

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE CRISIS IN
AMERICA AND HOW TO FIX IT:
A SOLUTIONS SUMMITWashington, D.C.
Thursday, January 21, 2016

PARTICIPANTS:

Welcome:

NORMAN L. EISEN

U.S. Ambassador to Czech Republic (2011-2014); Special Assistant and Special Counsel to the President (2009-2011); Visiting Fellow, The Brookings Institution

Introduction:

TREVOR POTTER

Commissioner, Federal Election Commission (1991-1995); Chairman (1994)

Keynote Remarks:

ANN RAVEL

Commissioner, Federal Election Commission; Chairwoman (2015)

Interveners:

PETER SCHWEITZER

President, Government Accountability Institute

JOHN PUDNER

Executive Director, Take Back Our Republic

MIKE PETRO

Executive Vice President, Committee on Economic Development

PANEL 1: A CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY:

Moderator:

TIM ROEMER

Ambassador to India (2009-2011); Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-IN, 1991-2003); Member, 9/11 Commission; Senior Strategic Advisor to Issue One

Panelists:

NORM MINETA

Secretary of Transportation (2001-2006); Secretary of Commerce (2000-2001); Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-CA, 1975-1995)

TIM WIRTH

Member, U.S. Senate (D-CO, 1987-1993);

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING

706 Duke Street, Suite 100

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

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Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-CO, 1975-1987)

DAN GLICKMAN

Secretary of Agriculture (1995-2001);

Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-KS, 1975-1995)

CONNIE MORELLA

Ambassador to OECD (2003-2007); Member, U.S. House of Representatives (R-MD, 1987-2003)

Interveners:

RICHARD PAINTER

Associate Counsel and Chief Ethics Lawyer, George W. Bush Administration (2005-2007)

JEFF PECK

Principal, Peck Madigan Jones; Lobbyist

CHUCK MERIN

Executive Vice President, Prime Policy Group;

Lobbyist

PANEL 2: A PROBLEM WE CAN FIX

Moderator:

NORMAN L. EISEN

U.S. Ambassador to Czech Republic (2011-2014); Special Assistant and Special Counsel to the President (2009-2011); Visiting Fellow, The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

FRED WERTHEIMER

Founder and President, Democracy 21

JOHN BONIFAZ

Co-Founder and President, Free Speech for People

DAN WOLF

Chair, Committee on Steering and Policy, Massachusetts State Senate (D)

ROGER KATZ

Chair, Government Oversight Committee, Maine State Senate (R)

JUSTICE ALLEN LOUGHRY

Justice, Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

JUSTICE CHERI BEASLEY

Associate Justice, North Carolina Supreme Court

Interveners:

BRUCE FREED

Founder and President, Center for Political Accountability

LUCAS WELCH

Executive Director, The Pluribus Project

DAN BERGER

Managing Shareholder, Berger and Montague; Sponsor, The Progress Project

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706 Duke Street, Suite 100

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

PANEL 3: THE TIME IS NOW:

Moderator:

NICK PENNIMAN
Executive Director, Issue One

Panelists:

JOHN SARBANES
Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-MD)

CLAUDINE SCHNEIDER
Member, U.S. House of Representatives (R-RI, 1981-1991)

TIM ROEMER
Ambassador to India (2009-2011); Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-IN, 1991-2003);
Member, 9/11 Commission; Senior Strategic Advisor to Issue One

ZEPHYR TEACHOUT
Chief Executive Officer, Mayday PAC

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. EISEN: I want to welcome everyone. Let's see, there are some -- I'll just ask our team. There are some folks standing in the back. Are there seats upfront, where we can put people? There are a few seats here and there up front, so if you'd like to sit down, come on up to front, by all means.

Welcome everyone to Brookings, Governance Studies program. I'm Norm Eisen. And very pleased to welcome you to our event on The Campaign Finance Crisis in America and How to Fix It: A Solutions Summit. The United States is confronting, as you will hear today from our distinguished panelists, drawn from every walk of life, the United States is confronting a crisis.

The Citizens United case and other judicial decisions, in and around that, have combined with a variety of other factors to unleash a flood of biblical proportions. Dark money is swamping the system and bringing a variety of ailments with it. The situation is catastrophic and it calls for solutions. Rather than being among those who wring their hands and believe there is no hope to repair this situation, our distinguished panelists and interveners today, are going to be addressing the crisis (Ringing bell) --

Hello, Mr. President. (Laughter)

Our distinguished panelists and interveners today are going to be addressing the crisis, the aspects of the crisis, what's its exact diagnosis is, you can't cure the disease unless you understand its elements. But they are going to do that with a focus on solutions. So we'll think about the concrete steps that can be taken and that are being taken. They are not always popularly appreciated or understood, but there have been literally hundreds of reform measures in the states and at the municipal level that show real promise of solving this problem, as well as promising solutions that can work on the federal level.

And then we will analyze why we need not wait for these solutions, but the time is now to find those solutions. So, we'll begin with a Keynote Speech by FEC Commissioner, Ann Ravel, introduced by Trevor Potter. They'll go on right after we enjoy a video describing the aspects of the situation that confronts us.

Now we'll be followed by three panels, the first one analyzing the problems, chaired by

Tim Roemer. The second one I will chair, addressing the solutions, and the third one chaired by Issue One's Nick Penniman, explaining why the time is now.

I would be remiss if I sat down without thanking our fantastic Brookings team, Courtland, and Liz, and Ann, and everybody at Brookings who have made this possible. Even for Brookings, this is a very large number of distinguished speakers, and distinguished audience participants. And we hope, as we plan this, because there are so many experts, and I see you out there in the audience, because there are so many experts we hope that the conversation today will be like a dinner party. Admittedly a very large dinner party, we are feeding you as well.

And so we've asked our speakers, for the most part, to limit themselves to three minutes each so we have the vast majority of the time in all of the panels to take questions, comments, ideas, and input from all of you, and to really mix it up, and don't be shy about challenging our speakers on their analysis of the problem, their ideas about solutions, and their ideas about solutions and their explanation of why the time is now.

I also want to thank Issue One, which is supporting us on this event, and have worked with us very closely, and Nick Penniman, who I already mentioned; David Simpson, the Chairman of the Board; John Rauh is here, and everybody associated with Issue One, and the ReFormers Caucus.

Thank you. And I want to thank Dan Burger, who is here somewhere, also for supporting the event. I want to emphasize, highlight, of course, Brookings independence, the independence of those who are appearing in their personal capacity, on our panels associated with these various events. And I want to thank all of you for supporting the event by being here. Okay?

And with that I'm going to take my seat, and we will enjoy a video from former Members of Congress describing the problem that is confronting us, the crisis of campaign finance and the solutions. Thank you for being here. (Applause) (Video playing)

MR. BROCK: Yes. We always talk about that the good old days. The good old days were pretty good though, compared to where we are today the system worked. If you tell me that the problem of money in politics, the distortions that it creates, it's just going to keep getting worse, shoot me. Shoot me. I've got 17 grandchildren; I cannot live with myself at the thought that they have to grow up in this kind of world. There is something fundamental that we had better address pretty quick, or this

country is going to be digging a deeper hole every day.

MS. MORELLA: I think we have reached crisis proportions when it comes to money. A member of congress devotes almost one-third of every day to raising money. How does money enter and interfere in what our legislator wants to do? You are spending that kind of time raising it.

MR. SIMPSON: And remember there was a few years ago of a guy who was charged with giving \$300,000 to a campaign, and they asked him from the bench or from the hearing room: Why did you give that? And he said: Access. To me that's being on the take, and then to have to read in the paper that all the politicians go to sit at the feet of some guy in his private digs, scuffling along the floor on their knees, you know, the supplicant: I need money. I wouldn't do that for anybody. That's disgusting.

MR. DASCHLE: That's the problem. And that's part of the why that Congress is so dysfunctional today. It's they just don't spend the time legislating. People leave on Thursday, they come back on Tuesday, they try to govern on Wednesday these days, and you can't run a country this complicated with the challenges we face, and spend so little time doing so.

MR. HAGEL: Money today, in the American political system, has gone beyond just corrupting the system. I saw it -- in the congress I saw it when I was Secretary of Defense. I'll give a good example, as Secretary of Defense; we asked the Armed Services Committee of both Houses to allow us to do our jobs and phase out old platforms, old planes old ships that we don't need, because we have new technologies coming at huge costs to maintain those.

So the money starts to flow in to influence. Well, they go in and they start to say well, you know what I mean, that we'll have to shut an assembly line down in two years, in your state, in your district, if you let this happen. And so, the things that need to be phased out for the good of the country -- the good of our security by the way -- those decisions don't get made because of that influence from the outside.

Disclosure, transparency, that's where it's really got to start now and not just a façade of disclosure, but real; every dollar in, and every dollar out. And where those dollars go to? All the way through start to finish, that's where you must start.

MR. DORGAN: So number one, a complete disclosure; number two, let's roll this back by finding a way to overturn Citizens United; and then number three, let's give the Federal Election

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Commission some sort of vitamin B12 industrial shot in the backside. And say: Do you know what; if you are not going to do your job you don't get paid.

Ultimately the American people can fix all of this by sending people to the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate that will vote the right way and do the right thing on these issues.

MR. ROEMER: So there's a great deal of concern in our country about lobbying and money, and special interests, and legislators, and what is this connection? Where is it legal and where is it nefarious or insidious? We talk about states being laboratories to fix this problem. South Carolina stepped forward with a solution, de-linking the money and the lobbyists, and the legislator, you can still lobby just can't get directly to somebody in the Legislative Branch.

MR. BRADLEY: There are plenty of things that we can do if we simply mobilize around the conviction that we've got to break this bond between policy and money. I look at history, they've always been moments in America where we didn't think things were possible, and yet they became possible. I mean that's what the abolitionists were all about, that's what the suffragists were all about, that's what the Civil Rights Movement was all about.

We can do these things in America, that's the magic of our system, that the people can actually effect change, as long as they believe they effect change and, quite frankly, if we don't find the answer the future is not going to be bright for America. If we do find the answer, there's no question we are going to lead the world for the next fifty years.

MR. ROEMER: This is not a red state problem; it's not a blue state problem, across the heartland, across America, the Left, the Right, the Democrats, the Republicans, Independents, we all need to work together to fix this. That's why this bipartisan ReFormers Caucus is one of the most unique caucuses in the history of our country.

These are Republicans and Democrats, former legislators, people that know the system better than anybody else. Enough is enough, let's restore our democracy, let's fix this big problem before it results in, as John Adams said: The suicide of our own democracy.

MR. POTTER: That was incredibly impressive. That's a great way to start today. It makes me feel just a little awkward following it; I don't have those production values. So, is there a way we could get just a couple of those ReFormers on the Supreme Court? That would be an awfully good

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start. I've been very impressed by the launch of the ReFormers Caucus. I think it's an important next step in this battle, and Issue One has done a great job in doing it.

I should say, I'm always happy to be back at Brookings as a Non-Resident Senior Fellow, I think is the title, and also a Senior Advisor to Issue One. So I've been following the ReFormers Caucus carefully.

