

Those affected by governing  
decisions must be the ones  
who make them



**The Community Rights Network**  
was established in 2010 as a project  
of the Community Environmental Legal  
Defense Fund to assist citizens to  
convene a Pennsylvania People's  
Constitutional Convention composed  
of delegates from municipalities across  
the state.

The Community Rights Network  
calls for a People's Constitutional  
Convention with a delegate selection  
process that represents the municipal  
communities of the Commonwealth.

**MAKE SURE YOUR  
MUNICIPALITY  
IS PART OF THE NETWORK**



The Pennsylvania Constitution recognizes that —

*“All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think proper.” (Article I, Section 2)*

It also cautions us *“To guard against the transgressions of the high powers which we have delegated, we declare that everything in this article is excepted out of the general powers of government and shall forever remain inviolate.” (Article I, Section 25)*

And yet, the legislature and courts, to whom we, the people, have delegated high powers, claim that the *“inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think proper”* may be exercised by the people only if and when the legislature places a question on the ballot to call for a convention or to allow the people to adopt an amendment proposed by the very government the people want to alter, reform or abolish.

IT IS TIME FOR A PEOPLE'S  
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

**PENNSYLVANIA  
COMMUNITY RIGHTS  
NETWORK**  
P.O. Box 2016  
Chambersburg, PA 17201

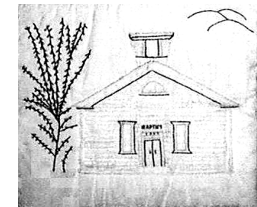


Phone: 717-254-3233  
Fax: 717-709-0263  
E-mail: [BenPrice@celdf.org](mailto:BenPrice@celdf.org)

## **PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY RIGHTS NETWORK**

On February 20, 2010, citizens from more than a dozen counties met in Chambersburg to initiate plans to convene a Pennsylvania People's Constitutional Convention made up of delegates from municipalities across the state. They concluded their deliberations by pledging to become *Community Rights Networkers*, and by issuing the Chambersburg Declaration.

## **THE CHAMBERSBURG DECLARATION**



**“Let the people think they govern,  
and they will be governed.”**  
— William Penn 1693

**“There is no inalienable right to local  
self-government.”**  
— PA Attorney General 2008

A project of  
**The Community Environmental Legal  
Defense Fund: [CELDF.org](http://CELDF.org)**



***We declare:***

That the political, legal, and economic systems of the United States allow, in each generation, an elite few to impose policy and governing decisions that threaten the very survival of human and natural communities;

That the goal of those decisions is to concentrate wealth and greater governing power through the exploitation of human and natural communities, while promoting the belief that such exploitation is necessary for the common good;

That the survival of our communities depends on replacing this system of governance by the privileged with new community-based democratic decision-making systems;

That environmental and economic sustainability can be achieved only when the people affected by governing decisions are the ones who make them;

That, for the past two centuries, people have been unable to secure economic and environmental sustainability primarily through the existing minority-rule system, laboring under the myth that we live in a democracy;

That most reformers and activists have not focused on replacing the current system of elite decision-making with a democratic one, but have concentrated merely on lobbying the factions in power to make better decisions; and

That reformers and activists have not halted the destruction of our human or natural communities because they have viewed economic and environmental ills as isolated problems, rather than as symptoms produced by the absence of democracy.

***Therefore, let it be resolved:***

That a people’s movement must be created with a goal of revoking the authority of the corporate minority to impose political, legal, and economic systems that endanger our human and natural communities;

That such a movement shall begin in the municipal communities of Pennsylvania;

That we, the people, must transform our individual community struggles into new frameworks of law that dismantle the existing undemocratic systems while codifying new, sustainable systems;

That such a movement must grow and accelerate through the work of people in all municipalities to raise the profile of this work at state and national levels;

That when corporate and governmental decision-makers challenge the people’s right to assert local, community self-governance through passage of municipal law, the people, through their municipal governments, must openly and frontally defy those legal and political doctrines that subordinate the rights of the people to the privileges of a few;

That those doctrines include preemption, subordination of municipal governments; bestowal of constitutional rights upon corporations, and relegating ecosystems to the status of property;

That those communities in defiance of rights-denying law must join with other communities in our state and across the nation to envision and build new state and federal constitutional structures that codify new, rights-asserting systems of governance;

That Pennsylvania communities have worked for more than a decade to advance those new systems and, therefore, have the responsibility to become the first communities to call for a new state constitutional structure; and

That now, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2010, the undersigned pledge to begin that work, which will drive the right to local, community self-government into the Pennsylvania Constitution, thus liberating Pennsylvania communities from the legal and political doctrines that prevent them from building economically and environmentally sustainable communities.

***That a Call Issues from this Gathering:***

To create a network of people committed to securing the right to local, community self-government, the reversal of political, legal, and cultural doctrines that interfere with that right, and the creation of a new system and doctrines that support that right;

To call upon the people and elected officials across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to convene a larger gathering of delegates representing their municipal communities, who will propose constitutional changes to secure the right of local, community self-government; and

To create the people’s movement that will result in these changes to the Pennsylvania Constitution.