

# A Plan to Establish Democracy in the United States

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*“The predators in Washington are only this far from monopoly control of our government. They have bought the political system, lock, stock and pork barrel, making change from within impossible.”*

Bill Moyers<sup>2</sup>

## **A systemic, multi-faceted problem.**

In order to understand why the country that is loudest in proclaiming itself a democracy is not, and is also not a republic, it is first necessary to understand the corrosive role of wealth in United States politics. Once this relationship is fully understood, a possible solution emerges logically.

### ***A fiduciary responsibility to stockholders.***

In 1919 Henry Ford's Motor Company was making impressive profits, and in a moment of altruism Mr. Ford decided to share those profits with the people directly responsible for producing them: his workers. Ford's stockholders objected. They felt that *they* deserved all of the Ford Motor Company profits simply because they were owners. To assert this argument forcefully they sued Mr. Ford, and they won.<sup>3</sup> The judge in this landmark case ruled in favor of property owners, writing that if Mr. Ford "*wanted to pursue a [charitable end] he should do it with his own money, not with other people's.*"

The principle forged into law by *Dodge v. Ford* continues today to force corporate management to have *a reasonable expectation of profit* when expenditures are made. The law has been modified slightly since 1980 to allow for a somewhat more "social" flavor, but the fiduciary responsibility that *Dodge v. Ford* established in 1919 remains firmly in place. The evidentiary weight of this requirement cannot be over emphasized, because it applies to corporate political campaign contributions and issue ads just like any other expenditure. Knowing this, it becomes indisputable that *when corporate money is spent in support of a politician, corporate management has a clear expectation that this expenditure will result in profit. Profit that is indirectly purchased in the form of commercially favorable legislation.*

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2 *The End Game For Democracy*, <http://www.truth-out.org/video/item/18538-the-end-game-for-democracy>

3 *Dodge v. Ford Motor Company*, 204 Mich. 459, 170 N.W. 668, 1919.

***Political investments have extremely high returns.***

Stockholders have no reason to complain when their company's management invests money to support a politician, because the return on that investment is invariably astronomical. There would be a legal issue, of course, if our politicians and plutocrats were not above the law. *Anything given or serving to persuade or induce* some desired behavior, such as monetary support for a politician given explicitly to purchase favorable legislation, meets the clear and unequivocal definition of a bribe.<sup>4</sup> But, in fact, our politicians and plutocrats are above the law.<sup>5</sup> Solon the Great, the author of the Athenian Constitution, understood this well when he wrote that, "*The Law is like a spider's web; the small are caught and the great tear it up.*"

To get some sense of the magnitude of the return on political investment in the United States, let's consider a recent example. In 2010 a major concern for our citizens was health care reform. The possibility of reform was also of great concern to the health care industry, because it risked endangering their profits. So, in 2010 the health care industry paid our politicians \$148,157,502.<sup>6</sup> This money was spent very wisely, from the corporate point of view. Any sensible congressman who was actually trying to reduce health care costs would clearly have opted for a single-payer system. Single-payer is a proven system that has been shown worldwide to cost *half* as much as our current health care system, while producing far superior results.<sup>7</sup> The health care industry's multi-million dollar expenditure was obviously not intended to reduce profits, but to prevent a single-payer health care system or anything similar from destroying profits. This expenditure worked beautifully --- from the health care industry's perspective.

By 2012 expenditures on health care by citizens living in the United States had increased to three trillion dollars annually.<sup>8</sup> But, these expenditures would have been half that had a single-payer system been adopted in 2010. Doing the math, we find that every single dollar of the health care industries \$148 million dollar investment in 2010 returned \$10,124<sup>9</sup> in profits in 2012. That's over a *million percent* return on investment in that single year. Looked at another way, every single dollar some congressman or the President collected from the health care industry in 2010 *encumbered* the citizens of the United States with an additional \$10,124 in health care costs in 2012. Moreover, this profit only accounts for part of the initial return on the health care industry's investment. These profits will recur and no doubt grow annually, returning at least another \$1.5 trillion to our health care industry in 2013 without any further investment whatsoever. When congress refused to even consider the single-payer system, they placed the profits of the wealthy far ahead of the well-being of the great majority of U.S. citizens. Had congress and the President left that extra \$1.5 trillion dollars in our citizen's pockets, that money would have provided a very effective stimulus to the economy. A stimulus that probably would have ended our continuing depression without further effort.

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4        "*anything given or serving to persuade or induce*" The definition of a bribe in the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, College Edition, 1968.