I come before you today with both good news and bad news, and it's the same news; and that is, we have been here before. A hundred and nine years ago, this month, Congress passed one of the first major laws geared toward reducing the corrupting influence of big money in politics. The Tillman Act of 1907 banned corporate contributions to candidates for federal office, and was enacted in response to a crisis in money and politics that has many similarities with the one we are confronted with today.

In the early 20th Century, waves of secret money swamped our elections. Much of its sources hidden from the public, more and more citizens felt that government had become a tool of campaign contributors, rather than responsive to average voters. State legislators and Congress were seen as, in the pockets of economic interests who perverted legislation to serve private purposes rather than the public good.

Disgust with this system, spanned the political spectrum, from progressive Democrats to establishment Republicans; Elihu Root, the prominent Republican New York City corporate lawyer who later became Secretary of State under President Theodore Roosevelt, declared that the influence of big money was, "A constantly growing evil in our political affairs, which has, in my judgment, done more to shake the confidence of the plain people of small means in our political institutions than any other practice which has ever obtained since the foundation of our government;" slightly formal language, but very much what we are hearing and feeling today.

As a result of these concerns, Congress enacted significant campaign finance reforms in 1907, and again in the 1920s; and yet again in the 1940s; and in the 1970s, post-Watergate; and most recently in 2002, with McCain-Feingold.

I suppose one cynical lesson which could be drawn from this history is that reform is impossible; money will always find a way. I believe, however, that the correct conclusion to draw from this troubled history is a different one: that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. True, money will try to

find a way into politics, but our democracy will only survive and succeed if its leaders push back against this excessive influence, maintaining the flexibility and foresight to adopt new policies to regulate in the face of new challenges. Today, we face many such challenges.

One is that five Supreme Court Justices see our Constitution and political system in a very different way than most of their predecessors did. They appear opposed, both ideologically and temperamentally, to any regulation of money in politics, and heedless of the consequences for our democracy, no matter how disastrous. But as the consequences of their flawed policies become clearer by the day, even some of them are forced to acknowledge, as Justice Kennedy recently did, that the system is "Not working the way it should."

Another challenge is the Federal Election Commission, which has been transformed from a vitally important agency that emerged as one of the great triumphs of the post-Watergate reform movement, into an actual impediment to enforcement of the law. And I should know, I used to be the Chair of the FEC.

In my time on the Commission, I worked hard to enforce the law, both zealously and evenhandedly, and even though we regularly confronted issues that touched on some of the most controversial political questions of the time, the Commission almost never deadlocked 3-3 along partisan lines when voting on enforcement matters.

FEC Chair, Ann Ravel, who will follow me to this podium, will tell us just how destructive the current partisan paralysis at the Commission has become.

The challenges we face today are the result of several failures of our system of government. The failure of five Justices on the Supreme Court to recognize the reality of money's corrupting influence, the failure of the FEC, IRS, and other regulators to enforce the important campaign finance laws that the Supreme Court has left on the books, such as contribution limits and full disclosure of money spent in elections.

Then we have the failure of Congress to enact new legislation in response to this crisis, such as the citizen funding and FEC reform bills that have been proposed. One reason for this is that Congress, as we saw in the film, has become completely addicted to the current flawed model of campaign funding. Fundraising weekends at resorts, many hours of breakfast, lunch, cocktail receptions,

and dinners in Washington, plus call time for hours every day that members are here, has changed representatives into beggars, and giving well-financed interests a near-stranglehold on their time and attention.

Democratic Congressman Steven Israel, who will be with us today, has just announced his retirement from Congress, citing insatiable demands for time for fundraising as a principal reason. Republican Congressman David Jolly has just proposed that members of Congress be banned from soliciting contributions themselves while in office, to address this problem.

These combined failures have created a government derided by the left as a corrupted political system that promotes economic inequality by enacting policies favored by billionaires, and corporate interest. But it is also derided by the right as a corrupted political system that promotes crony capitalism, union entitlement, and government waste.

And, most importantly, it is a system derided by voters. More than 80 percent of voters of both parties, according to one recent poll, believe that the government and our political system is out of touch with the average citizen it is meant to represent.

We are gathered today to discuss what can be done and what should be done, indeed, what must be done to resolve this crisis. And we are gathered not a moment too soon.

Now, FEC Chair, Ann Ravel, will give us her keynote analysis of the FEC and what can be done. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. RAVEL: Thank you very much, Trevor. And thank you Norm and Brookings for organizing this really important and timely summit.

A vast majority of citizens, as has been said, of every political affiliation are deeply troubled about the state of campaign finance and its impact on our country. So, bringing people of such diverse perspectives here today to discuss the crisis in our representative democracy and to consider tangible solutions, is a major step forward.

Voter turnout in the last election was at the lowest since World War II, and those people who did vote were far more polarized than ever before. Far fewer individuals are contributing to campaigns, while the total amount of money that is being contributed has skyrocketed. Meanwhile, a large number of predominantly minority and poor people, including voters, are not being engaged by the

campaigns, because micro-targeting is solely focused on likely contributors, or voters.

The resulting disengagement from politics and from government will inevitably create a permanent class of outsiders and further exacerbate the crisis that we see today. As the agency that was meant to ensure fairness in the electoral process, the FEC, as Trevor said, is really important. It should be a leader in restoring public confidence in political institutions, instead though, the FEC is broken, and ineffective, but at its worst, it has a major responsibility for causing the crisis that we are experiencing now. And I'll tell you why.

But first I have to set the record straight about the FEC. Those who defend its current dysfunction claim that the FEC was intended to do nothing. They attempt to hide behind recent Supreme Court decisions, to argue that there must be sensitivity in enforcing the remaining law. And they claim that the FEC has no authority to require disclosure of campaign spending because, after all, Congress didn't pass the Disclose Act.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The Supreme Court's recent decisions explicitly rely on effective enforcement of disclosure laws, and Congress has charged the FEC with enforcing all campaign finance laws, including disclosure. No further legislation or direction from Congress on this is necessary. Additionally, to say that the FEC was intended to stalemate is absurd.

Congress established the FEC in the wake of the biggest scandal and constitutional crisis in this country since the Civil War. Its purpose, as the congressional record clearly shows, was to restore public trust by providing full disclosure of campaign finance transactions and to encourage participation in politics.

Yes, the FEC was intended to be balanced in its enforcement, but it's utter nonsense to say that Congress intended to establish a disclosure and enforcement agency after Watergate, to do nothing. Congress created an agency to investigate and penalize illegal behavior. The FEC has an obligation to enforce the laws that have been upheld by the courts. It's not the FEC's job to divine what the Supreme Court might decide in the future.

The fact is, the Supreme Court and many lower courts have actually affirmed the very parts of the law that are the most important to us in this election, disclosure of all sources of political spending, and the prohibition of coordination between candidates and independent spending groups.

Unfortunately, the FEC Commissioners, who routinely vote as a bloc, don't believe in either the purpose of the FEC, or the governing bloc. As a result, they continually undermine the effectiveness of the agency in large and in small ways. I want to make it clear though, while the bloc that I mention, manifests itself by party, the divide on the Commission is not partisan, it's ideological.

Here's a few examples of the dysfunction, and trust me, only a few because I was only given 15 minutes, but I could talk for hours.

Though the Supreme Court has affirmed the impropriety of coordination between candidates and outside groups, as a protection against corruption, the Commission has actually created loopholes to allow coordination. The Commission permits a candidate to attend to attend the Super PAC fundraiser and speak, even if there are only two people in the room. That's not a fundraiser, that's a meeting.

The Commission has also authorized a candidate's campaign consultant, and a congressional Chief of Staff to solicit unlimited sums of money for a Super PAC supporting that same candidate. That's not independence, that's teamwork. The unlimited amount of coordination that the Commission permits is probably best exemplified by its unwillingness to even investigate the case, where a candidate's mother ran a Super PAC, expressly supporting her daughter's candidacy.

The bloc adamantly refuses to merely clarify outdated rules on coordination to account for the existence of Super PACs. The consequence of all of this very real, there is now a profusion of single candidate Super PACs which appear to be coordinating with candidates, controlling and even running campaigns, yet the Commission has never investigated a single Super PAC coordination case.

Purposeful delays by the bloc mean that any decisions will be made long after they matter to the voters. We are just now considering complaints from the 2012 Election, that's four years ago, an eternity in politics. Commissioners hold over cases allowing the Statute of Limitations to run, and reducing our ability to impose penalties. The gaming of the enforcement system isn't a secret.

In fact, in a public last summer, Commissioner Goodman justified his decision to hold up cases during Chair year, because the respondents were Conservative Republican groups. When a case is considered, any enforcement of significant violations is rare. In closed meetings, some of the Commissioners act as if they are the attorneys for the respondents; cross-examining the FEC's

nonpartisan career lawyers for their recommendations.

The repeated attacks on FEC lawyers contributes to the notoriously low morale at the agency, but the bloc then refuses to investigate unless there is irrefutable evidence a violation occurred, this is preposterous. As the FEC's own policy says, investigations are appropriate when a complaint credibly alleges that a significant violation may have occurred. That's all. That's a very low standard.

And if the bloc finally agrees that the facts are clear, and there was a violation, even an egregious one, they won't impose meaningful penalties. Here is what I mean. In 2006, the average fine was \$179,499; in 2014 it was \$12,890. As election spending increases dramatically penalties have plummeted.

In a recent case involving a former candidate who actually admitted to spending campaign money on personal uses, like, at a Build A Bear Workshop, which doesn't have a lot of relationship to the campaign, the bloc was only willing to seek a penalty on a very tiny, tiny fraction of what he actually used. Even when the FEC should be protecting donors, it's a struggle. The FEC has evidence of PACs spend the vast majority of donors' money on their own staff; with none of the funds going to the candidates they allegedly have raised the money for. Yet the bloc wouldn't ask Congress for authority to protect the donors to those PACs.

Possibly the clearest example of this; see nothing, hear nothing, do nothing bloc, is its refusal to prevent foreign money from influencing American elections. The law prohibits foreign money in all elections, but the bloc wouldn't even investigate a clear violation involving foreign money in a California ballot measure, saying that our rules are unclear. Then they refuse to do a rulemaking to clarify the rules.

We all know about them, it's been mentioned, the scourge of dark money in our elections, more than four times as much dark money has been spent at this point in the election cycle as was spent at the same time in 2012. The FEC has not enforced the unambiguous law requiring these groups to register as political committees and report their donors. The federal disclosure agency is actually encouraging the proliferation of dark money.

This disgraceful state of affairs at the FEC is common knowledge among political insiders. Candidates and elected officials are aware that they won't be held accountable for breaking the

rules, and that has led to much of what we now see. A free-for-all benefiting a few and alienating everybody else; 84 percent of Americans say that money has too much influence in politics, but most think that nothing can be done, as the American people and law abiding candidates rightfully expect the laws to be followed. When they are flouted without consequence people lose confidence in the process.

These irresponsible actions of the commission have led to further distrust of government and disassociation from the political system. Studies have shown that people who are disassociated from the system are more likely to have little respect for the law. As Joseph Stiglitz has pointed out, effective government requires shared action, and trust is necessary for shared action, without it, acceptance of the law and the reliance that business depends upon, such as in adherence to contracts, will break down.

