

# spotlight

2022 Issue 2



Understanding the different facets of white supremacy and anti-Blackness is critical to address the harms the U.S. enacted on Black communities and to advance the cause for reparations in the country. Illustration by Paloma Rae.

## The case for reparations

### Challenging corporate abuse and fighting for racial justice

**“The systemic change we strive for cannot be realized without an end to the systemic and anti-Black racism that allow these injustices to continue.”**

ANN-MICHELLE ROBERTS | PROGRAM  
DIRECTOR OF THE BLACK COLLECTIVE

#### See the roadmap!

[CorporateAccountability.org/  
RoadmapToReparations](https://CorporateAccountability.org/RoadmapToReparations)

#### Support this work:

[CorporateAccountability.org/  
Spotlight](https://CorporateAccountability.org/Spotlight)

Corporate Accountability has a long and powerful history of challenging transnational corporations. And we know from our decades of organizing that corporations have continually exploited, abused, profited from, and disenfranchised Black people, Black communities, and Blackness.

The power and profit of transnational corporations cannot be separated from systemic and specifically anti-Black racism. And unchecked corporate influence has also helped create racist policies, institutions, and environments that have terrorized Black people for centuries.

That’s why we put together a visual timeline that illustrates the racist abuses of Wells Fargo—just one example of how this misappropriated wealth has been reinvested in harmful and discriminatory practices

that have only deepened inequities and worsened the racial wealth gap.

Corporate Accountability’s Roadmap to Reparations shows two paths. The left illustrates Wells Fargo’s deceptive and dangerous practices—from slave labor to the Jim Crow era, to its current practices of discriminatory mortgage lending, private prison investments, and more. Meanwhile, the right traces the decades of work by communities and activists in the U.S. who are moving the reparations movement in the country forward.

Challenging corporate power is an essential part of the broader journey of justice, reparations, and equity for all. And your commitment to the journey of dismantling anti-Black racism will help build a just and liberatory world for all.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Curbing corporate power, advancing true democracy

## Dear friend,

With the U.S. midterm elections approaching, many of us are thinking about the state of democracy. I've talked with many of you about the ways that corporate power influences and corrupts democracy—not just in this country but around the world. And this moment feels like a reckoning point.

I've said before that disruption is our new norm. And we've seen that play out this year. Racist mass shootings, soaring prices that hit low-income and working-class people the hardest, the ongoing pandemic, and climate-related weather disasters are just some ways people have been harmed. But too many elected officials have failed to take bold action to attend to our failing democracy. Instead, they've chosen to continue aligning themselves with corporate power and white supremacy, advancing the most brutal form of capitalism and a politics that prioritizes privatization at a dire expense to the common good.

The stark truth is corporations and those behind them are doing all they can to hold on to their power and wealth. The elite few: mega-wealthy, mostly white men are making choices every day to keep the system working for them.

As a progressive movement, there are many things we can and should be doing to address the source of this problem. At Corporate Accountability, our role is clear: to end the ability of transnational corporations to wield the deadly power they currently hold. This will make it impossible for those in power to keep making destructive choices.

Small, incremental changes to tweak our faltering democracy won't be enough to create a better world for us all. We need bold, visionary organizing that gets to the root of the problem. Curbing corporate power is a necessary component in this work, and I'm proud to do this work alongside you. Thank you, as always, for your partnership in this fierce work.



Onward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Patti Lynn".

**Patti Lynn**  
Executive Director

# Putting corporate executives in the hot seat

## Bringing direct pressure at Big Food and Beverage shareholders' meetings

Corporations consistently brand themselves as benevolent actors in public health policy—but we know the truth. Each year, corporations spend billions to flex their political power to protect their profits. And it's long past time that they fully open the books on their political activities worldwide.

**"Many companies who influence our democracy and government behind closed doors may profit in the short term, but the truth often comes to light."**

PALESA RAMOLEFO | CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY ALLY AND ACTIVIST WITH AMANDLA.MOBI.

During the recent shareholders' meetings season, we and our allies called out the executives of corporations like Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and McDonald's for their many abuses and for continuing to interfere with common-sense policy decisions at the expense of people and the planet. And representing the voices of thousands of people, we demanded that they fully disclose the details of their political spending and affiliated activities worldwide, including their role in obstructing public health policies in countries like Mexico, Brazil, and South Africa.

We'll continue working closely with our allies and members like you to demand accountability and transparency from these industries. Thanks for partnering with us to expose these corporate abuses!



# Seeding our future together

## How Corporate Accountability members are making Big Polluters pay



The victory in Wisconsin comes as part of a longer campaign by a core group of members, like Karen Ingvaldsen (pictured), who came together and started organizing at a Corporate Accountability house party in February 2020.

As longtime organizers, we know that organizing collectively can be a powerful antidote to how overwhelming it can feel to tackle crises like climate change on an individual basis. And working together as part of a broader movement is what leads to tangible victories in the fight for justice.