5        See Glen Greenwald's excellent book: "*With Liberty and Justice for SOME*"

6        <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/totals.php?cycle=2010&ind=H>

7        In 2010 the French single-payer health care system was ranked number one by the World Health Organization. The US health care system was ranked 37th, right at the bottom of all industrialized nations. French health care cost half what U.S. Health care cost *per capita*.

8        <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danmunro/2012/01/19/u-s-healthcare-hits-3-trillion/>

9        The half of health care expenditure that was made unnecessarily (1.5 trillion), divided by the bribes congress received (\$148,157,502).

***Wealthy interests purchase favorable legislation, politicians shakedown wealthy interests.***

The situation is far worse than the above isolated example indicates. Unfortunately, congressional behavior with regard to health care in 2010 was not at all unusual. In 2005 Larry M. Bartels,<sup>10</sup> at Princeton University, published the results of a very interesting study entitled: "*Economic Inequality and Political Representation*."<sup>11</sup> In this study, Professor Bartels directly addressed the issue of representation in the Senate as a function of the economic status of the citizens presumed to be represented. The results demonstrated scientifically what most people who watch our politics would guess: *if you are of low economic status, neither a Democrat or a Republican will represent your interests --- at all.* The situation improves as economic status improves until citizens with obscenely high incomes enjoy extremely good representation indeed. Professor Bartels comments that: "*These disparities [in representation] are especially troubling because they suggest the potential for a debilitating feedback cycle linking the economic and political realms: increasing economic inequality may produce increasing inequality in political responsiveness, which in turn produces public policies increasingly detrimental to the interests of poor citizens, which in turn produces even greater economic inequality, and so on.*"<sup>12</sup> Dr. Bartels's results have recently been confirmed by a similar study.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Bartels's "*debilitating feedback cycle*" has been a functional reality for centuries. The United States congress has always put the interests of the wealthy ahead of all other citizens, because the wealthy are the source of congressional personal wealth and status, and because our politicians have no practical choice in this matter. The same is true of our Presidents. No national politician has any realistic chance of election whatsoever, without the funding and the access to media received from and controlled by wealthy sources. Funding and access to the media are the carrot, and also the stick. Should any politician attempt a stance that favors the general population at the expense of the wealthy, it is clear that there will be no future funding or media access for that politician. And, that politician will usually be publicly crucified by our plutocrat-controlled media to make certain his or her political demise.

Of course all of our politicians will swear defensively that the money they receive from wealthy sources has no influence over their legislative decisions; but the data that Dr. Bartels and others have collected clearly make a lie of this contention. Simple logic also reveals this self-serving contention as a lie: *our politicians would not have their plush and lucrative jobs without this money.* The money functions as a bribe from the perspective of the receiver as well as the giver, as completely demonstrated by it's effect, and regardless of whether this relationship is made explicit by the parties involved or not. Funds from plutocratic sources are either given to persuade or induce the receiving politician to produce favorable legislation, or in payment for legislation produced speculatively by a politician to encourage funding. The giver knows this and the receiver knows this, and neither need to discuss the relationship for it to function as intended. Both Democrats and Republicans participate enthusiastically in this "business method," and compete among themselves with the "favorableness" of their legislation to prove to their wealthy "donors" that they are the better "friend." "Donors," in their turn, quite rationally "shop" their political minions for the best return on their political investments, and make their payments accordingly. Ironically, congressional and presidential candidates represent one of the few remaining instances of an actual competitive market in the U.S. economy.

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10 Department of Politics and Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs

11 <http://www.princeton.edu/~bartels/economic.pdf>

12 *ibid*, page 31

13 <http://www.addictinginfo.org/2013/08/21/new-study-shows-the-senate-only-responsive-to-the-wealthy/> (paper not yet available online)

***The practice of merging business and government interests has an ugly label: Fascism.***

Corporations and the extremely wealthy have used the power of their dollars to purchase favorable legislation since shortly after the Constitution was ratified. Legislation that proves by the very fact of its ubiquitous purchase, sale, and effect, that concepts of fairness and equality under the law, are explicitly *not* intended. For example, our government has sold legislation that has forced U.S. workers with high costs of living to compete directly with workers able to live on pennies a day, with no benefits, in sweatshops around the world (globalization). Our government has sold legislation that has limited or banned collective bargaining that would tend to equalize the distribution of wealth. Our government has sold legislation that has hampered a Union's ability to enlist new members. Our government has sold legislation that has facilitated mergers and monopoly practices to the detriment of competitors and the economy as a whole. Our government has sold legislation that created regulations favorable to the wealthy, and then threatened to pass legislation designed to repeal these same regulations --- to encourage "donations."<sup>14</sup> Our government has sold legislation that has removed regulations that restrained corporations engaging in unsafe practices in the food industry, the drug industry, in all industries affecting air and water quality, in the banking industry, and industries affecting our common ecosystem. Our government has sold legislation that has facilitated and made legal the "externalizing" of corporate costs so that the public is required to pay those costs.