We can't resign ourselves to the campaign finance system that we now have. Citizens have to be active participants in militating for change. I know that today's event will provide the solutions that people need. There are, as Trevor mentioned, bills in Congress, and one yesterday was introduced to remedy problems at the FEC, and I do hope that Congress will take action.

There is also a simple fix. The term of every other commissioner has expired, many of them, long ago. I've suggested it, and other panelists will discuss, a blue ribbon committee to identify potential commissioners of stature. Additionally, there are many internal processes at the FEC that could be changed to make the Commission more accountable to the public. Most importantly we have to find ways to get people civically engaged.

People must be incentivized to be involved politically and in government. Technology can be a really important tool but ultimately I think we have to do the hard work to help people recognize that their participation really does matter.

It's said that campaign finance issues, and many people have told me this, I'm sure they've told others, that they'll only be addressed when there is a scandal. The truth is, that campaign finance today is a scandal. I am really looking forward to hearing the views and recommendations of the panelists on how to address this crisis. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: Thank you, Ann. And we've asked three of our distinguished audience to prepare short 3-minute interventions, and then we'll open it up to the floor. First I'd like to call on Peter Schweitzer, the Author of *Clinton Cash*, and the President of the Government Accountability Institute; and

Peter, you can come on up to the podium, that will be great.

MR. SCHWEITZER: Thank you. Thank you very much. It's a hard task to follow the very thoughtful comments from the Chairwoman, and from Trevor Potter.

Let me just begin by saying that I come at this from a slightly different perspective, in that I think the paradigm with which campaign finance reform is often looked at, is what I call: The Mr. Smith goes to Washington paradigm. And the paradigm is basically like that great Jimmy Stewart movie—that you have public officials that come in, and you have these outside influences that are trying to corrupt them.

And so the paradigm becomes one of essentially a form of bribery. I would contend that increasingly today the problem is more one of extortion, that the challenge not so much from businesses that are trying to influence politicians, although that certainly happens, but that businesses feel and are targeted by politicians in the search for cash.

Think about it this way. What you have with money and politics is an influenced marketplace, and you have buyers of influence which would be these outside interests, corporations, labor unions, et cetera, and on the other hand you have sellers of influence that would be elected political figures. What happens when we regulate most marketplaces in the United States; insurance industry, finance? The vast majority of the regulatory burden is placed on the sellers of goods and services.

And I would contend that we need to adopt a similar approach when it comes to campaign finance reform. I'm not saying that there isn't grounds for good commonsense restrictions on the activities of donors, there are, but what I am saying is that I think a lot of the problem is related to a political class from both political parties, that are trying to create demand for their services, and the example I would use in this case would be the high tech industry.

The high tech industry, 20 years ago, gave very few contributions of any sizable proportion to political campaigns. Today they have some of the largest lobbying operations, and they give some of the largest sums of money. Why did that happen? Did they just wake up one morning and say, we decide to give our money away? No. It's because they face an increasing regulatory regime that in a sense require them, or they felt compelled to become involved in the process.

What I would contend is, we ought to look at solutions that regulate the sellers of

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influence, not the buyers of influence. An example that I proposed in a book wrote called *Extortion* is, do in Washington, D.C. what is done in all the 29-state capitals, including Florida where I live. Where, there are laws and rules that say specifically that a politician, when the legislature is in session, cannot solicit or receive campaign contributions, period.

Now, imagine if we did that in Washington, D.C., if nothing else we would get a lot shorter congressional sessions. Thank you very much.

MR. EISEN: Okay. And now we'll ask John Pudner, the Executive Director of Take Back Our Republic; to come up to the stage. John is going to plug this new book by Richard Painter. I'm going to do the pre-plug. Richard was supposed to be with us today, and then there was a family emergency, he couldn't join us -- everybody is fine -- to announce the publication of his new book, an outstanding analysis from the Conservative perspective, of why campaign finance reform is needed, "Taxation Only With Representation: The Conservative Conscience in Campaign Finance Reform", by my friend, Professor Painter, who was ethics czar in the Bush White House, my counterpart in the administration that preceded Obama.

I will say one last word of introduction, John, one of the thrilling aspects for me, for all of us here at Brookings, in putting this event together, was to realize that the strength of feeling and emotion on both sides of the aisle, and indeed on every point of the political spectrum from right to left on this issue, both by leaders, but also at the grassroots, is equally strong. And we have wonderful representation from every from every part of the political spectrum, including John.

MR. PUDNER: To emphasize that point I'll start with a confession that Chairwoman Ravel was the first Obama appointee I ever complimented on these things. So the quick story behind that is prior to our launch in "Take Back Our Republic", I ran conservative campaigns, and we did feature the President a lot in commercials, but it was generally to motivate voters. But then Breitbart ran a piece by me shortly after starting this up, and the piece was on this absurd Los Angeles case, in which a foreign company contributed to an American vote, this company was international, wasn't American-based, it was founded by a German who had been indicted for tax evasion.

I read this case and said, well, I've talked gridlock in Washington during campaign, talk about gridlock in the FEC. How did these guys not investigate this? And to my shock, realized the three

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Republicans had stopped this from happening, and that the hero in the story was Chairwoman Ravel. So I had to go out and compliment, and actually had some of my conservative friends read that Breitbart article and complimented me, and two days later emailed back and said, wait a second, are we on the wrong side of that issue, how did that happen?

So it is absurd, just the gridlocks, which leads us to the need for FEC reform. We have, I hate to say, Wisconsin, I think, had a great model, at least for the basis, for the formation which was, unfortunately, taken out, and so I went up there to complain about that and to browbeat, you know, some friends in the past. Just went the wrong direction, got away from disclosure, et cetera.

I made a lot of new friends there who never thought I'd be their side, they even got mad at (Inaudible), when I attacked some liberal groups for breaking (c)(4) limits so, you know, were equal opportunity offenders. But the point is, we are going to have to be a little bit of offenders. Yes. If the FEC is going to be given some teeth to enforce the law, and if they are the body that has to enforce the law so that they, in essence, can stop anyone else enforcing the law, that's a problem that has to be fixed.

So FEC reform has to be central in the makeup, and the ability to break ties, et cetera. We will touch, perhaps later in the day, on some early proposals on stopping what we consider enlisted credit card contributions in the hundreds of millions, or undisclosed it could hide illicit contributions on tax credits which in effect, threw both of President Reagan's elections, which we think do bring people back into the voting, and on other disclosure matters, but we'll save that for later.

But I would just like to say, and thank you for the preview on the book; I was going to tell everyone, you could get the first copy if you hurry to the back, I was informed a few people found it on Amazon, we haven't announced it yet, so you'll get the sixth or seventh copy if you want, in the back, that we are giving away today. But I think if you go through and see the case Dr. Painter makes, Why Conservatives have to fight for campaign finance reform from all different sides.

And much as Peter did in "Clinton Cash", Peter points out that "Clinton Cash" was his first book exposing corruption. We have to be aware, and I think this, chapter by chapter, takes across where this fight has to go from the Conservative side. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: Thank you, John. And our final intervener is Mike Petro, the Executive Vice

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President of the Committee for Economic Development and Business Organization. And just as we've heard from all sides of the political spectrum we've found, in preparing for today that there's -- that business is fed up, and Mike is going to share some reflections.

MR. PETRO: Well, thanks, everyone, for asking me to be here. I want to thank Norm, and Trevor and Ann. Of course your leadership has been paramount, and I wish we had you about 10, 15 years earlier, but it's been great to participate with you.

I represent the Committee for Economic Development; we are about 180 CEOs, business leaders from around the country. CED has been involved in a democracy, campaign finance issues, and it goes back decades, and it's really based on the view that a strong and vibrant democracy is good for the country, it's good for the economy and it's good for business, and the break downs in the political system, whether it be corruption, or perceived corruption, is bad for our system of American capitalism. Our organization feels strongly about this.

So in 1999 we released a study called Investing in the People's Business; among other things, it had recommendations for various reforms that were reflected in the McCain-Feingold Legislation. In fact, Trevor served as an Advisor on that committee.

And we succeeded in getting 300 CEOs to come out against soft money, and when BCRA was passed our members were elated, they really felt like they were in a good government, good democracy effort, but the air was let out of their sails just a few years later when groups started to circumvent the law, and we had a situation where FEC was not enforcing BCRA.

And I have to tell you; really, we lost a lot of our members with this issue, because they believed, as business leaders, if this thing is rigged why did we go to all this trouble? And so that was the sad moment, but CED kept at it, and we retained most of our members within the Campaign Finance Reform Committee, and we released a study called, Building on Reform which, essentially, like other people in the room, it basically said at the time -- and this was 10 years ago now -- but it said at the time, that the FEC is dysfunctional, that it's not carrying out its duties, and it's not capable of carrying out its duties.

And so we held up the Federal Reserve system as a model back then, we really felt like we ought to create a system that looks like the Federal Reserve, and that the FEC should be

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restructured, to bring members who are prominent members and come through the system through a nominating commission, maybe similar to those that are commended at the state level for judicial nominating committees, and that that ought to happen. We also believed at the time that there ought to be an odd number of commissioners, and that the commissioners, their term should be staggered.

And I'll close with one point, and I see Congressman Roemer over here, my business leaders were impressed by the way the 9/11 Commission carried out their work. In fact, we had Governor Kaine come and talk to our business about bipartisan efforts to fix things. And they talk all the time about that effort, about how Governor Kaine, and Congressman Hamilton, and others came together to fix a problem, and they did it in bipartisan way.

And so my members, business leaders, who are not as political as a lot of people in the room, their view is. Why can't we have a 9/11 Commission? Why can't we hold this up the way we did with -- like with the Federal Reserve. So, they are asking those questions, CED is engaged in these issues, and we are happy to work with this kind of bipartisan coalition, and I would just say that, you know, if we could do it through the 9/11 Commission, we can do it through the FEC and its restructure.

Thank you. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: Okay. And now, we turn it over to all of our experts, in the audience. My Brookings colleagues should be moving around. Yes, moving around the room with a microphone, if you'd like to speak please indicate. Any questions or comments from the audience?

Well, I'll warm you up then. Ann, what's your reaction to Peter's suggestion that we need to regulate this as we do other markets?

MS. RAVEL: It's not quite in my purview, so it's -- and maybe Trevor will be able to speak more to that, but certainly that is -- what he suggested I think is probably somewhat accurate that that's part of the problem, that's part of what's going on here, but I don't think I can respond. But Trevor is ready.

MR. EISEN: Trevor, should we regulate the sellers?

MR. POTTER: I think on this one, all roads lead to Peter's solution. Whether you view this as extortion, and I think it varies and it depends on the circumstance, but certainly I've been in -- particularly when I was spending much more time practicing law, representing people who were

regulated, I had clients who would go to the Hill for a meeting, then they'd go back to their office and the meeting was a professional meeting on a matter of interest to their company, and the person who is on a committee and they had gone to make their nonpartisan pitch.

The go back to their office, and they get a call saying, I am a fundraiser for Congressman X, and I wondered if you'd like to serve on our committee for a fundraiser next week. And they call us and say, is this legal? Can I say yes? Do I have to say yes? That extortion side is clearly there. Then you have the buying access influence side, and I think that's clearly there. Then you have the side that simply looks at the effect of it, never mind the cause.

