It was the unbelievably far future: the year 2033. It had been eleven months now since the 29th amendment came into affect. It passed surprisingly easily, especially compared to the previous amendment. Who would have thought that the establishment of another branch of government would have been easier than banning foreign titles of nobility?

The primary motivator for the change was, to be honest, greed. Greed all around. For years after the disastrous 2016 and even more embarrassing 2020 elections, most political discussion turned around the power of foreign and corporate interests in affecting the government of the United States.

A bout of economic warfare followed by a sudden embargo, a flash crash, and then finally reconciliation combined beautifully with rising Indian and Japanese nationalism to handle the animosity between the United States, China and Russia at least for the time being. The two Asiatic powers looked southward and eastward with worry. So with one problem out of the way, the nation turned its ponderous attention to the second issue, that of corporations.

The issue of corporate rights is in fact a storied one. Its roots go back hundreds of years, but its main gain in power was actually during that of the civil rights era. While African Americans protested for equal treatment, corporations silently gained power as well.

By the early 2000s the effects of this brash power grab were noticeable. Senators seemed to vote very consistently in favor of those issues favored by corporations, the corporate tax rate was the lowest it had ever been, and following a series of contentious supreme court decisions, it was common to say that 'corporations were people too', even if that wasn't exactly true.

What was clear was that the checks and balances of the government, as set up by the well meaning revolutionaries in 1700 were just no longer applicable when confronted by the economic and soft power of these massive companies.

Therefore a solution was sought. Almost instantly, the left fractured into three factions: those of the neoliberals argued heavily against corporate restriction. The key factor enabling America's rise to power was its companies, to tie its hands in this manner would surely crush our productivity down to that of France or even Italy, they argued, much to the chagrin of EU representatives.

The 'slightly more social' democrats toed the line as they always did, and hedged their bets between both sides. Restriction was and should be allowed, but which restrictions and how they were enacted was paramount. Despite claiming to be the largest, most rational side, their arguments and policies were quite honestly very boring. They did not get much media coverage.

Finally, the hard left railed against corporate power. They saw the need not only to restrict the actions of corporations in political space, but to make other understand that this power itself was morally degenerate. The very motivation for wealth was subversive to both the integrity of the state and to the welfare of the people. Everyone agreed that this stance was 'very spicy'.

However, the right was not free of its squabbles either. The party split right down its seams, with its populist libertarian hellraisers blasting the greed and profligate nature of the upper class while the older more bourgeois guard hemmed between less regulation and no regulation. The fundamentalist Christians, including the Mormons at first tried to expand the discussion to include getting restrictions on religion's influence as well, but especially after the shit they tried to pull in 2020, no one was falling for that again. They mostly ended up siding with the old guard.

Thus, with both parties fracturing before their leader's very eyes, and terrified of an unholy alliance between the libertarians and the hard left, the majority leader and whip gathered their most political savvy friends to try to figure out some sort of deal before the political parties of the country completely realigned.

What they came up with was the compromise that eventually became the 29th amendment.

There would be a fourth branch of the government specifically for the representation of corporations. The liberals originally gasped in horror at the thought, but as the plan was fleshed out even they started to fall in line.

The most important function of of the branch was the ability to introduce, but not vote on nor amend the text of certain laws. In some sense, this merely formalized the corruptive tendency of lobbying and special interest groups to 'suggest' ideas to senators and congressmen. The branch also had the ability to discuss broad topics regarding interests common across corporations like wages and immigration. Taxation was specifically called out as being outside the purview of this branch, and its power would remain with the house, at least for now.

Based on a humorous discussion between a junior house member and the majority leader, regarding where they were supposed to sit while they discussed this agreement, the new branch was referred to as the Chair. With its members being chairmen, or chairpeople.

The counter balance the Chair came in three forms. First was the abolishment of lobbying as a profession. The former action was made very much illegal. No members of a company were allowed to fraternize with members of congress unless they were specifically members of the Chair. This was enforced technically using the same regulation surveillance technology created in the aftermath of the Frank-Dodd Act.

The second balance was the constituency of the Chair. It had only a hundred slots, with a further enforcement even the number of supporting staff was regulated for the chosen electors from those companies. In addition, in a fit of brilliance from a heavily inebriated democratic senator, it was stipulated that the majority of these slots must be filled with companies that both did not exist in any national nor regional stock exchange, nor whose valuation surpassed a certain value.

Finally, in turning the screw, the last balance was that of the election of the Chair. Unlike the houses of congress, the judiciary or the presidency, it was decided that the Chair slots would be open to any qualifying company which had a US headquarters, but only after being bet upon in an auction. The proceeds of this auction would be directly marked for entitlement plans and other social programs.

Almost at once, there was an outcry from US companies that they would be shoehorned out of any slots by internationals, large or small. Based on this feedback, the last instance of legal lobbying, it was decided that the small slots must be filled by US companies. However, how that was actually determined remained an open question right up to the first Chair auction.

And so, a grand experiment in political engineering was had.

As expected, everyone instantly tried to subvert the process; large companies tried to worm their way into small slots; internationals tried to disguise themselves as US companies; companies established other shell companies and colluded about auction pricing; republicans sneakily passed a law diverting some of the entitlement funding specifically towards the entitlement of veterans and members of the military; the far left marched against the amendment and then rioted against it. However, by in large it was a great success, at least for its first chaotic year.