Our government has sold legislation that masquerades as regulation but instead sets standards designed so that corporations can use them as legal cover for unsafe practices. For example, regulation that sets mercury levels in the water supply too high for good health, but facilitates corporate profits and becomes legally unchallengeable precisely because the levels are within government limits. In all the cases mentioned and many more, the legislation was enacted for a Judas price; so some wealthy entity could make more profit at the expense of our health, or more profit at the expense of a competitor, or to enable the direct extortion of money from the great majority of our citizens --- as is the case with our present "*your money or your life*" health care system.

Just within the last four decades, if each worker's share of the profits from production that existed about 1970 had tracked and maintained the same ratio as increases in production since then, the mean wage of American workers today would be roughly \$90,000 per year. Instead, it is roughly \$52,000 per year, and dropping. This while American workers put in an average of 122 more hours per year than English workers, and an average of 378 more hours per year than German workers,<sup>15</sup> both of whom are doing much better than U.S. workers. Which is to say that, at a bare minimum, *all* the profits from increases in productivity made by U.S. workers over the last four decades have been taken from those workers by the wealthy, and this theft was facilitated by the U.S. congress and various presidents for their own personal gain. When our politicians merge the interests of business and government, the result is not democracy or a republic, it is fascism.<sup>16</sup> Fascism is a system that will destroy any society eventually, because it is based on unrestrained greed; with practitioners that abhor altruism, justice, and especially democracy. Democracy would allow citizens to effectively fight the depredations of morally challenged and psychopathic plutocrats.

Ironically, our system of government has become dysfunctional for *all* our citizens, including

14 A possible explanation for the attempt at health care reform in 2010 that produced over \$148 million in "donations." A "shakedown" in other words.

15 <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ANHRS>

16 **Fascism** "*A philosophy or system of government that advocates or exercises a dictatorship of the extreme right, typically through the merging of state and business leadership, together with an ideology of belligerent nationalism.*" New College Edition of the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1969, Houghton Mifflin.

the wealthy. We face incredibly dangerous problems that are not, and cannot, be addressed because of plutocratic control of our political system. Climate change and peak oil are two problems, for example, with the potential to completely eradicate our species from the planet.<sup>17</sup> Bribe politicians who should be addressing these problems are instead being paid explicitly to avoid solutions, or to create new problems such as wars. From the perspective of the wealthy, problems are opportunities that facilitate profits because they have the money to exploit them.<sup>18</sup> But from a global perspective, there are too many individuals with the wealth to influence individual politicians in conflicting directions, and this practice has deprived our “ship of state” of effective guidance. Short-term greed always seems to trump long-term reason and planning in United States politics.

Recently, the obscenely wealthy appear to have realized just how dangerous their positions are. Indeed, they seem to fear the future enough to desperately seek the imagined safety of obtaining and controlling every resource they can steal as quickly as possible. Plutocratic greed apparently knows no bounds, and our plutocrats act collectively like a herd of cats obsessively chasing a laser pointer into a swimming pool with no way to climb out. It is certainly obvious that their thinking does not appear to extend to the idea that if they cause the planet to become uninhabitable, they too will lose their lives. Whatever their reasons, plutocrat controlled government minions have been rendered impotent by contrary instructions, and we the people are left facing impending and implacable disaster.

### **A possible solution.**

The systemic problem described above was engineered into our system of government from the beginning of its existence. The result is an obscenely inequitable system that is, nonetheless, inherently stable by design. Exacerbating the problem, it is completely unrealistic to hope a majority of our corrupt politicians will ever suffer a collective attack of empathy and voluntarily change this system. The great majority of our politicians have been very carefully preselected by the wealthy to be psychopathic predators without a hint of altruism. These psychopathic politicians must be *forcibly* removed by their presumed employers: we, the people of the United States. The question is only how this might be accomplished.

