



Dear Supporter,

ACORN is not dead!

ACORN is alive because **you** are alive and still fighting for justice. **Over the past 40 years, ACORN members have been through a lot in the fight to empower working families and families of color -- and it has been the commitment of people like you, regular folks doing extraordinary things, that has made it possible.**

Since ACORN's inception all the way back in 1970, regular folks have been fighting and winning extraordinary things that make a difference in their everyday lives -- from promoting home ownership, combating predatory lending, reforming public schools, protecting and promoting voter participation, raising the minimum wage, helping to rebuild New Orleans, and just last month to helping bring about fundamental change in our nation's health care policy. The work of ACORN members and supporters, the heart and soul of ACORN, has literally changed our country.

As you know, one of our greatest accomplishments was helping over one million citizens in poor and minority communities apply to become registered voters in 2008. Our work was non-partisan, seeking simply to make democracy work by giving these citizens a chance to vote for the candidate of their choice and letting all politicians know that low- and moderate-income communities VOTE and expect our issues to be addressed.

So it is hardly surprising that the corporate-funded defenders of low-wages, predatory lending, sub-standard housing, dirty air and energy, and a pay-to-play health care "system" -- the entire status quo - - decided they had to limit ACORN's impact in 2008. And after the election, they decided they just couldn't afford to have ACORN around anymore.

ACORN started out small and feisty and over the years grew into one of the largest community organizations in America. Our accomplishments are the results of the vision and extraordinary work from talented, dedicated leaders, staff and 500,000 members and supporters like you.

In many areas, we exceeded expectations. Nevertheless as we focused on responding to the issues facing our communities, we fell short in implementing some aspects of governance and infrastructure appropriate for an organization our size. As we grew into a major political force in America, this left us open to legitimate criticism from our allies and vulnerable to slanderous attacks from our corporate-funded opponents..

We were in the midst of a wide-ranging and promising effort to address these shortcomings when the now-infamous videos hit. Amazingly, as we faced the full force of non-stop coverage on Fox News and its cyber-space echo chamber, contributions from our members and supporters actually **increased**, but foundation grants, involving millions of dollars, were frozen. As a result we had to lay off many staff, and close dozens of offices.

We knew vindication would come. And it has. Investigations by the Brooklyn District Attorney's office, and most recently, California's Attorney General, confirmed that the heavily manipulated videotapes released to the media last September grossly misrepresented what actually occurred during the interviews at ACORN offices. In the video linked below, Rachel Maddow conducts a brilliant analysis of the raw tapes, which has implications for journalists, elected officials, and other targets of the corporate-funded forces of the status quo. Please take a moment to watch her devastating segment from Tuesday April 6.

The truth about the ACORN lies



See Rachel Maddow's analysis of the lies about ACORN





But the work could not wait for slow-moving vindication, and communities across America, anxious to address the dire situations immediately facing working families did the right thing by launching new independent state-based organizations. It was against this backdrop that our Board voted in late March to officially cease all of ACORN's field activity and close those state chapters which had not already closed.

However, as I said, we're not dead. We will continue to fight for working families with the support of members and supporters like you. We'll be here, on the web, and in the media. I'll be honest. We don't know what the future holds for ACORN -- a lot of it depends on circumstances out of our control. But our ultimate success rests squarely in your hands - the hands of people who care about the future direction of our country and creating an America that ensures equity, justice, and freedom for all its people.

As journalist Bill Moyers told the editorial board of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

"[W]e should not allow ACORN's recent troubles -- what long-standing organization doesn't stumble from time to time? -- to distract us from the fact that ACORN has fought for the last and the least among us. More than any group I've covered over my long career in journalism, ACORN was devoted to helping poor people become their own best champions." [1]

With that in mind you will definitely be hearing from us regularly over the next several months. Wherever you are, we urge you to remain involved in your communities, and to continue your work with us. Your dedication and your voice is needed now more than ever.



In solidarity and strength,

Bertha Lewis
ACORN CEO and Chief Organizer

PS. The new organizations that ACORN members and others have launched across America will need your support as well. Many of them have purchased ACORN's lists and will be reaching out to you in the coming months to advance the mission of building power for low and moderate income people in this country.

[1] Editorial Board, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 23, 2010, <http://interact.stltoday.com/blogzone/the-platform/published-editorials/2010/03/acorns-demise-doesnt-end-passion-for-reform-now-in-st-louis/>



ACORN

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

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ACORN is the nation's largest community organization of low- and moderate-income families, with over 500,000 member families organized into neighborhood chapters in 71 cities across the country. Since 1970 ACORN has taken action and won victories on issues of