Hundreds unite to tell Governor “Put People First”
CCI members bring groups together to challenge Branstad’s corporate agenda

On July 16, the afternoon of our “This is What Democracy Looks Like” statewide convention, CCI members organized a People’s March on Terrace Hill. What resulted could become a progressive-populist coalition of the most powerful community and labor groups in the state of Iowa.

Two hundred fifty CCI members and 250 labor members from across the state joined together to demand that Gov. Branstad stop pushing a corporate agenda and start putting our communities before corporations and everyday people before profits, politics, and polluters.

“This is what I've always wanted to see - farmers and union members standing together,” CCI member Garry Klicker from Bloomfield told the crowd. “I don't care how hot it gets outside; we want it a little hotter under Branstad's collar!”

“I loved seeing the unions join with us. It showed real cooperation and that together we can be a force to be reckoned with,” said CCI member Erica Johnson from Des Moines. “It was great to hear people speaking the truth - farmers talking about the absence of jobs in their towns and school teachers who understand that Branstad puts corporate ag polluters before students. We’re all in this together.”

Want to relive the convention and march? Or want see what you missed? View photos at www.flickr.com/photos/iowacci or a video of the People’s March at www.youtube.com/iowacc1.

“Membership May” (& June) finds success in you!

Iowa CCI isn't just an organization with members; we are our members. And, thanks to your calls and asks - and to those of you who took this opportunity to join - we welcomed 136 new CCI members into the family during our six-week “friend” raiser.

Without a doubt it was members like you who made it happen. Members like Phyllis Burget from Ankeny who asked members to re-join during our lapsed member phone bank, members like Jeff Strottman from Iowa City and Elvira Guererro from Des Moines who asked their friends to join and members like Kenn & Pat Bowen of Winterset who volunteered to host a house party this fall as an opportunity to invite their friends to be a part of the movement to create an Iowa that puts people first.

Thank you! The secret of our success is you and the thousands of other members who know the POWER OF PEOPLE to get things done.

Read why three fellow CCI members asked their friends to join on page four.

“I told my friends that we are the leaders we’ve been waiting for, and I absolutely believe that; if change is to come it will be we the common people who bring it about.”

- John Blisingame, Silver City
People before polluters!

Members win early victory on road to stop hog factory

In July, the Adair County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to deny a construction permit for a proposed Cargill-backed 4,960-head hog factory, after dozens of local CCI members mobilized in opposition to the plan. The DNR now has to approve the “no” vote.

“This facility would produce nearly 10,000 hogs a year and produce as much waste as a town of 60,000 - except hog waste is untreated and spread on our fields,” said new member Deb Bauer. “This is a great first step and early victory for clean air and water, but we know our fight is not over.”

Putting people first!

Your persistence wins victory for families and civil rights

“We oppose this detention center and the perpetuation of any approach that splits up families and feeds a for-profit prison system,” Sr. Jeanie Hagedorn (right) told the Des Moines Zoning and Adjustment Board in June.

Thanks to hundreds of CCI members like you, we made our presence known and message clear. The board unanimously voted down a permit for a new, bigger Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center near downtown. Victory!

It’s a revenue crisis! Make corporations pay their fair share.

CCI report and action exposes Wells Fargo tax dodging

In June, CCI and SEIU Local 199 released a report showing that Wells Fargo:

• reported more than $18 billion in pre-tax income in 2009,
• paid NO federal taxes in 2009, and
• received, instead, a $4 billion dollar rebate.

“We’re not sure what they pay, if anything, in state taxes because Iowa doesn’t make them report it,” said new member Deb Bauer. “This is a great first step and early victory for clean air and water, but we know our fight is not over.”

Read our report at http://j.mp/wellsfargoiowa

2011 Legislative Session

By the Numbers:

6 Bad pro-factory farm deregulation bills your actions helped stop.

2 Good bills you helped move further than ever before. A bill designed to stop wage theft passed the Senate and our anti-payday lending bill passed out of committee with bi-partisan support.

227 Of you who lobbied legislators in person at one of three CCI lobby days at the State Capitol.

627 Of you sent 2,172 messages to your elected officials because of a CCI action alert.

We have no doubt that we have our work cut out for us in the 2012 session. Save the date now for CCI’s Rally & Lobby Day, Tuesday, January 10.

Big changes in 2012

Did you know???

• 2012 is a redistricting year - meaning the state is redrawing congressional, legislative, county supervisor, city ward, and school director district boundaries.

• Iowa will move from five U.S. Congressional Representatives to four.

• Your Congressional and legislative districts will likely change.

• All four Iowa US Congressional races, all 100 State Representative races and a majority of the 50 State Senate races will be on the ballot next November.

Breaking Down the Silos

Truth-out.org featured a great article on our work in July.

Read it at http://j.mp/Truth-out.