The wealthy have assumed that our only recourse to their feudal rule is through some form of physical force. In response to their fear, they have directed our politicians to provide deadly military equipment and training to our various police departments. This equipment and training have transformed our police from domestic protectors into local standing armies with weapons designed for war. In addition, every effort has been made to indoctrinate the members of these domestic armies to do whatever the government may instruct them to do, and thus to serve the interests of the wealthy over the interests of the people. We saw hints of this in the way the Occupy movement was sometimes viciously attacked. This viciousness was unnecessary to address the immediate problems at hand, but served well to send a message to the participants and others contemplating joining the Occupy movement. A message that said: “*You don't want to join these people, because we will cause you implacable pain if you do.*” Even so, the force used was carefully titrated to demonstrate a *willingness* to use brutal force, while at the same time excesses such as overt murders and the like were avoided. Keep in mind, though, that the relatively soft touch that the Occupy movement felt could easily have been turned into a deadly iron fist. The equipment was there, as were the men willing to use it.

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17 Cushman, William Bradford, *Hubris Ark*, ISBN-13: 978-1482319347, 2013.

18 Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, ISBN-13: 978-0-312-42799-3, 2007.

Psychologically, the sight of police shooting protesters would be a much more effective short-term deterrent to an unruly American public than just clubbing them, gassing them, shooting them with non-lethal munitions, pepper spraying them, or subjecting them to rough arrests. But as a long-term solution, murdering protesters would have been exceedingly stupid.

Our obscenely wealthy are not stupid, just extremely greedy and viciously psychopathic. They know that using the techniques of overt oppression to force compliance has never proved to be effective in the long term. Overt oppression always results in the loss of support from far too many citizens. Fortunately for us, that fact and a knowledge of history teaches us that no government will last that has lost support from a significant portion of the people governed. History also teaches us that no government will last when as little as 1 to 5% of their subject population actively works for change.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, ***we must put our government in a position where their actions cause them to lose public support, and the actions of those working for change produce a gain in public support.*** If the method used also serves to directly remove our corrupt government, then it serves our ends quite nicely.

We have been taught since birth that we are a democracy, even though we are not. We have been told repeatedly that we control our representatives through voting, but we can not. Our elections are rigged, the candidates put before us are preselected to be corruptible in almost all cases, and are clearly bribed both before and after obtaining office. The “election show” serves only to convince many of us that we control our own destiny, but it is clearly a lie. In fact, we of the 99% hold the position of serfs in a modern feudal society. A feudal society that features extremely high-tech psychological as well as physical control systems; and a lawless plutocratic class in control of murderous forces that would have made Stalin envious. But, consider how quickly our country could change if we were to become a democracy, or even a republic, and political bribery was no longer tolerated. Our plutocrats would lose the political control which they now exercise through bribery, and we would truly be *able to vote* our coin-operated congressmen and president out of office. We, the people also have access to modern technology, as well as ancient, and we also know how to use it. The modern technology is the Internet, and the ancient technology is the simple paper ballot, cast and counted in a completely transparent fashion.

### ***Internet debates.***

What can our plutocrats do if we set up the means to stream *real* debates over the Internet? Debates that cost little or nothing to produce, and which the corporate mass media cannot filter or restrict. Debates that address real issues instead of the constant diet of divisiveness, pabulum, lies, and the scare tactics of security-theater that we are now fed by our plutocrat-controlled media. These debates would be popular because they would be a rare source of truth-telling. And, our plutocrats would not be able to do anything to prevent them that we can't circumvent. Moreover, whatever they *try* to do to prevent these debates will also serve to indict them as *against democracy*, thus costing them essential support.

Our plutocrats could, for example, go to the extreme of shutting down the Internet entirely, or perhaps just the servers delivering a particular debate. And if they do, what could send a clearer message to our citizens that they were being prevented from learning something that they should know? Shutting down the Internet would play into our hands perfectly, and could easily be countered with old-fashioned printing techniques --- which would then become much more powerful. Imagine

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19 Kevin Zeese, quoted by Chris Hedges here: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/19127-the-sparks-of-rebellion>.

the impact of a paper handout that was forced into existence because the government shut down the Internet, and everyone knew it! A handout that explained *why* the government is afraid of debates, and exactly *what* the government has been doing. Conversely, if the government fails to shut citizen debates down, such a debate environment would be a fertile place to address fundamental issues such as *government* voter fraud, political bribery, and too-big-to-allow-to-exist business entities; all issues which neither our plutocrat-owned government nor our plutocrat-owned media will ever seriously address. Indeed, the more our wealthy and their purchased government fight an effort to establish democracy, *the more they will strengthen that effort.*<sup>20</sup>

