

The Rights Race

adapted from original by Democracy Unlimited of Humboldt County

Time

About 15–20 minutes.

Materials

- Cast
 - » State Governor (student intern)
 - » Race official (teacher)
 - » REPLACE text to next section:
 - » Corporation as artificial person (drama student or intern)
 - » Citizens (students)
- A large room or open space where students can line up side-by-side about 25 feet away from, and facing, the teacher
- Corporation props: Accessories like sunglasses and a hat, if possible
- 3 double-sided copies of the Rights Race script
- 1 double-sided copy of the corporate charter with charter rights on BLUE paper
- 1 double-sided copy of the corporate charter with constitutional rights on ORANGE paper

Preparation for Act 1

- Choose and prep space.
- Review instructions and script with Governor and Corporation.
- Prep Corporation.
 - » Use ORANGE charter.
 - » Just before race: Don any props. Wait in hallway or off to side of race area.

- » Entrance cue: KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.
- » Entrance instruction: Enter room or space and push to CENTER FRONT of line of Citizens with much jostling and repeated statements of “excuse me, pardon me.”
- » Behavior during race: HAM IT UP. Wave ORANGE copy of corporate charter at Citizens during entrance and throughout race.
- » During reading of statements: Always take BIG STEPS FORWARD with each forward statement and ignore backward statements.
- After reading of script: Corporation should be very near the Governor. Step forward and shake Governor’s hand.

Conduct the Race

- Refer to the Rights Race script.
- After debriefing for Act I, return to classroom with Timeline and resume lesson.



THE RIGHTS RACE SCRIPT

ACT 1

The Scene

(Citizens form a line about 25 feet away from and facing the Official and Governor.

The Corporation is either outside in hallway or off to side and behind the Citizens and being very quiet.)

Official

"I am the Official for this Race. This is our Governor and you are the Citizens of this community. Governor, can you see the People?"

Governor

"Well, ahem, yes, ahem. I think so. Is that them w-a-a-a-y down there? There seems to be a lot of them."

Official

"Yes, Governor. There is a proposal by the concerned citizens of our community to establish that only human persons have protected constitutional rights and that money is not speech."

Governor

"Well, ahem, yes, ahem. I've heard about these things. It's my job to listen to the people as I make these decisions. But it seems to me one person is missing."

Official

"I don't think so but..."

Corporation enters

(KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK on door or nearby desk.)

Corporation

"Pardon me, excuse me. Pardon me, excuse me. Pardon me, excuse me."

Governor

"Ahhhh, yes, that's who was missing. Corporations of course! Corporations are persons with charters to do business in this state. Corporations are also recognized in law as equal to human persons and having constitutional rights, so I have to listen to them too."



Corporation

Waves ORANGE corporate charter at Citizens.

Official

"Now, People, in order to influence your Governor, you have to get to them. Whoever gets over here first will more influence over the decision."

"Now BEFORE WE START the Race, let's review the Race rules. We want to make sure that all Persons are taking full advantage of your lawful rights and privileges."

"I'm going to read a set of statements, and if they are true for you, take a step forward or backward as appropriate."

The Scene

(Underlined statements apply to Corporations ONLY; other statements apply to Citizens and Corporations, UNLESS noted.)

Official

"Take a step **forward** if you have the right to freedom of speech under the 1st Amendment."

"Take a step **forward** if you have the right to equal protection and due process under the law under the 5th Amendment."

"Take a step **forward** if you can live forever."

"Take a step **backward** if you can be put in jail." (Citizens only)

"Take a step **forward** if you have the right to just compensation for taking of your property under the 5th Amendment."

"Take a step **backward** if you need clean air and clean water to survive." (Citizens only)

"Take a step **forward** if you have the right to be secure from unreasonable search and seizure under the 4th Amendment."

"Take a step **forward** if you have limited liability for the harms you cause to others."

"Take a step **forward** if you net over a million dollars in profit annually."

"Take a step **forward** if you have the right not to self-incriminate under the 5th Amendment."

"Take a step **forward** if you can be in more than one place at the same time."

"Take a step **forward** if you have the right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment."

"Okay, now we can begin our race to the Governor. Whoever gets to the Governor first is going to help our Governor decide these issues. Is everyone ready?"



The Scene

(At this point you can choose to actually race, or not. The Corporation should be very far ahead of everyone else.)

Governor

Shakes **Corporation's** hand. "Well done! What can I do for you?"

