

Addressing the Negative Impact of Money in American Politics:
The Key to Success for the Democratic Party
and for Achieving All Progressive Goals

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America's future vitality depends on an Appropriate and Creative balance being achieved between two of its major institutions: 1) a competitively oriented Capitalist Economy [based on individual values – Me First – expressed at all social scales – individual, family, corporation, ethnic group, town, state, nation], and 2) a cooperatively oriented, egalitarian Democratic Political Structure [based on communal values – We First – expressed through all social scales from individuals to nations]. Of course our independent Judiciary and Free Press are also extremely significant, and they do play a role in the above dynamic.

Presently the relationship between our economy and polity in American society is out of balance with the influence of our competitively oriented economy having been allowed to intrude into and erode/weaken the role of our cooperatively oriented, egalitarian democratic polity. The negative influence of money in politics is the primary cause of this imbalance. And this money, which is buying out our polity, comes from the economic domain [Corporations, the Super Wealthy, and the Financial Industry – Wall Street and the Investment Banks, all of whose special interests are served by the Lobbying Industry and the most powerful Political Action Committees [PACs]. And, of course, the influence of these special economically driven interests has been magnified by the 'Citizens United' Supreme Court Decision.

While the Republican Party actively feeds the economic interests that promote the influence of money in politics, the Democratic Party remains fully invested in this moneyed status quo – offering mostly lip service to reforms in this area. Note that on most “surveys” of Democratic Party voter opinions, campaign finance reform is most often the last category to which Democrats are asked to respond. This is even the case for the otherwise laudable and explicitly progressive political organization, Campaign for America's Future.

When will Democrats and Progressives recognize the fact that every other issue/goal of importance to them is largely blocked from being meaningfully addressed/achieved by the negative influence of money in politics. It does not matter whether the issue is health care, immigration, excessive military expenditure/policing the world, banking/investment/securities regulation, infrastructure, education, voter access, redistricting, or equal rights for women

and minorities, the key barrier to making progress is the fact that campaigns for political office – especially at the national level – depend in large measure for their success on special interest money. And big special interest financial contributions buy access and influence among the politicians these interests manage to get elected.

Exclusively Publicly Financed Campaigns for all Federal Offices and significant Restrictions on PACs is the place to focus attention if we are to meaningfully reduce the negative impact of money in American politics. The reversal of the Citizens United decision constitutes an important but longer term goal.

Countering the corrosive impact of Money in Politics is not a “glamor” issue, but making real headway on every other Democrat/Progressive goal depends upon effectively addressing it. It is far past the time to make this issue THE ISSUE!! And, interestingly, this issue is equally of concern to most liberals and conservatives so it is an issue with powerful political crossover appeal! If Democrats grab this issue as focally theirs in 2018 and identify its critical importance for solving the key problem of an ineffective, stagnant, and essentially paralyzed federal legislature, they can gain control of Congress, implement the needed reforms, and create the conditions needed to pursue their other progressive goals. On the other hand, if Democrats continue to shuttle this matter to the periphery and instead just push their individual progressive goals under the same old guard Congressional leadership, they will make it easy for the opposition to apply the negative label of “socialism,” and they will render themselves just another political organization continuing to contribute to the fundamental, underlying problem of imbalance between America's economic and political institutions. And they will invite by doing so an ever more frustrated middle class that is ever more susceptible to being spun by the next conservative Republican populist.

It is high time for Americans – and Democrats in particular – to address and overcome the most important CAUSE for what may well be our most significant national PROBLEM – a Congress of ideological, bickering extremists who spend a great deal of their time raising money for their reelection campaigns, who are as a result underwritten by MONEY in POLITICS, who largely serve the moneyed special interests that support them, who are “paid” to not compromise, and who only secondarily attend to the common good!!