



IOWA CITIZENS FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

ACTION FUND

A “People First Iowa” Agenda

2014 Legislative Session Priorities

2014 is an election year and the upcoming legislative session is an opportunity for Iowa CCI Action Fund members to not just win progressive victories but also to draw clear-cut contrasts between Governor Branstad’s pro-corporate policies and what we are calling a “**People First Iowa**” agenda.

Our work at the statehouse this year will impact the issue environment in Iowa through the November elections and move us closer to our goals of a more just and democratic Iowa that puts communities before corporations and people before profits, politics, and polluters. We are not interested in small, piecemeal change, but on large-scale, transformational policies that will make life a lot better for the most amount of people possible.

We know that Governor Branstad and his corporate allies are the single largest roadblock standing in our way. More than 3,000 CCI Action Fund members in all 99 counties are committed to doing everything in our power to make 2014 Branstad’s last year in office, and it all starts during the 90-day legislative session at the statehouse beginning on January 13.

Our Farms, Our Air, Our Water – Agriculture and Environmental Policy To Build A People First Iowa

Here in Iowa, we’re good neighbors. But factory farms just aren’t. They build without consideration for our quality of life, property values, rural economies, or the environment. Factory farms don’t “smell like money” – they reek of corporate greed. In the last two years, Iowa CCI members fought factory farms in our local communities in nearly 50 different counties, and we successfully stopped 18 from being built. Governor Branstad’s blatant interference on behalf of the big-moneyed corporate ag lobby could not stop Clean Water Act enforcement from coming to Iowa, and we are talking to thousands of more Iowans than ever before who are ready to stand up, speak out, and fight back. **More than sixty percent of Iowans believe we need stronger laws to stop factory farms from polluting our air and water.**

- **Our Legislative Priorities:** Local control of factory farms, Clean Water Act permits for every factory farm, \$1.3 million in new funding for Department of Natural Resources (DNR) field staff, legalization of raw milk sales, and food labeling for Genetically Modified Crops (GMOs).

Our Wages, Our Work – Worker’s Justice To Build A People First Iowa

A fair day’s work deserves a fair day’s pay. But too many Iowans aren’t making a livable wage while the out-of-state corporations that employ them continue to dodge paying their fair share in taxes. Too many more workers are being treated unfairly and cheated out of the wages that are owed to them. A national “Fight for \$15” movement has catapulted raising the minimum wage into national and statewide debates. Iowa CCI members have recovered more than \$150,000 in stolen wages for low-wage workers since 2010.

Our allies at the Iowa Policy Project have issued two recent reports, the first documents that a single Iowan must make more than \$12/hour to make ends meet; the second shows that Iowans lose up to \$600 million a year from wage theft and the state misses out on more than \$60 million in lost tax revenue. **Raising the minimum wage** isn’t just the right thing to do on moral grounds, it’s also a powerful economic stimulus tool and will do more to create jobs than any tax cut. **Cracking down on wage theft** means holding employers accountable for breaking the law and stealing wages from hard working Iowans.

- **Our Legislative Priorities:** Raise the minimum wage to at least \$12/hour and include anti-wage theft provisions with increased fines and penalties for businesses that engage in wage theft, and fully fund Iowa Workforce Development and hire at least four more wage theft case workers.

Our Money, Our Priorities - A State Budget To Build A People First Iowa

Hardworking Iowans weathered the national economic recession better than most states, but Governor Branstad has mismanaged our state budget by giving away hundreds of millions of dollars to out-of-state corporations rather than fully funding vital public services that everyday people and hardworking families depend on.

Rather than turn around and hand out even more unnecessary tax cuts to Iowa’s wealthiest citizens and big corporations, we expect state leaders to **reinvest in programs and state agencies that have faced cuts** in recent years. We need a budget that **closes corporate tax loopholes** rather than opening them up wider. By bringing in more revenue, we can afford to reinvest in infrastructure, vital public services, and programs that everyday Iowans and hardworking families depend on.

- **Our Legislative Priorities:** Combined corporate reporting, Transparency in Tax Reporting Act, ending tax breaks and exemptions for factory farm polluters, and fully funding state agencies and vital public services.

Our Paychecks, Our Security – Financial Policy To Build A People First Iowa

In Iowa, when someone is in a time of need, we help them. Payday lenders, on the other hand, use that time to trap individuals into a cycle of predatory payday lending. **Cracking down on predatory lending would keep as much as \$36 million of our money from leaving the state of Iowa every year.** That is money that some of Iowa’s largest cities have already been trying to keep in their communities by limiting the industry’s growth through local zoning ordinances. In the last three years, Iowa CCI members have taken a statewide lead on this issue and local members have won

city-based ordinances in 7 cities across Iowa – Des Moines, West Des Moines, Clive, Ames, Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Windsor Heights, with Dubuque and Waterloo soon to follow.

But cities can only do so much, and their action should serve as a wake-up call to the state legislature that the time is long overdue for them to take bold action and put an end to this form of legalized loan sharking.

- **Legislative Priorities:** Cap payday loan interest rates at 36 percent – the same rate as banks and credit unions.

Our Lives, Our Schools – Education Policy To Build A People First Iowa

Many hardworking young Iowans don't have American citizenship, but that shouldn't stop them from pursuing their dream of higher education. The federal government has instituted a program of deferred action for young people who came to states, like Iowa, as children, have grown up here, and who want to live and work here. It is time for Iowa to extend that dream to more students by passing the **IOWA Act**. This would allow children who have lived in Iowa for five years and graduated from our high schools to attend Iowa Universities by paying in-state tuition rates.

- **Our Legislative Priorities:** IOWA Act so immigrants can afford to go to college and pay in-state tuition rates

Our Government, Our Voice – Electoral Policy To Build A People First Iowa

Iowa is fortunate to have some of the highest voter registration and voter turnout rates in the country. Our voting and redistricting system are considered models for the country. But there have been recent attacks on our voting system – both from government officials and from big money corporate attack groups. **VOICE** would help stop the corrosive influence that big money is trying to wield in our elections, and return the power of the vote to everyday Iowans. And **universal voter registration** would officially register every Iowan of legal voting age to vote, ensuring we are opening our voting process to more Iowans, not trying to restrict it to fewer.

- **Our Legislative Priorities:** Voter-Owned Iowa Clean Elections (VOICE) a system for public financing, campaign contribution limits, universal voter registration, Constitutional Amendment overturning corporate personhood/Citizen's United