Watch a great video of Jennifer Sherer (above), daughter Althea, and fifty other members march on Iowa City’s Wells Fargo branch to deliver our message at www.youtube.com/iowacc1.

2.

Summer 2011
Hands off Social Security, Medicaid & Medicare!
You are helping shift the narrative around America’s most beloved savings and safety net programs for seniors and the disabled

In a May member survey:
• 82 percent of you said Social Security is “very important” to you and your family, and
• 75 percent of you said you would be “very negatively impacted” should Social Security benefits be cut or the program privatized in whole or in part.

Since then members from across the state - rural and urban, retired and still working - have organized en masse to call for strengthening these critical programs, not place them under the ax of deficit hawks.

Learn more about the campaign from our ‘Strengthen Social Security’ organizer Matthew Covington:

1. Why do you think so many people are moved by this issue?
“Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid impact a lot of people, actually they impact just about everyone. If you’re not already receiving Social Security, you know someone who does. Or, you’re paying into it. It makes up a big portion of retirees’ income.

And, this is about American values, the promise of taking care of each other; we’re all in it together. These programs best exemplify that. People are justifiably angry that out-of-touch politicians are trying to break this promise and balance the budget on our backs through cuts to these programs.”

2. What are the three things everyone should know about this issue?
• Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid did not cause the debt crisis. By law Social Security has never added to our debt; it shouldn’t be used to balance our budget. Medicare and Medicaid aren’t the problem either – it’s prescription drug monopolies, rising healthcare costs and the insurance industry. Jobs, closing corporate tax loopholes and making Wall Street pay their fair share will get our economy back on track, not cuts to millions of everyday Americans.

• Social Security will be solvent for years to come - if we keep Wall Street’s hands off it. If no changes are made to the program, it will be able to pay out three-fourths of all promised benefits for the foreseeable future.

• “Scrap the Cap.” Everyone should pay their fair share. The current cap on wages subject to Social Security contributions is $106,800 per person. We don’t need cuts to benefits or to raise the retirement age. We need to raise the income cap - or scrap it - to bring more money into the system and make it solvent for at least 75 years.

4 things you can do!

1. Bird-dog the candidates
By addressing leading presidential candidates on the stump, congressmen on their recess stops, and their staff around the state we can force elected officials and the media to address these issues.

Larry Ginter (above) was one of thirty members who crashed Sen. Grassley’s July townhall meeting in Carroll, shaming him for voting to cut Medicaid and end Medicare as we know it.

2. Get petition signatures
Be like Rita Hohenshell of Des Moines (left) who walked door to door in her south side neighborhood and collected signatures at church to turn in six full petition pages of others who want to Strengthen Social Security.

3. Host a house party
You may be surprised how much your friends and family care about this issue. Invite them to be a part of the solution and the movement. Learn more on page four.

4. Contact Matthew at 515-255-0800 or matthew@iowacci.org to be plugged into the action.

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
We talk. We act. We get it done.

Summer 2011
This fall, we’re planning to hold 20 house parties across the state, but we need your help to make it happen. Together, we’ll pull together an even bigger network of people willing to take action and fight back during the 2012 legislative session and campaign season.

House parties are a powerful tool for building our people power base. Half social gathering, half informational meeting - they are a fun way to invite your friends and neighbors to be a part of the movement for a better Iowa.

You pick the date and the issue you care about most (Social Security, factory farms, our legislative work - you decide) and invite your friends. We will help you with the details.

To volunteer today or to learn more, contact Kari Carney at 515-282-0484 or kari@iowacci.org.

Join our e-mail action list!

Get the latest news on issues you care about and find out when your call, email or presence can have the biggest impact. Email your address to iowacci@iowacci.org or sign up at www.iowacci.org. And, don’t forget to add our email to your friend list!

Be social for social justice

Join us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.

We asked and three CCI members answered:

“Why is it important to you to ask others to join Iowa CCI?”

“‘United we stand’ is what Iowa CCI is all about. This group is the most effective group in Iowa. One cannot fight the daily battles without help from their friends. And my friend Julie has now become a part of the larger group of my activist friends. That is good for the environment!”

- Phyllis Willis, hog farmer from Thornton

“If we don’t speak with our friends and neighbors, how will they learn about CCI and the issues we work on? It’s up to us. My friend had participated in a Rally and Lobby Day and other meetings with us but she had yet to join, so I decided to give her a call. I feel good that I recruited a member. It’s only one family, but I did it!”

- Tomasa Fonseca, school worker from Marshalltown

“At CCI we understand the power gained when we speak with a collective voice, and the more voices we can add the more power we can focus on bringing about progressive change. A number of my friends think like us, but don’t always see the importance of this collective voice. That’s why I wanted to bring them together with some of us and help them see that it’s crucial that we join together if we want to make a difference.”

- John Blasingame, retired laborer from Silver City