s suffrage, trade unionists, and civil rights. Like many readers of Project Censored, they have come to the conclusion that real movements are not birthed—or even led by—politicians or leaders of nonprofits but by committed individuals.

The leadership of Move to Amend understands that it will require a social movement to amend the Constitution to make the US the democratic republic that the creation myth of this country promises. They are absolutely committed to building a movement that is broad and deep, based in local communities, multiracial, multiethnic, and intergenerational.

**MOVE TO AMEND’S PROPOSED 28TH AMENDMENT TO THE US CONSTITUTION**

House Joint Resolution 29 introduced February 14, 2013

SECTION 1. [Artificial Entities Such as Corporations Do Not Have Constitutional Rights]

The rights protected by the Constitution of the United States are the rights of natural persons only.

Artificial entities established by the laws of any State, the United
States, or any foreign state shall have no rights under this Constitution and are subject to regulation by the People, through Federal, State, or local law.

The privileges of artificial entities shall be determined by the People, through Federal, State, or local law, and shall not be construed to be inherent or inalienable.

SECTION 2. [Money is Not Free Speech]

Federal, State, and local government shall regulate, limit, or prohibit contributions and expenditures, including a candidate’s own contributions and expenditures, to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their economic status, have access to the political process, and that no person gains, as a result of their money, substantially more access or ability to influence in any way the election of any candidate for public office or any ballot measure.

Federal, State, and local government shall require that any permissible contributions and expenditures be publicly disclosed.

The judiciary shall not construe the spending of money to influence elections to be speech under the First Amendment.

To join the effort, go to www.MoveToAmend.org and sign the petition, or call (707) 269-0984.

David Cobb is a principal with the Program on Corporations, Law, and Democracy (POCLAD). He has sued corporate polluters, lobbied elected officials, run for political office himself, and has been arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience. In 2004, he ran for president of the United States on the Green Party ticket and was responsible for demanding a recount in Ohio. He serves on the National Leadership Team of Move to Amend.

Electronic Frontier Foundation: Before, After, and Now—How the Snowden Leaks Revitalized Media Coverage of Digital Privacy

Dave Maass

If Edward Snowden hadn’t escaped the country with a massive cache of secret intelligence agency documents and leaked them to the press, then June 5, 2013, would only have been notable to me as the day that
Wall Street Journal investigative reporter Jennifer Valentino-DeVries met my dogs.

Instead, that was the day that the media fully rebooted the global debate over electronic privacy.

Valentino-DeVries was visiting EFF’s new offices on the outskirts of San Francisco’s Tenderloin district to talk to our attorneys about National security letters (NSLs). These are secret orders that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issues to telecommunication companies, without judicial review, to demand user data. Even though I’m EFF’s media relations coordinator, I tend to leave these interviews to our legal team since it’s so difficult to know what we can and can’t say about our cases challenging NSLs. We can’t even name our clients, and as much as they would like to talk about the issue, our clients remain gagged by the NSLs. What we can say is, in March 2013, a judge agreed with our argument that NSLs are unconstitutional, although the ruling is on hold while the government appeals. Valentino-DeVries, who was among the small group of reporters covering our slowly progressing cases, stopped by my office on the way out; all I had to add was an introduction to my office-loafing terriers, Marlowe and Buster.

It’s funny to imagine how that encounter would’ve gone if it had only happened a couple hours later.

The first leak, reported by Glenn Greenwald in the Guardian, was an order from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court confirming what we have alleged for years: the National Security Agency has been gathering call-records data on millions of innocent Americans. The phone lines blew up with calls from reporters who wanted EFF’s expert analysis. The next day, Laura Poitras and the Washington Post’s Barton Gellman came out with a report on PRISM, the NSA program that obtains user communications and stored data from Internet corporations such as Google and Facebook. It was like the media had launched a DDoS attack on our phone lines, with as many thirty interview requests coming in per hour. By Friday, we had to bring in pizza and chain people to their desks to handle the reporter requests. Then, on Sunday, the Guardian revealed Snowden’s identity, complete with a picture of his laptop with an EFF sticker. We were in the middle of the storm and we weren’t sure how long it would last.
As I write this almost a year later, the debate over electronic surveillance refuses to go away, remaining as a major policy issue on the local, national, and international levels. Much of this is due to a sea change in how the press views the newsworthiness of digital privacy.

A prime example is in the coverage of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (often referred to as the FISA court), the secret judicial panel tasked with overseeing and approving the government’s electronic surveillance programs. For years, we have been suing under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to obtain opinions issued by the FISA court, but before the “Summer of Snowden,” the lawsuits were a hard sell to reporters. The story was just too procedural to make for sexy headlines. Now, however, reporters are interested in every motion we file in these cases—particularly as nearly every document the government has posted to its official ICOnTheRecord Tumblr page on NSA spying has been in response to FOIA litigation. The records we wrenched free include opinions showing that NSA mass surveillance violated the Fourth Amendment and that the NSA had made substantial misrepresentations to the court.

The new media attention has extended beyond the NSA. Reporters are now zeroing in on local law enforcement surveillance as well, such as the use of automatic license plate readers, drones, and Sting-rays (a kind of fake cell tower that gathers data indiscriminately). We’ve also noted increased interest in our intellectual property work as it applies to Internet freedom, including our copyright and patent reform efforts and our opposition to the intellectual property clauses in the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (which made story #3 in Censored 2014 and, thanks to WikiLeaks, appears again in this year’s Censored 2015 Top 25 list).

We are seeing a renaissance in digital rights reporting, with privacy and Internet freedom again becoming an actual beat for many reporters after dropping off in the mid-2000s. Digital security specialists—such as Bruce Schneier, Jacob Appelbaum, and Ashkan Soltani—are sharing bylines on stories in national media outlets. Retired NSA chief Keith Alexander was the first guest to be skewered, grilled, and served by John Oliver on his new HBO show, “Last Week Tonight,” while the Washington Post and Guardian shared the Pulitzer for public service journalism. EFF’s press call traffic has eased a
little, I believe, in part because reporters don’t need as many pundits to spell out how the technology works or why the NSA’s programs are dangerous. These journalists have become the experts, advocates, and activists themselves.

To learn more about the Electronic Frontier Foundation’s work and how to get involved in the defense of civil liberties in the digital world, go to www.eff.org.

Dave Maass advocates for transparency and free expression through media relations and investigative research at the Electronic Frontier Foundation. Prior to joining EFF, he worked as an investigative journalist in every state along the US–Mexico border, covering issues including law enforcement, campaign finance, and technology. He is also a columnist for San Diego CityBeat and a contributor to Blastr.com.

Notes


3. Hiltzik, “Cultural Production of Ignorance.”


7. USA PATRIOT was an acronym for “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism.” The 2001 act is commonly referred to as the PATRIOT Act.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.


20. For the full text of the amendment, with clear explanations of its technical terms (including, for example, the difference between “natural” and “artificial” persons), see https://movetoamend.org/wethepeopleamendment.

21. According to DigitalAttackMap.com, “A Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack is an attempt to make an online service unavailable by overwhelming it with traffic from multiple sources. They [the attackers] target a wide variety of important resources, from banks to news websites, and present a major challenge to making sure people can publish and access important information.” See http://www.digitalattackmap.com/understanding-ddos.