The effect is, as several members have articulately been saying now for a while; I can remember Senator Woods saying this when he left the Senate: It takes too much time away from what we are here for. We are paid to go to meetings, have hearings, talk to our colleagues think through problems, draft legislation, all of the things that we think Congress does, and we are not doing it.

I heard the Head of a Foreign Policy Institute respond to a question of, what's the greatest national security threat facing America, by saying: that's easy, it's our campaign finance system. He went on to say, it's because the members aren't spending time on national security problems, they are spending time raising money. So, whichever your analysis is, I think you come back to, we've got to find a way to have members come to work and do their work and not spend their days fundraising.

And so the expedient which many states have adopted, for a variety of reasons, including all of these, of saying you can't accept campaign contributions while the legislature is in session, has this effect of saying, you are going to have to change the system, because I can assure you, members of Congress running for election can't imagine how they would do that without being able to raise money morning, noon and night in Washington right now. And if that's what takes -- that's the impetus to come up with a different way of doing this, I think it will have the right effect.

MR. EISEN: -- asking the first question? Thank you, Trevor. Whether it's a blessing or a curse, my mic can be heard equally well with or without my voice -- with or without the microphone. When President Obama warned in his condemnation of Citizens United in the State of the Union in 2010, when he warned that these foreign funds would creep into the system, there was controversy. Now there can be no controversy that it's happening, and is being ignored.

We'll hear from this gentleman. A quick question please, and then from that gentleman sitting on the aisle with his hand up, you were the first two with hands up.

MR. SKINNER: Hi. I'm Richard Skinner with the Sunlight Foundation. My question is, do people see the Federal Election Commission as an inherently flawed entity that needs to be replaced by a totally different structure, such as a single-headed nonpartisan agency? Or is it just -- it's temporarily dysfunctional because of the people who have been appointed to that, and then how can we get better people appointed to the FEC?

MR. CLARK: Yes, I'm Charlie Clark, with Government Executive. Along those lines, within the FEC, is the atmosphere collegial? Are there angry debates among the -- How much time do you spend hashing out these issues versus just doing administrative management?

MS. RAVEL: Okay. With regard to the first question, you know, obviously ideally it would be better if Congress were to do something and constitute it differently, but I'm a pragmatist, and I'm old, and so I'd like to see change more quickly, and I actually think that the problem, as Trevor said, people used to actually come to conclusions at the FEC.

And I really do believe that the problem now is that there is agency capture because of the way that the Commissioners are appointed, and it would be so much better if there was a different process for appointing to get people who truly believed in the mission and believed in the (inaudible).

MR. POTTER: I would add to that, that I think from my time there, the FEC could perfectly well with its current structure, with the right six Commissioners. However, with the wrong Commissioners, with the split we have a deadlock that was really unthinkable when I was there. We've learned that we have a structural flaw. So, yes, it would be great to have the right six Commissioners, but to avoid this situation occurring again, having an odd number; certainly having a different way to appoint them would make an enormous difference.

MR. EISEN: We'll take just one more pair of very quick questions, and then I encourage everybody who had their hand up to save your questions, because we are going to delve into these issues for the remainder of the day, and we'll have ample opportunities to call on you, and I'll try to remember who you are. Okay. Two quick questions, the lady here in red.

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Betsy (Inaudible) with the (Inaudible) and Veteran's Affairs Facts. I

was just curious about the suggestion about having the FEC run more like the Federal Reserve, and how that could possibly be done, organized, run?

MR. POTTER: So, at the time of this recommendation, which again, was 10 years ago; even the Federal Reserve since then has gotten a little bit more politicized, hasn't it, right? So back then they were looking a mechanism, or something that they could hold up, that has, over time, seemed to transcend politics and ideology, and they looked at the Federal Reserve as an example.

And so it was really held up as kind of a model, it wasn't -- you know, it wasn't like we had pass a law to make it the Federal Reserve, but why can't we have something where you have thoughtful, prominent Americans be part of a commission, and you keep ideology and politics out of it. Maybe it's pie in the sky, but again, you've got to remember these guys don't do this for a living, they are executives, they do other things, right.

And so, their view on this was, well, geez, you know, these guys at the Federal Reserve seem to have it down, why can't -- you know. And so there's a little bit, our members are a little bit naïve, I think, but I do think that their thinking about having some sort of mechanism of bipartisan, prominent thinkers. The people that were on this video, those are the kinds of people that they were thinking of. Alright?

MR. ROEMER: Warren. That's the kind of volatility that we see at our politics today. We don't know who the two nominees are going to be, and I would say very directly to everybody in this room and across the country, some of the outsiders are connecting to the American people right now with their messages not only on the economic dislocation and the inequality in our country. They are directly connecting to the American people on the political dislocation and lack of trust of the American people in the system.

Too many people believe donors have more influence than voters. Too many people are starting to say when they think about running for Congress, money is determining not only who wins our elections, it's determining who even decides to run in our elections, and widows out good people before they even get involved in our great democracy, especially so many of our young people that are now considering getting involved in politics, and they say "Tim, Steve, Tim Wirth, Connie Morella, how do I do this if I don't know a millionaire who can fund my campaign?"

As an ambassador, and I know Norm can speak to this, as you travel around the world you hear other people talk about America and oftentimes it is I want to go to America because it is the greatest place in the world to live and pursue your dreams, but we're starting to hear people say now more and more as you travel around the world, "What happened to America?"

Now other countries are starting to know that you have a pay-to-play system, and they're starting to work your system internationally. They're paying and playing in American politics. That's not how our system is devised, ladies and gentlemen.

On the sixth anniversary of *Citizens United* as Washington is divided and dysfunctional, the American people are pretty united across the board. Seventy and eighty percent of the American people, Republicans and Democrats, are all saying we want to fix our political system. Go to Washington and fix it.

We've got a great panel; people who have worked in Washington, D.C. and who either represent our ReFormers Caucus, 116 former Democratic and Republican members of the House and the Senate; and governors and secretaries of cabinet positions, but we also have a current member of Congress who -- Steve, I don't want to question how smart you are right now, but anybody who can be talked into coming from New York to Washington on his week off in the middle of a snow storm either is really dedicated to fixing our politics or loves the snow. (Laughter) And as a fellow mid-westerner I love the snow. I can't wait for the blizzard coming over the weekend. Washington might finally get a real snow storm.

So, as we get into their stories I want to introduce the panel and then introduce the panel and then introduce our distinguished interveners. First of all I want to say Steve, a friend of mine, Steve Israel, Congressman Israel, thank you so much for joining us and coming down from New York. When Congress is out of session your distinguished service both to country and to your state, I think everybody recognizes the stellar and superb service.

My friend Connie Morella, a Republican from the State of Maryland who so many of us worked with in a bipartisan way when we served together, and she was a doer and somebody of action, and my good friend from Colorado, Senator Tim Wirth, who long ago recognized the challenges in the world of climate change and started the clarion call a couple decades ago on this important issue.

So, we'll get to them. Let me first of all call on Jeff Peck, Principle of Peck, Madigan, & Jones for a very quick intervention.

MR. PECK: Sure, thanks, Tim, and a pleasure to be here.

MR. ROEMER: Want to stand up? Do you want to come up here? What's easiest for you? Might take you 30 seconds to get up here and that's off your time.

MR. PECK: I have a limited amount of time. I won't spend any of it walking. So I have three -- just three very, very quick points. Number one, we've all talked about *Citizens United*. I think it's important to remind ourselves of one line in that decision from Justice Kennedy, and I'm quoting here. "We now conclude that independent expenditures including those made by corporations do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption," so I think just by the reaction here and the reaction to anyone with a functioning brain around the country, you would see now -- I think it was probably apparent then, but it's woefully apparent now how wrong that statement is.

I want to focus for a second on the appearance of corruption, and one thing we've talked about a lot is gridlock in Congress, but there's something deeper than that and that is this the cynicism and anger that so many Americans feel and their view that the government -- the system is not on the level and is rigged against them, and that contributes to the gridlock we see in Congress, but it's an underlying fundamental problem -- what Tim talked about in terms of failures and problems from within, and that is something we really, really need to recognize.

Second, when it comes to Presidential campaigns I think it's not really corporations; we ought to focus on a specific problem when it comes to Presidential campaigns and that is contributions from individuals. You may have seen a *New York Times* story last summer talking about 158 families essentially funding half the Presidential campaigns writ large. That is a stunning number in terms of a small number of individuals and they're Democrats and Republicans, although they tend to lean Republican who are really electing the next President.

One example, just to mention, and I'd encourage you all to look at a Bloomberg story yesterday about Robert Mercer and his funding of the Ted Cruz campaign. This is a gentleman who has been very, very successful who's contributed \$11 million so far to the Cruz campaign. That's part of \$38 million that Ted Cruz raised from the super PAC for his campaign, so even if Ted Cruz had no popularity

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at all, and one of the reasons you see so many people in the race is because they have a super PAC behind them, and it's not because -- the super PACs don't guarantee success. Rick Perry learned that. Jeb Bush is learning that. Sheldon Adelson and Newt Gingrich last summer, but it's the appearance of corruption that that creates.

Lastly, I think there's hope and reason for optimism. I think as a result of *Citizens United*, citizens are united, and if you look at a recent poll you see rare unity among Americans; 84 percent saying that money has too much influence, 66 percent saying that the wealthy have more influence, and the real reason for hope is 39 percent think fundamental change is needed and 46 percent think the system think the system needs to be completely rebuilt, and then (inaudible) of cynicism and anger towards government I take comfort in that higher percentage of people who believe we really need to fundamentally reform the system.

MR. ROEMER: Thank you very much. (Applause) Chuck Marin -- Chuck's an Executive Vice President with Prime Policy Group. Chuck, you've got a quick -- two and half, three minutes. Take it away.

MR. MARIN: What Tim hasn't made plain is that Jeff and I are lobbyists, so we left our scarlet elves at the door (laughter), but we are active participants, practitioners, in the substance of the issue at hand. I'm going to read a brief statement and ask a question.

I firmly believe that the financial arms race created by current federal election laws is a major underlying cause of rising public cynicism about a system that seems rigged against everyday Americans which in turn damages the public's already shaky confidence in the pursuit of the American dream which is in my mind still the great differentiator between the citizens of this country and people around the world; the belief in the dream.

Along with income stagnation and wage inequality, the chaos created by current campaign finance laws seems to validate for many voters that hard work and playing by the rules now longer makes their votes impactful to the legislative and political processes.

A number of the other participants have referred to the public polling numbers, the preferences of the majority of all Americans. Donald Trump observed in the very first Presidential debate last year speaking of his opponents on the stage, and I'm paraphrasing here. He said, I gave them of

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them money for a reason. When the waiting GOP candidate says that he's clearly inferring that a successful businessman -- as he is -- he very consciously invested in elected officials to gain a strategic advantage in the marketplace.

Growing public cynicism about the ability of very wealthy donors to game the system through super PACS and less than transparent disclosure regulations in turn ultimately corrodes the public's fundamental trust in government.

Here's the irony. Both national political parties are consumed by this fundraising arms race and the preservation of the status quo which is ironic to me for two very significant reasons; the first, that this directly contradicts the preference of most voters, and secondly and more importantly, their intransigence around campaign finance reform is occurring at the very same time when the percentage of all Americans willing to self-identify as a member of either party is either declining, stagnant, or at record lows.