### ***Transparent and un-riggable voting.***

And imagine what would happen if we were to set up "mirror" voting places adjacent to or near all "official" voting places and ask everyone who voted in the "official" places to also vote in the Citizen's voting places. In the Citizen's voting places every effort would be made to be completely transparent and above reproach. Paper ballots would be used, folded and dropped into a large transparent ballot box with multiple cameras trained on it, with the output from these cameras both recorded and streamed live on the Internet so others could watch and record. Voters could watch their friends vote from wherever they had an Internet connection, and know without any doubt that those votes really happened. Each ballot would be displayed to a camera as it is removed from the ballot box at the end of voting, and simultaneously recorded and streamed on the Internet so the public at large could see it and record the votes on it if they wish. Multiple cameras and witnesses would be on site, and multiple human counters would count each election or issue immediately upon poll closure, while on camera and on the Internet, to insure complete and transparent honesty. Our plutocrats could not prevent these mirror sites. They would hate them, because they would call direct attention to the complete lack of transparency built intentionally into our current voting system --- and because this simple paper ballot system would be extremely difficult for them to rig --- but they could *not* prevent them. Again, every effort our plutocrats made to prevent such a program would invariably be interpreted by the public as an example of our plutocrats acting against those attempting to establish democracy.

Every effort can, and must, be made to insure the complete transparency and righteousness of the Citizen's voting as well as the reproducibility of the results. Then, when there is a discrepancy between the "official" results and the Citizen's results, a challenge can be made in the courts and the court of public opinion. Our Citizens will be able to easily prove beyond any doubt that their results truly represent the will of the people. The government, however, will have no way to prove anything, because their results will all be based upon electronic counts with no traceable record of origin. And, since many citizens would have experienced the Citizens voting personally, they would know with certainty that the results of the Citizens voting were an honest reflection of the peoples will. This certain knowledge would discredit government claims that only they were "official" and "we should trust them." Once again, the wealthy and their government minions would lose in the court of public opinion and quite possibly also in court. With Internet debates and transparent elections we could effectively say to our corrupt government: "*You have been lying to us about being a democracy. We are not, but we think its a good idea nonetheless and intend to actually become one.*"

When citizens control debates and voting all the barriers to honest politicians now so carefully put in place by our plutocratic predators will be effectively eliminated. All barriers to ballot initiatives

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20 See the "Streisand Effect" here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streisand\\_effect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streisand_effect)

will also be removed. Ballot initiatives such as a constitutional amendment against bribery, an amendment limiting the size of too-big-to-exist business entities, and an amendment defining procedures to safeguard our elections from government fraud. All or any of these amendments could be included in any election. Barriers to amendments such as these would be bypassed in spite of government wishes --- and the government could do little to prevent this --- and what they could do will not work, if just one to five percent of us *do* work.

### ***Democracy!***

It is the people who ultimately determine what is “legal,” or “official” in a democracy, and *if we act as if we are a democracy, we will be one*. Our “officials” are only official with our sufferance. The program described briefly here does not require massive citizen participation to succeed. It is a difficult problem without question, but the procedures described above are realistic --- and there is no time to waste. Our country, and our very Earth, are dying before our eyes from the uncontrolled looting being carried out by the wealthy with our government's assistance. We simply will not survive the inevitable consequences of peak oil and the horridly dangerous climate change that is now upon us if we do not re-direct these processes. Albert Einstein once observed that: "*The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil; but by those who watch them without doing anything.*"

We can go down quietly, doing nothing, complacent and complicit in our own demise; or we can act as *citizens*; fighting openly in the streets if need be, or fighting intelligently as proposed here, with at least some chance of winning, and while retaining our honor and our dignity. The Occupy movement has proved beyond question that those of us who are willing to fight are not alone. Indeed, we are surprisingly large in number, and strong.

Working to achieve a true democracy in the United States is an overtly revolutionary act, and is very dangerous to those in power. This fact is reason enough to do this work; so that our plutocrats and their political stooges lose sleep every night worrying that we might actually achieve our goal. It is long past the time to teach our government to fear the public, and to forcibly remove our politician's hands from plutocratic pockets. As Thomas Jefferson put it: "*When governments fear the people, there is liberty. When the people fear the government, there is tyranny.*"

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Many of the issues raised here are treated in much greater depth in a small book called *Revolution Handbook* (ISBN-13: 978-1466234338), which I hope you will download, in pdf format, free and without DRM here:

<http://PoiesisResearch.com/Handbook.php>.

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