

Morality Play
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Amendment XIII

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Corporate Spokesperson: I speak in behalf of my corporation: to stake its claim to personhood, and all of the constitutional protections that any other person can claim. Freedom of speech, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Citizen: Anyone can see that you yourself are a person. But anyone can also see that your corporation is **not** a person.

Corporate Spokesperson: Anyone **except** the occasional Supreme Court majority. Like the one that said the federal government could not keep corporate money out of political elections. Why? Because **corporate money** was equivalent to **personal speech**. Ha!

Citizen: Okay. Just suppose your corporation **is** a person.

Corporate Spokesperson: Gladly.

Citizen: If your corporation **is** a person, it's a person owned by other persons.

Corporate Spokesperson (reluctantly): Well, yes.

Citizen: But a person owned by other persons is a **slave**. And slavery is forbidden by the Thirteenth Amendment, which empowers Congress to enforce that amendment by appropriate legislation.

Corporate Spokesperson: Oops.

Citizen: The choice is **yours**. You can insist on corporate personhood, and dare Congress to abolish you by appropriate legislation. Or, you can give up your claim to corporate personhood. Which one do you choose?

Corporate Spokesperson: **Not** a problem. Let's face it. Corporations own all three branches of the federal government. So you can say goodbye to any realistic hope of appropriate legislation. It will never get passed. If it does get passed, it may get vetoed. And if it doesn't get vetoed, the Supreme Court can always say it's unconstitutional.

Citizen: So, you choose to insist on corporate personhood?

Corporate Spokesperson: Hey, no contest.

Citizen: Then you leave us citizens no choice.

Corporate Spokesperson: What? What do you mean by that?

Citizen: Constitutional amendment. A new one. This new 28th amendment will say: Corporations are not persons, and money is not speech.

Corporate Spokesperson: Ha. Lots of luck.

Citizen: No, **not** lots of luck. Lots of **us**. Lots of **we the people!**