So here then is my question for the group: When public disgust with the influence of money on the legislative process is palpable and growing, when the brand value of national political parties are hitting record lows, why don't national political party leaders recognize that their support for thoughtful campaign finance reform could only enhance the standing of their increasing unappealing national political brands?

MR. ROEMER: All right, Chuck, great question. Connie, I think we're going to go right to the panel and transition seamlessly to you to start, and maybe at the end of your three minutes you can start to answer Chuck's good question.

MS. MORELLA: (inaudible)

MR. ROEMER: Whatever you want to do. Where do you feel --

MS. MORELLA: Can you all see me if I sit here? Thank you. That was a nice introduction, and I do want to thank -- the whole concept of the Solutions Summit. When I see standing room here I've got to congratulate Brookings and Norm and Issue One that I'm involved in, and I want to thank Mike and Nick and Tim and all of the people who are here because we all realize that we do need a solution to this money and campaign.

Well, as you know, I'm Connie Morella and I approve this message. (Laughter) I was

thinking with regard to my small time on this panel that January is named for Janus. Janus was a god from Greek mythology that had two heads; looking back and then looking forward, and that's really what this Solutions Summit is about. We look back at what should be, maybe where we saw some of that happening, and we look to the present where it isn't, and we look to the future where we have great hopes.

Well, as I look back at my first Congressional election in 1986, I was trying to remember how much I spent. It was about \$300,000. That was a lot of money. That was a lot of money at that time. How did I raise it? I raised it by having fundraisers, having meetings. I went to all my friends, all the organizations I belonged to, everybody who had any contact with me. They were afraid to see me for fear I was going to ask them for some money, but I'm talking about small amounts of money from the people that I wanted to represent. I wanted them to be part of my team, and that's what happened, whether they wrote a check for \$25 or \$250, they all got a thank you note, and I had a commitment. I had a commitment that they were going to watch that election closely.

Now, you also know, since some of you were my former constituents that I had maybe the most highly competitive district I think in the country, with Democrats and Republicans. Now that is -- we should have more of those districts because they are motivator for you to do what you may want to do but might not be pushed to do, and that is to reach out, to reach out, to make sure that you have the Democrats and you're listening to them. You're listening to the Republicans, and you're working out what you think the solution was that would benefit your constituents, your conscience, and your country, probably in reverse order.

Subsequently what happens now is the same election would cost close to \$2 million, and a spigot never turns off, and whereas I had a connection with constituents -- I'm not the only one that does but -- had a connection with these constituents. When you're raising money from super PACs and from PACs you just don't have that kind of, I guess connection I keep using -- that simpatico. They don't really feel they trust you because they don't know you, and you just don't have that sense when you are involved with legislation.

And so as Charlie Cook once said -- who was a constituent -- he said, "That Morella, she knows her district. She will go to the opening of an envelope," and truly (laughter), truly I did, and another

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problem is when you're raising all that money from super PACs and from PACs, you don't know your own colleagues. That's another sense I have of the need for connection. If you respect people and know them, then you will listen to them, and even if you disagree you're going to be respectful of that, and you're going to find some kind of a solution.

And so, I wish I had more time to talk about how OECD colleagues from other countries looked upon the United States in terms of this outrageous money and campaigns, and they would talk to me about it and say, "What are you going to do in your country? It costs so much money for these campaigns," so we could take a leaf from their policy in terms of bringing about some changes, so this is a situation where we people, we pay for it, and we pay for it highly.

MR. ROEMER: Thank you, Connie. (Applause) Connie, in order to make this as quick as possible and get the questions right away, let's go right to Senator Tim Wirth and then we'll conclude with Steve Israel.

MR. WIRTH: Make it as quick as possible here. My district was probably a mirror image of Connie's. As a Democrat in a Republican district and she was a Republic in a more Democratic district, what you had to do to get elected at an earlier age was very different from now.

This is a panel about governance, and there are just a couple other points that have to be made, and as part of this package one of those relates to districting or re-districting which has changed so dramatically.

In the State of Colorado it used to be redistricting was done by a legislature and a governor together to spread populations out. Now it was done in a very different way. A Black community is all in one district, a Hispanic community is all in another district, and you lose completely the -- a great deal you lose the diversity that you need to get the job done that Connie was talking about; the outreach. That districting becomes a very important part of this whole puzzle. That can be solved. I think it's relatively simple to solve compared to the broader campaign finance issue.

A second item which Tom Daschle mentioned in his comments on the screen earlier is scheduling in Washington. Tip O'Neal had a wonderful rule that we were three on and one off. You were in Washington for three weeks. You were gone and you could do whatever you wanted in that other week; go home, go to your district, do whatever you wanted to do. But we were expected to be here with

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votes on Monday and votes on Friday. We were here, which meant you got to know your colleagues and you were forced to legislate. In fact, I suppose now you go and spend all your time in a booth dialing for money, but this at least forced everybody to be here, and that's a very important part of the governance issue.

The third part of this which has been discussed is disclosure. I hope we can come back to that. Let me use the rest of my time to talk about the impact of this on the substance of governance. I was involved deeply in two issues: telecommunications and energy climate. In telecommunications in the House it was a group of members of Congress on both sides that helped to lead to the breakup of AT&T. Why was that important? Because we were moving from analogue to a digital world. It was extremely important, and AT&T didn't want to make that move. Similarly, we wanted to open up the lines that were being paid for, the telephone lines, to be used by effectively cable providers and the Internet. The telephone company resisted that, and the networks were furious at it.

Now, why is that important for this discussion? Because I don't think that ever would have happened in the current environment. I think we would have been buried in money to say no, no, no, no, and a lot of people were taking big chances to make the votes and make the pressure to defy AT&T and defy the networks. They could not do that now. I greatly admire what they did. At that point they were a very hard set of votes.

Similar sort of phenomena exist now related to climate change. You all have watched that, and they -- people, do they know any better I ask -- I say to myself well maybe they do know better, but maybe they don't. Maybe the fact is that the only people they talk to are people with a vast amount of money who have a huge amount of stake in this issue. They're not talking very broadly to other people, and so they haven't learned the issue, and they don't know how complicated an issue like climate is and how it demands a real attention to detail.

Final point which we have not talked about which I do think demands a lot of discussion is how the current gap between rich and poor is in fact reinforced by this access to the powerful by a few. Our country is governed and not in a democratic way, but it's governed by a very few individuals who have access to the tax code, the regulatory code, a whole variety of privilege-building mechanisms that is making the gap between rich and poor in the country even worse. I hope can come back to that. Thank

you very much.

MR. ROEMER: Thank you, Tim. (Applause) We have a great tradition in the House and the Senate that you can yield back time that you don't use, and I want to compliment both Connie and Tim -- right on time. Tim, the pressure's on you now.

MR. WIRTH: Same deal, I promise.

MR. ISRAEL: I want to thank Ambassador Roemer and Senator Wirth and Congresswoman Morella and my former Blue Dog colleague, Congressman John Tanner, who is here who is my mentor in the Blue Dogs.

I specifically invoke their titles because even though they're former officials, I'm about to be a former official, and I'm told you get to keep the title as Congressman even after you leave, so this seems like a very good deal to me.

I'm a recovering member of Congress, and the best part of my recovery is I get to look at my schedule every day, and it is missing the two worst words in Washington, D.C.: "call time", the process by which you dial for dollars. I no longer have to see "call time" on my schedule. It was tantamount to picking up a schedule in the morning and seeing from 1:00 to 3:00 "waterboarding" (laughter) because it was, for me -- it became personal torture.

I've been in New York. Several days ago I visited a friend of mine and a very significant supporter of mine, John Catsimatidis, who happens to be a staunch Republican, ran for mayor of New York City. He's worth a considerable amount of money. Had a nice conversation. Ended the conversation, walked out, turned back, went back into his office and I said, "Hey, John, I can't tell you how -- what a delight it was for me to talk to you without asking you for money." And he looked at me and he said, "Steve, I can't tell you what a delight it was to have you come and not ask for money."

Let me quantify this; been in Congress for 16 years. Some of you read my op-ed in the *New York Times*. Four thousand two hundred hours of call time, 1,600 fundraising events, \$20 million raised just for my election in a competitive district excluding the fund raising that I did as chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee for four years, sitting in a cubicle as if you're selling penny stocks, only it's shares of democracy that are being traded.

And let me conclude with two points, respectful of the time. One, easy point; for the

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record, I cannot think of one member of Congress on either side of the aisle who violates their principles for a PAC check. I don't worry about that. I've never seen it happen.

What I do worry about is the catastrophic opportunity-cost. Every hour on call time is one hour less on policy. Every fund raiser is that much less time that you have sitting with somebody on the other side of the aisle talking about the sweet spot of compromise on infrastructure, or gun safety, or climate change, whatever it is.

And finally, here's what I do worry about. I am in charge of messaging for the House Democratic Caucus until my term expires. I'm the Chairman of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee which means that I spend a lot of time in focus groups trying to figure out what's going on. The reason that Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump are doing so well is self-evident. There is a catastrophic loss of faith that most people have in institutions, particularly the institution of government. They saw an oil spill in 2010; government couldn't fix it. A hurricane in Louisiana in 2004; government couldn't fix it. And now they believe -- they witnessed a meltdown in the economy; government's not giving them the tools to stay ahead in a radically changing economy, and now they've come to the conclusion that the government is the problem.

In 2014 -- I'll just give you this statistic that quantifies it: In 2014 as the Chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee I witnessed this: one-third of eligible voters went to the polls to support a Democrat or a Republican. Two thirds stayed home because they don't believe that they have a voice or a vote that matters because they don't have a PAC check or a lobbyist, and that is very dangerous for our democracy. Thank you all very much. (Applause)

MR. ROEMER: Let me start with you as our audience gets worked up. I think they are ready to pounce on some questions here, but many of us read with compelling interest your op-ed in the *New York Times*, but fill in the blank space for us here. Describe for our audience what kind of atmosphere you're in when you're making these phone calls; what the cubicle looks like, what you're eating (laughter), how many hours you're there, how many times you have to come back? Is there a member of Congress sitting next to you competing to try to beat you to a phone call? What's that atmosphere like? How do you describe it?

MR. ISRAEL: Forgive the parallel, but if you saw the movie, *The Wolf of Wall Street*,

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
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which happened to take place in my district, you saw these people sitting huddled in cubicles selling stock, you know, and making that quick -- that fast sell, right, that fast sell. You've got to get them on the phone, no more than 15 seconds, make the sell and move on, close the deal, always be closing, right.

Well, that's kind of what it's like.

You sit in a cubicle with an assistant. Some members have the assistant -- and there's a notebook with a page about the donor that you're calling. It has the donor's name. It has the donor's address. It has the donor's spouse. As I said in my *New York Times* op-ed I once found myself saying, "How's Sheila? Oh, Shelley. How's Shelley?" (Laughter) The donor history, the history of donations, what other members of Congress they gave to, and so I was a Blue Dog, and if they gave to John Tanner I would know they gave to John Tanner, and that was an affinity. It's an affinity call, and some of my colleagues do what called double-dialing and triple-dialing, and so I'm talking to Tim Roemer and asking him for the maximum allowable under the law while my assistant has another donor on the phone prying so that I don't waste any time dialing when I could be talking and closing and closing. And we fueled by junk food, and I mastered the art -- my finance assistant --

SPEAKER: What's your favorite junk food?