All over the U.S. our members are mobilizing for climate justice, with promising wins in California and Wisconsin. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a group of climate activists successfully organized the county's Board of Supervisors, leading to a resolution demanding that Attorney General Josh Kaul investigate the fossil fuel industry for its role in fueling the climate crisis. Now the group is getting ready to bring their local campaign to the state.

Mobilizing grassroots, people power has long been at the heart of Corporate Accountability's campaigns. Learn more about Milwaukee's Make Big Polluters Pay campaign from activist, interfaith minister, and longtime Corporate Accountability supporter **Karen Ingvaldsen** in the member spotlight on this page.

### Learn more!

Read about the progress our members are making in California on our blog: [CorporateAccountability.org/CaliforniaAG](https://CorporateAccountability.org/CaliforniaAG)

## Member spotlight: Karen Ingvaldsen

**Karen is an activist and interfaith minister mobilizing grassroots power to make Big Polluters pay in Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

**The victory of your grassroots organizing in Wisconsin is truly incredible and inspiring. Can you give us a little insight into how the Wisconsin for Environmental Justice (WFEJ) group came together and what led to your campaign?**

A couple of years ago, I co-hosted a Corporate Accountability house party where we talked about bringing the Make Big Polluters Pay campaign to Wisconsin. Most of the people who attended the event were activists in the community, specifically working on making our country safer, more environmentally friendly, and more healing. It took us just one meeting to start organizing together, until COVID-19 shut everything down a month later and our work came to a standstill. For a year, we did nothing. But in January 2021, I was reading an environmental magazine and found myself thinking about our group. That's when I decided that we couldn't keep on waiting. I called up organizers within the WFEJ group and at Corporate Accountability, and I convinced everyone that we needed to start organizing again—and our campaign took off from there.

**Will there be a next phase of organizing from the WFEJ group?**

We're actually moving to incorporate our group as a formalized organization so that we can escalate our campaign. There are so many folks organizing around climate in Wisconsin, and we'd love to support their work as well as be part of a consolidated movement. We also want to reach out to young people and students who can help us educate a wider public. Our hope is to mobilize and bring our demands up to city government and then on to other parts of the state.

**You have a long and consistent history of activism. How are you able to show up every day and fight for justice, especially in times where it feels really hard to remain hopeful about the work?**

I've been involved in all sorts of causes my whole life, so it feels natural to continue and keep showing up. And I know I don't have another choice. There's so much work to be done that if I don't do something, I wouldn't know what to do with myself. But I'm hopeful because I know there are other people like me out there who are organizing in their communities and with each other. And even when it's overwhelming to keep going, I know that I'm not alone in this fight.

# Pushing back against PMI-funded COVID-19 vaccine

Prioritizing people's health over corporate PR



Corporate Accountability's Tobacco Campaign Director Daniel Dorado speaking about Big Tobacco's impacts on our health and the planet at the recent World Health Assembly meeting.

## "There's absolutely no room for Big Tobacco in public health policies and solutions."

DANIEL DORADO | TOBACCO CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

Since the start of the pandemic, the tobacco industry has tried to take advantage of the COVID-19 crisis to profit from it, deflect regulation of its core tobacco business, and healthwash its image as a deadly industry.

One of the world's largest tobacco corporations is even leading the charge in developing a COVID-19 vaccine, despite objections from the world's leading public health institutions and advocates. And once we learned of Philip Morris International's (PMI) involvement in the development of the Covifenz vaccine, we jumped into action to push back against the corporation.

We worked closely with our allies to expose PMI's blatant attempt to worm its way into the pharmaceutical industry in prominent media outlets like Bloomberg, going as far as seeking out World Health Organization's (WHO) categorical rejection of the vaccine. And since the publication of the article, hundreds

of public health organizations and advocates have also voiced their support of the WHO's decision—including those who have, until now, been silent on this issue.

PMI relies on positive press to obscure the truth of its abuses, continue its business model, and push its narrative of "harm reduction." And exposing corporate attempts to exploit public health crises for profit is necessary to ensure that institutions like the WHO doesn't succumb to political pressure and backtrack.

The control of one public health crisis should not come at the expense of another.

### Add your voice!

Join the call to make Big Tobacco pay for its abuses to public health and the planet.  
[CorporateAccountability.org/MBTP](https://CorporateAccountability.org/MBTP)

## Plan for a legacy gift

Sustain this work to protect human rights, people's lives, and the planet.

**Contact** Marcia Whitehead, Managing Director, at 617.695.2525.

**Visit** our website at [CorporateAccountability.org/LegacyGiving](https://CorporateAccountability.org/LegacyGiving)

**Send** in the enclosed envelope.

## Why legacy giving?

By leaving a legacy gift to Corporate Accountability, you can feel confident that your values and commitment to social change will carry on, and you provide the organization with a secure source of income. That helps us be more fearless and strategic in our work to challenge corporate power.

## Thank you for your partnership!



**"Growing up in the dryness of the Southwest, I remember worrying about our limited water supply. It's important to protect every person's access to this human right and to push back against the threat of water privatization. This is only one reason why I've supported Corporate Accountability for decades!"**

JODY RICHARDS | CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY MEMBER AND LEGACY DONOR



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