INTERLUDE

Discussion Guide

- Form a circle to debrief.
 - » How did it feel as a Citizen to be part of the race? (disempowered)
 - » What was it like to be the Corporation? (empowered!)
 - » Were you surprised by the Race result? Why or why not?
 - » Do you have any questions about any of the rights used in this race?
- Point of Act I: Artificial persons with court-granted protected constitutional rights have gained political power over Citizens (natural persons). Judge-made law has amended the Constitution de facto—without the people's consent.
- Return to classroom with Timeline and resume lesson.

Preparation for Act II

- Prep space; review instructions and script with Governor and Corporation.
- Prep Corporation.
 - » Use BLUE charter.
 - » Just before race: Don any props. Take BLUE charter and wait politely in lineup with Citizens.
 - » Behavior during race: Polite. Wave BLUE corporate charter at Citizens throughout race.
 - » During reading of statements: Listen for 3 move options – MOSTLY stay-in-place or backward moves; a couple of forward moves. Take LARGE STEPS BACKWARDS and small steps forward. Stay BEHIND the Citizens.
- After reading of script: Corporation should be near where it started the race – far from the Governor.

Instructions for Act II

- Ask Citizens to resume starting positions again.
- Corporation joins Citizens in lineup.

Conduct the race



ACT 2

The Scene

(Citizens line up about 25 feet away from and facing the Official and Governor.)

The Corporation joins Citizens in the lineup.)

Official

"Governor, your Citizens are back with a new proposal. As you know, the People recently passed a constitutional amendment to establish that only natural persons have protected constitutional rights and that money is not speech."

Governor

"Well, ahem, yes, ahem. Well, what is it this time?"

Official

"The concerned Citizens of our community have a science-based plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions in all public buildings, public utilities, public transportation, and public vehicles."

Governor

"Well, ahem, yes, ahem. I've heard about these things. It's my job to listen to the People as I make these decisions. Is our Corporation present?"

Official

"Why of course, Governor. But this time, the Corporation only has rights that were granted through its corporate charter."

Corporation

Waves BLUE corporate charter from Citizen lineup.

Governor

"Yes, yes, but I still have to listen to them too!"

Official

"Of course. Now remember, People, in order to influence the Governor, you have to get to them. Whoever gets over here first will more influence over the decision."



“BEFORE WE START the Race, let’s review the Race rules again. I’m going to read a set of statements, and if they are true for you, take a step forward or backward as appropriate.”

The Scene

(Underlined statements apply to Corporation ONLY; other statements apply to Citizens ONLY.)

Official

“Take a step **forward** if you have the protected constitutional right to freedom of speech under the 1st Amendment.”

“Take a step **forward** if you have the protected constitutional right to equal protection and due process under the law under the 5th Amendment.”

“Take a step **backward** if you can live forever.”

“Take a step **backward** if you can be put in jail.”

“Take a step **forward** if you have the protected constitutional right to just compensation for taking of your property under the 5th Amendment.”

“Take a step **forward** if you need clean air and clean water to survive.”

“Take a step **forward** if you have the protected constitutional right to be secure from unreasonable search and seizure under the 4th Amendment.”

“Take a step **forward** if you have limited liability for the harms you cause to others.”

“Take a step **forward** if you net over a million dollars in profit annually.”

Take a step **forward** if you have the protected constitutional right not to self-incriminate under the 5th Amendment.

“Take a step **backward** if you can be in more than one place at the same time.”

“Take a step **forward** if you have the protected constitutional right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment.

Official

“Okay, now we can begin our race to the Governor. Whoever gets to the Governor first is going to help our Governor decide these issues. Is everyone ready?”



The Scene

(At this point you can choose to actually race, or not. The Citizens should be very far ahead of the Corporation.)

Governor

Greets the **Citizens**.

"Well done! What can I do for you?"

END

Discussion guide

- Form a circle to debrief.
 - » How did it feel this time as a Citizen to be part of the race? (empowered!)
 - » What was it like this time to be the Corporation? (disempowered)
 - » Were you surprised by the Race result? Why or why not?
 - » Why might a constitutional amendment (as discussed in lesson) produce this result?
- Point of Act II: A constitutional amendment to overrule the Court on corporate personhood could provide a legal reset to reinstate people's authority over corporations and make corporations accountable to the people.
- Return to classroom to get personal effects.