MR. ISRAEL: I'm now gluten free, so there's not a lot available. But actually my finance assistant was actually convinced that I had a very serious medical problem because I mastered the art of saying that I needed to use the men's room like 15 times an hour to escape doing these calls. You've got to get your prostate checked, Congressman. (Laughter)

And finally this, finally this, and this I think is -- it illustrates my point about the opportunity-cost. When votes are called and you're in the middle of call time, it becomes an impediment. Think about that. When votes are called and you're in the middle of call time, it becomes an impediment. I do not believe that our founders ever conceived of a system where anybody viewed votes as an inconvenience that was getting in the way of fund raising. It should be the other way around. It should be the other way around.

Unfortunately too much time is spent on this which is why we so desperately need reform that will not only level the playing field but will create a life for members of Congress where they can focus on what matters back home, and not this constant requirement that they raise the money to defend

themselves from the super PAC attack every November.

MS. MORELLA: I wonder, Tim and Steve -- I wonder if you might want to comment on what the consequences are if you do not go over and make those calls, and also what happens with the kind of money that you are bringing in. Is that not a factor? Tim? Anybody?

MR. ISRAEL: I'll answer very briefly. When I chaired the DCCC and respective recruits would sit with me and talk about what it's going to take, I would paint a tough picture for them. I would say picture yourself in two years, it's October, you're sitting in your den, you're sitting in your house, you turn on the television and you suddenly see the most vial and despicable commercial against you funded by a group you've never even heard of. Your only response at that point will be did I make enough calls two years ago to raise the amount of money I'm going to need to defend myself, and that's where that opportunity-cost is.

MR. ROEMER: I want to turn to Tim real quickly and say we often hear that members of Congress spend 40 percent of their time raising money, sometimes 60 percent of their time raising money, sometimes higher when it's an election cycle, so you can imagine when you're not doing the fund raising and you're only spending 20 percent of your time in your committee, the committee oversight hearing on Syria and the problems we face there and the solutions on that very difficult foreign policy issue, you can multiply out how this aggravates the problems of governing. So, Tim I turn to you and say -- and these are tough confessionalists -- did you spend 50, 60, 70 percent of your time fund raising? What figure would you put on it, and what is the impact on the legislative process?

MR. WIRTH: I know exactly what it was. In the last two years before a Senate campaign, we kept track because we knew it was going to be bad, and I spent 85 percent of the time that I had -- this was not time in committee hearings or on the floor -- no official -- outside of official Senate business 85 percent of my time was spent raising money, and I was very good at it. I raised a lot of money for the campaign committee. I raised a lot of money for myself. I was determined after my first election I was not going to get outspent again, and that was just -- that was not going to happen. It was defend yourself at all costs, and if you have that kind of a bankroll there, the other person -- the other people are going to be less likely to go after you, but it's enormously debilitating, and it's not only that it's - - takes a lot of time and you're sitting there and you're doing it over and over and over again, but it's really

corroding of who you are.

It's just incredible corrosive to be there making that kind of request of people for money that you know a lot of them -- why are they giving you money? Not because you're their best buddy in the world -- because they want access. They want to make sure that they can get in the door the next time. Anybody who says that isn't true is lying. People want access and this is the way they get access. They're not getting access through town meetings. They're not getting access because they know -- they're getting access because of the money, and that is also -- you realize that because I always had that very clearly in my mind. That is what this is all about, and I find it very, very corrosive.

MR. ROEMER: So let's turn to the audience. Yes, right here in the purple. Here comes the microphone over from the side. Please tell us your name and a quick question.

MS. BOCKROCK: Okay, I'm Eleanor Bokrock. In the 1970's I worked in the Senate for Bill Proxmire who famously did not take any campaign contributions and spent less than \$1,000 on his reelection campaigns, which probably couldn't happen now and I find it ironic that with this terrible redistricting problem that protects incumbents to a large degree, we nonetheless have this spiraling cost of election campaigns, and I'd like to know some of the reasons. I think some of it is to try to prevent people from running against them, but it is a disgrace in every way I can conceive of, and I'm glad I was in the golden age of the Senate, I guess.

MR. ROEMER: Connie, do you want to answer?

MS. MORELLA: One of the things that I'm most concerned about -- I teach a class periodically on women in politics, and a book has just come out and that is Running from Office or Running from Elections, and I'm concerned that the young people are really not looking to public service as a career; elective office or even working on campaigns and government, and I think that's a deleterious effect.

I think you see it also manifested in terms of the voter turnout when you talk about safe districts the way it used to be a little bit more equitable, and therefore you got people who are not voting in primaries unless they feel they have a particular cause that they're going to follow through on, but many people just don't vote in primaries in safe districts, and young people are turned off. Others have turned off also.

I wanted to also pick up again on the concept of doing that dialing for dollars that the DNC and the RNC and that is they publish -- the parties will publish how much money you were able to bring in, and so it's kind of like the shame or praise game (laughter), and it might be manifested in little ways like something you wanted in a bill or something that you were looking for; a committee assignment or whatever. So you also have that that you have to face as a member of Congress, and that's very debilitating in terms of what you can do.

MR. ROEMER: Yes. I want to go toward the back. Yes, with the beard, right over here.

MR. OLSON: I'd like to ask -- Tom Olson's the name. I'd like to ask a sort of two-part question. The first part is very naïve. If two-thirds of the districts are not competitive, why are people raising all this money? The second part of the question is does anybody look at where all the money gets spent?

It seems to me that back in the day, 40 - 50 years ago there was a rule about how much you could spend on election campaigns, and TV time was tightly controlled. Is that where the problem is? Is there such a big industry of getting money from what politicians have to spend, or what they do spend that that's where part of the problem is?

I'm reminded of somebody talking about the two sides of the coin. I mean part of the coin is raising money. Part of the coin is who gets the money once you've raised it?

MR. ROEMER: So, we've got a perfect person to answer that. Steve, maybe talk about your own election or leadership PAC and raising money for the party. You've got three buckets that you're --

MR. ISRAEL: Two responses, Tom. On the issue of if two-thirds of the districts in Congress or non-competitive, why is that money raised? For two reasons. The unintended consequence of redistricting that protects incumbents is this: When I'm on the members-only elevator or in the members' gym which are the most candid places on The Hill because reporters can't --

MR. OLSON: I'm going to ask you about quotes from there later so you better -- (laughter)

MR. ISRAEL: -- here's what I hear from validly tea party members. They say to me I've got to raise money because I'm going to catch a primary. For anybody who believes that they don't need

money in the bank to defend against a primary in a safe district I have two words: Eric Cantor.

Nobody knows this better than John Tanner who had a bill for national non-partisan redistricting, and so I don't care where you're from, if you have a district that is competitive in a media market like mine, New York City, \$1,500 a point, you've got to be able to defend yourself against a race, and if you have a safe Republican district in Virginia or a safe Democratic district in New York City, you've got to defend yourself against the potential of a primary, so you're going to raise money. That's number one.

Number two, even if you don't have a primary -- Connie talked about that list of members who raise money for their colleagues, for the most vulnerable among them you have an obligation to support the team, which means you pay dues to the NRCC or dues to DCCC and you have to help contribute to candidates who have real races, so that's why there's no such thing as a member of Congress who doesn't raise money; there are those obligations.

And with respect to where it's spent, I do find it ironic, and I hope I'm not going to agitate anybody from the media here, that the same television and radio pundits who rail against a broken campaign finance system that their salaries are paid by campaigns who are funding commercials on those stations.

I've decided -- I'm kidding now, for the record -- but I've decided that after Congress here's what I want to do. I want to find a small television station somewhere in Ohio (laughter) where there is a competitive state House seat and a competitive Congressional seat and a competitive state-wide attorney general's or governor's seat where I know millions and millions of dollars are going to just flood that TV station in ads, keep it for two years and then flip it. (Laughter) It would be a very profitable enterprise, and that's part of the problem.

MR. ROEMER: Is that why we have trouble getting attention to this issue, Steve? Is that what you're saying? Tom, just one 30-second add-on to this to show the convoluted and insidious nature of the money and its impact on legislators and the negative part of this that compounds over and over again. As you move up in your seniority in Congress and you move to higher positions on committees, instead of what we all would intuitively hope in our system is that person becomes an expert in foreign policy on the Intelligence Committee helping us figure out complicated issues around the world and

traveling to those places to understand it; agriculture policy.

Instead the very reverse often happens where the party goes to those people who are the ranking member and the chairman and says you have to raise even more money to keep your gavel, to be a chairman, and you're going to do less time protecting our country and understanding how quickly our system is changing and the need to have oversight hearings or travel or learn about the complexity of your job.

So the very reverse process is taking place in our legislative system which is so destructive and puts it in a downward spiral. Rick, and then I think we've got a -- how many more? Do we have a lot of time? How much more time do we have?

MR. SMITH: Hedrick Smith --

MR. ROEMER: Okay, Rick, --

MR. SMITH: Hedrick Smith. I run a website "Reclaim the American Dream." Tim, that video that you opened with with Bill Brock and Tom Daschle and Allen Simpson and Connie and yourself was so impressive, and my question is -- and the Reformers Caucus is so important -- my question is today, those people, what specific reforms are they prepared to come out as a group and back because we need bipartisan backing from public figures like those. Disclosure, limits on campaign financing, public funding, rolling back *Citizens United*; what are the concrete steps that that group can come together on?

MR. ROEMER: I know the next panel, Rick, is going to be addressing this. Let me give you the 30-second answer and also have Connie give you a 30-second answer on this because I think it is such a profoundly important question.

We've had several working lunches, teleconference calls, Skypes, everything to try to put together a set of principles on behalf of these 116 former members of Congress; what can we agree to and how do we put forward these principles to try to get change and reform?

We've agreed on a number of them. One: disclosure, immediate disclosure and transparency. Two: Ann was talking about this with Trevor earlier; enforcement procedures and changing the FEC. Three: empowering and encouraging the states as laboratories of democracy to push for referendum and reforms to clean up the state-level politics which -- talk about this later -- so many states

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are initiating and succeeding on across the country from the east coast to the west coast. And also fourthly, jurisprudence; that we need to challenge the court on *Citizens United* and on *Buckley vs. Valeo* and overturn these decisions, and a President can do that with one or two openings in the Supreme Court, or Congress can trigger that. So, there are four or five issues right there. I think the fifth one I talked about very briefly in the film was severing the ties between lobbying and direct contributions to legislators particularly when they're in session. Connie?

MS. MORELLA: Initially when I got involved with this I thought it was like Sisyphus pushing a rock up and it kept coming down; however, we've got to continue with moving ahead and this is showing that it can be done.

Tim, very nicely articulated. Some of the high points that will come out in the next panel because they've tried to work this so the panels will discuss different things, and one of the major things is that people feel turned off. They have no trust in government. This whole concept is to empower people, to let them know they have a role to play, that they can become involved, maybe referenda in their states.

My state has one on -- for the Montgomery Council. It has -- the governor who was the first governor elected as a Republican in many years -- he took campaign finance money and he won despite an incumbent Lt. Governor, so those are some of the things, but particularly empowering the people and showing them some of the things that have been done as Tim mentioned that we could emulate and expand on.

MR. ROEMER: One last question and then we're going to go to the next panel, with a short break. All the way back there in the pink long shirt right on the aisle.

MS. MCGEHEE: Hello, I'm Meredith McGehee.

MR. ROEMER: Hi, Meredith.

MS. MCGEHEE: It's nice to see you (inaudible) many of you who I've lobbied for many years when you were up on the Hill.

I have a political question since this is the political panel. I've lobbied on McCain-Feingold and many previous bills, but it's very tough if you up on the Hill right now to find anyone on the Republican side to lobby, to even talk to on these issues, which is a change.

When we look at the video and we see a lot of former Republicans talking about this, it's

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heartening, but it's very disheartening when you try to go up there now. I would like to know your political assessment and reasoning of why the Congressional leadership in particular but the Republican Party in general has taken as its position such hostility toward any efforts to address this system, have kind of bought into efforts at disclosure, are now anti-First Amendment efforts for any kind of campaign finance reform, are kind of squelching money as speech. As the politicians who are experts in this area, I think it would be interesting to get your assessment of what's happened up there to change that dynamic.

MR. ROEMER: Tim, you want to take the first shot?

MR. WIRTH: Let me just take a brief bit of the history of this. When we first tried limitations, Mitch McConnell always used to say, "Well, disclosure is all you need. Disclosure is the best antiseptic," and we operated under that for a long time that we were going to agree upon disclosure -- but that stopped in 2010 after the disclosure bill died.

We thought we had a majority of votes. Many of you were working on that. We thought we had a majority of votes, and the reason it fell apart was that the National Chamber of Commerce said "We have in our sights enough members of Congress that we think a very significant change can occur in 2010 if we can raise a lot of money, but we can't raise that money if the sources of that money are disclosed," so therefore the disclosure bill stopped cold in 2010, and there was this explosion of money that came in focused on a lot of incumbents.

Now, that gets you to a point. Now, where do these people come from who are just getting elected on that front? Disclosure is something that they don't want to see. Campaign finance reform is something that they don't want to see because they have got that -- their survival and their role with the -- at this point the Republican party, I'm afraid, is extraordinarily tied to their tradition. Steve might have a better sense of this than I do, but I think it's a very dangerous issue.

I think we've got to get a lot tougher on this. I think we play an awful lot of Mr. Nice Guy, and I think much of what has to be done on this is a direct challenge to a lot of people in movements around the country, and there are those kinds of movements that are related to poverty, related to climate change, related to women. Which people are, for example -- and people are saying, "Is your Congressman corrupt? Is he on the take?" I think this sort of thing and getting these issues out -- they're not going to get out because we say campaign finance is going to do it. I don't think that gets you

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anywhere. We've got to put a much stronger, a much sharper edge on it, and I think going after some very difficult questions is perhaps one effective way of doing it.

MR. ROEMER: Steve, last word on this?

MR. ISRAEL: Very briefly let me respond to your question by taking you behind the scenes, thirty seconds. When I became the Chairman of the DCCC I was told that our revenue breakdown was one-third from members of Congress, dues to DCCC; one-third from political action committees and advocates; and one-third from grass roots donations. Towards the end of my cycle at DCCC one-half of all our revenues were coming from grass roots -- one-half -- in \$3 a day contributions totaling millions of dollars.

And so, I went to -- I alluded to this in my *New York Times* piece, "Confessions of a Congressman." I went to one of those fancy Washington black-tie dinners where everybody's eyes lift above your shoulders to see if anybody better is around or somebody from the cast of *Veep*, and I was talking to a Republican leader, a current Republican leader, and he said, "Congratulations, you've been beating us." The DCCC -- if a minority party had beaten the NRCC every single month of every single quarter of every single cycle, how is that possible? We're in the minority. He said, "Congratulations. You're killing us on fund raising because of your grass roots." And I said, "Well, thank you." He said, "It doesn't matter. By November we'll have all the super PAC money," and that's why they don't want to make those changes.

MR. ROEMER: So instead of ending our panel on a skeptical or cynical note (laughter), I want to encourage you, get your cup of coffee, come back in three or four minutes. The next panel is called "The Time is Now." We're going to talk about hopeful, practical, common sense, and maybe even bipartisan solutions to get this problem solved, and I think you'll see a panel that believes we can solve it. So, thank you, guys --

MR. WIRTH: Can I ask as well that we say something at some point about the revolving door which I think is a very important element in all this. Maybe --

MR. ROEMER: I'm sure it will. Thank you all. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: I'm very pleased to welcome you back and welcome you to our panel on solutions. It's my conviction that solutions are at hand, that it's nearer than we think. The United States,

the genius of the United States in its three century history has been that every time the country has been faced with a crisis, every time, we've risen to meet the crisis. We don't always do that great in between crises. We sometimes drift a little bit, but we never fail to meet those enormous existential challenges. And what you've heard here so far today is that the campaign finance situation is the latest in the series of those crises. And just as the video -- Senator Bradley put it very, very eloquently -- just as the civil rights revolution on racial issues was thought to be insoluble and inconceivable, suffrage and women's rights, how can we possibly solve that problem, the great wars of the 20th century, the situation was far more dire, and yet every time we've risen to the occasion. This panel is focused on how we can do the same for this crisis, viewing it as the most fundamental one today that goes to the heart of our democracy.

On the panel to address possibilities on the national level we have Fred Wertheimer, my friend, the founder and President of Democracy 21, and John Bonifaz, the co-founder and President of Free Speech for People. They'll speak to solutions at a nationwide level. They will be followed by a state legislative perspective. Dan Wolf, the Chair of the Committee on Steering and Policy of the Massachusetts State Senate, a democrat, and Roger Katz, the Chair of the Government Oversight Committee of the Maine State Senate, a republican, will speak about experiences in their state and the explosion really of energy and solutions that are taking hold at the state and local level around the country. And then, finally, because we've heard again and again about the importance of the judicial perspective, the importance of the judicial branch, Justice Kennedy's own statement, the swing vote in Citizens United, that the system is not working as it should be, and it's another lesson of American history that Supreme Court decisions seem like they're written in stone, until suddenly they're not, and it's merely a question of one vote changing on bringing along the other four Justices who were opposed to the decision in Citizens United to reverse this travesty of jurisprudence that the Court wrought. So we'll hear from two Judges to speak about the situation in their states, and that's Justice Alan Loughry, Justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, and Justice Cheri Beasley, Associate Justice, North Carolina Supreme Court. And then, finally, we'll have our interveners, Bruce Freed, the founder and President of the Center for Political Accountability, Lucas Welch, the Executive Director of the Pluribus Project, and Dan Berger of the Berger and Montague firm and the Progress Project.

So without any further ado, Fred, over to you.

MR. WERTHEIMER: Thank you, Norman. In 1974 when the Presidential Public Financing System was enacted we almost passed Congressional Public Financing. We passed it in the Senate, lost in the House by 47 votes. I was a campaign finance reform lobbyist for Common Cause and I thought, this is easy. We will have congressional public financing by the end of the 1970s and then I can go figure out what else I want to do.

Well, here we all are today. For most of those who work on campaign finance reform, public financing of elections remains the most important legislative reform. And there has been progress made in the states on this issue. New York City has a model that is used by many. There are other important reforms. My thoughts on this are contained in an op-ed that I published on Huffington Post today that outlines a reform agenda. Those who believe no serious campaign finance reform bills can be enacted today are right. But those who believe these reforms can never be enacted are wrong. History is very clear here. In the 1970s and the 1990s we had major scandals and they were followed by major reforms. We are going to have major scandals again and we are going to have opportunities for major reforms. With this corrupt campaign finance system it is only a matter of time before the scandals really break out. The American people are clearly ready for change. The largest national reform movement in decades now exists and it's growing rapidly.

I'd like to address the rest of my brief remarks to one very important way to fix this system without legislation and without the need for the support of the Supreme Court, and it's the use of technology. Technologies have made disruptive and revolutionary changes in virtually every sector of our society. They can do the same thing for campaign finance. I've got a paper in the back for those of you who want to see the work we're doing on this. We're working with a fellow named Joe Rospars, the founder of Blue State Digital, who headed the effort for Obama that raised a \$1 billion from 8 million donors online. We think that you can make revolutionary breakthroughs in technology, and that is worth spending an awful lot of time. It's a way for dramatically increasing the role of ordinary Americans in this country and we don't have to go through the friendly Congress right now to do it.

Without a new role for ordinary Americans the dominance of big money over our political system is simply going to grow. And what's happening in this election is extraordinary. We've never seen anything like it in history. It's billionaires of the world unite.

Thank you. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: John?

MR. BONIFAZ: Thank you, Norman. I will focus my remarks on two critical solutions, both which are necessary for ending the big money dominance of our political process and for reclaiming our democracy.

First, we must press for a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which overturns the Supreme Court's rulings in Citizens United and Buckley v. Valeo, and which allows for campaign spending limits in our elections. And, second, we must advance a new jurisprudence on money and politics which lifts up the fundamental promise of American democracy, political equality for all.

Since our launch in January 2010 Free Speech for People has been leading the work on both of these fronts. We also support all the solutions Fred has just outlined, including public funding of elections. But as important a reform as public financing is it will not fully address the continued threat posed by today's regime of unlimited campaign spending. In the current post Citizens United landscape, any system of public financing is now threatened by the targeted and unlimited spending of outside groups. No one has a First Amendment right to drown out other people's speech. A 28th Amendment allowing for campaign spending limits would ensure that big money interests may not drown out the voices of everyone else in the political process. Since the Citizens United ruling 16 states, more than 650 cities and town, and more than 150 republican officials across the country have joined the call for a 28th Amendment. And in September 2014 the U.S. Senate held a historic vote, with 54 senators voting in support of this Constitutional Amendment. We have done this before in our nation's history, 27 times before, 7 of those times to overturn egregious Supreme Court rulings. We have amended our Constitution to defend our democracy and to expand our democracy. We can and we must do it again.

And while we build this Amendment movement we must also build a new jurisprudence which moves beyond the purported free speech rights of the wealthy to the equal protection rights of all of us. Today's campaign finance system operates as an exclusionary wealth primary inconsistent with the equal protection clause and the promise of political equality for all. We need a new jurisprudence which is grounded in that basic promise.

Now there are those who say it just cannot be done, that it is impossible to enact a 28th

Amendment and to create a new jurisprudence. But let us remember the words of Nelson Mandela, who said it always seems impossible until it's done. The growing movement to reclaim our democracy is on the right side of history. (Applause)

MR. WOLF: So this will be different because I'm not a politician, or I haven't been for a long time. I'm not a lawyer and I'm not a Judge. So just real quickly, I grew up at a dining room table; my mother was an American history professor at the University of Pennsylvania, my dad a business person. As a mechanic and a pilot I started an airline. I have three daughters. They were growing into a world that I was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with as the world that would be our legacy.

And so seven years ago I decided I was going to run for office. What an eye opener. I come from a background where when I walk through the maintenance hangar at my airline I look at a mechanic and think that person should have just as much political power in a democracy as I should have as the CEO of the company. This morning I started at our ticket counter at the Boston Airport and our baggage handler, she should have as much power as I have as the CEO of the company. And we are so far away from that.

And this dialogue today reminds me of the old joke, how many therapists does it take to change a light bulb. Well, the light bulb has to want to change. (Laughter) My concern about trying to drive the solutions through the political system is we have a political system that is now loaded with people who are in the political system because they are comfortable with doing business this way. It has been generationally long enough so that we have attracted the wrong people. And to expect those people to change without a cultural change in the system is going to be really challenging.

So to see what Massachusetts is doing, go on line because I'm going to throw out a radical thought for you. An individual who I probably could not agree less with on every issue, a guy named Grover Norquist, who is actually on the other side of the political extreme, however if there is one thing that's working it's the pledge he has made, the no new net tax pledge, which in my opinion has gone a long way to shutting down our government relative to investments in the future. That notwithstanding, it has been successful relative to changing the culture among a lot of the republicans especially in our political system.

I would submit that we should get the 10 or 20 best, smartest people on campaign

finance and on achieving the goals that we're trying to achieve into a room and come up with a pledge that we can ask politicians, both those running for office and those in office to make relative to how they will conduct themselves during the campaign and how they will conduct themselves in office. And I would submit -- and this is a little oxymoronic, if you will, that we need to raise some money so that those who are unwilling to agree to -- let's call it democracy's promise -- get unelected or don't get elected in their first campaign. Because we are not going to change this easily from the inside out.

A Constitutional Amendment, I agree we need to do it. Legal changes both at a state level and at a federal level, I agree we need to do it. But we need to work on changing the culture. And some of that will be sticks and some of it will be carrots, but I think this group, embodied in this room, has the intelligence to come up with a pledge and to get out there, hit the streets, using technology as a leverage point, because that's a technology that we have that's new to us, and force our political leaders to agree to conduct that is worthy of our democracy, that is worthy of the mechanic on our hangar floor and the baggage handler, not just the CEO of our airline.

Thanks. (Applause)

MR. KATZ: Good afternoon, I'm Roger Katz; I'm a State Senator from Augusta, Maine, a republican, and a frequent consumer of his airline by the way. (Laughter) I'm here with my colleague, John Brodigan from the State of Maine, who authored the referendum I'm going to tell you about in just a second. But I just wanted to tell you that John gave me some good advice when I first ran for office. He said you can fool some of the people some of the time and those are the ones you should concentrate on. (Laughter) It's worked out pretty well so far.

So as you may have heard, Maine just did something which I think is important. We're one of the small laboratories of America. We have passed a public financing for House and Senate members, candidates. You have to just get a whole bunch of \$5 contributions and you can get for senator up to \$25,000 or in public financing. And that system worked pretty well because it provided for matching funds to those same candidates if you're privately financed opponent went out and out spent you or if a bunch of independent expenditures came in against you. But after Citizens United that matching funds, part of it was thrown out as being interfering with free speech. And guess what happened -- the participation level in clean elections went down and down and down.

So a bunch of bright people in Maine, including John, put together a referendum question which just passed this past fall which attempts to deal a little bit with the increasing negative impact of money in politics in our state. And it does three things primarily. The first one it does, it allows you to go out and get more than the initial base amount of money if you get more and more and more \$5 contributions. So for instance, as a State Senator now I have to get 175 \$5 contributions to get to \$25,000, but if I get all the way up to 435 \$5 contributions I can get as much as \$60,000 and run a good race against a privately financed candidate. The numbers in Maine are a little lower. The second thing that the referendum does is to increase the penalties for interfering with our campaign finance law and violating it. The penalties have been so low that it's essentially just been a cost of business for people from outside who wanted to come in and violate our laws. That's important. And the third thing we did is to copy I think what's done in some states, and to say in any campaign for a candidate that if there is outside money that comes in they must identify in each of their ads, radio, TV, or print, their three top donors. It's getting at least a little bit at the issue of transparency, so we'll have a better idea of knowing who's financing these campaigns.

And I think it was a very referendum. We're going to put it into place now, but it really is nibbling around the edge because that's about all we could do given the Supreme Court cases. So I am so excited to hear about the idea of changing the Constitution or hear again about it, and hear about things that are going on elsewhere because it's only those kind of fundamental things which are really going to change things. I mean right now a guy last campaign said, you know, my \$5 makes me a player in our political system. That's not true now.

Thank you. (Applause)

JUSTICE LOUGHRY: You know, I feel like one of the presidential candidates the other day. There's so much to say on this and the debate the other night -- I want to say give me 30 more seconds please. There's so much and so many of the comments echoed earlier were so important. Let's step back a bunch of years. I'm a six year old kid, I'm fascinated with politics, I'm not exactly sure why, but I know that it's something very important. Wind the clock forward, I was a direct aide to a governor, I worked for a United States Congressman, I was the senior assistant to the Attorney General. Some of those people wonderful individuals, not saying otherwise, but I got to see the system in a much different

way and instead of being fascinated I became very frustrated. So that culminated in this book that I put together. I looked at my State's history in West Virginia from 1861, two years before statehood, until now and looked at it very critically. I put the blinders on. As somebody said earlier I'm an equal opportunity offender -- I don't care what you're registered -- and went into this idea of vote buying and corruption in early years until now with the massive amounts of money that pour into political campaigns. And I put this book together, Senator Robert C. Byrd, Senator John McCain wrote the forwards, democrat, republican. Senator Byrd, who was always against amending the Constitution, except for one example, and that was the amendment that was discussed. So I put this together, I told my wife -- I mean I really slammed some people -- it's just an honest look at this (laughter) -- and I said we may need to move out of the state, but I certainly will not be able to participate in politics in any meaningful way.

Let's jump back to 2004. A coal operator put \$3.5 million into the campaign for somebody running for our Supreme Court and against another candidate. That individual won the election. That individual sat on a case where there was an \$85 million turnaround in that case. So because of that our state put in a public funding program. I was the first person to participate in that, I qualified, I raised the donations as you're discussing. I ran against literally millions and millions of dollars and I won an election. I mean this is supposed to be about solutions and in writing the book and talking with others and people, I do think people are frustrated. They feel jaded, disappointed, but mainly they feel helpless at the end of the day. And I'm telling you there are avenues to reform.

I have 30 second left. I'm just going to jump over here and switch gears for a second to the matching funding. When I qualified for this funding, the individuals who wanted this bill passed actually had me in federal court trying to knock down part of our law which dealt with the funding.

My time is about out. If we have questions I want to address that. My point is I think there's a way that this can still be utilized when it comes to judicial elections even though you're not going to use it when it comes to other elections. So there are still possibilities out there. (Applause)

MS. BEASLEY: In North Carolina all judges are elected. And candidates for the North Carolina Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court run statewide elections. In 2006 North Carolina started a public financing program, and really that's sort of a misnomer because it really was an assessment of \$50 for each licensed attorney in the state that sort of created this fund, and then of

course there was check off money available. But that was really how the elections for the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Courts were financed.

2012 was the last time we -- so for a six year period we had public financing. My Supreme Court race was in 2014 which means there was no public financing. 2014 was my fourth election. I had two as a State Trial Judge; I had one for the North Carolina Court of Appeals where I did have public financing in just the same way that Justice Loughry described. You raise a little bit of money, that fund will match, and it was successful. In 2014 for the Supreme Court I didn't have that option. And so it meant calling folks and trying to raise money for an election.

I heard Representative (inaudible) before talk about the CT term, call time. And so while I was balancing the work of the Court, often reading at 2:00 and 3:00 o'clock in the morning, there's no other way to raise money from folks other than to make phone calls. And there are a finite number of people who are interested in appellate judicial races. Most lawyers frankly don't care because they don't practice before the Appellate Court. And so it is very difficult. The fact that we're even having this discussion here today is so impressive because most people, even in our respective states, don't even know that they are electing Judges. And they may know about the trial court Judges, but they certainly don't know who the candidates are for the Supreme Court, and they don't have an idea of what's hanging in the balance.

Let me say this, in 2014 \$1.2 million was spent in Supreme Court races in North Carolina. There were four candidates on the ballot, and that money was spent on two of us, okay. About \$500,000 of that money was spent on me. I was specifically targeted. And for all of the races across the country it was mostly women who were targeted. So the outside money -- that in my race was spent by the Republican State Leadership Committee, but let me be clear, this is not a partisan issue. This is about judicial independence, and it's making sure that we do have fair and impartial courts and the money of course is spent -- and they're candid about it -- making sure that they take over State Supreme Courts so that they follow their agendas. Well, there's something wrong with that. And so we've got to be reticent in making sure that our judges are in fact fair and impartial and not beholden to anybody who's willing to pay money for their decisions. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: So when you start to assemble the threads of this tapestry of change that

we're trying to weave, whether it's the power of small donors that we've seen revolutionize and energize campaigns, the history of getting things done, as tough as it seems through Constitutional amendments, when you have the energy at the grassroots that we've experienced today at every point on the political spectrum, the things that have worked, the progress that has been made at the State level, the demonstrable programs that have a positive effect, the over 600 -- there are over 600 state and local government bodies that have spoken out objecting to Citizens United. Fourteen states have endorsed or are moving towards endorsing the Constitutional Amendment. When you hear this array of possibilities you see how the threads could start to come together to make this possible.

Now, when we go to questions from the audience we're going to push on the propositions that all of you have put forward. We're going to test them, we're going to lean on you to think about what are the additional ingredients that are needed to catalyze these promising elements into change. But before we do that I want to call on our three interveners who have additional insights of value, things that are making a difference in other aspects of the political system. And starting with the business world, calling on Bruce Freed to describe some of the things he's done.

MR. FREED: Can I come up there and do that?

MR. EISEN: If you like.

MR. FREED: That would be easier. Thank you. Norm, thank you very much. And it's a pleasure to be with all of you today. What I wanted to do is bring a different perspective to dealing with solutions of money and politics, and reigning in the money that is flooding the system today. We really need today to be innovative and look outside the political system and the regulatory system. And I want to talk about an approach that the Center for Political Accountability has been taking that uses corporate governance as an instrument to engage companies and to achieve disclosure and accountability of their political spending. This is with corporate funds and it involves much of the money that goes in for dark money.

Why is focusing on companies so important? Because they're the biggest spenders. According to Open Secrets, when you look at their figures business outspends the second largest spender, labor, by 15-1. So you really have a preponderance of money. This would be at the Congressional level, at the state level, that comes in from corporations. Now, a great deal of that money

is not disclosed and it's not required to be disclosed. But what the Center for Political Accountability has done in working with our shareholder partners is use the corporate governance process, engaging companies through shareholder resolutions and through dialogue to adopt disclosure and accountability policies. That has taken off. The Center has an index, it's called the CPA Zicklin Index. We've been doing it for five years. This last year, 2015, we did the entire S&P 500 and found that over 300 companies have some level of political disclosure and accountability. It means that we've found that a quarter of the S&P 500 have a policy on giving to 501(c)(4)s. Either they disclose if they give or they don't give to (c)(4)s, and (c)(4)s are really a major source of dark money. You also have disclosure of trade association payments, the portion of company payments that are used for non deductible or political spending. The companies today that do not engage in disclosure and accountability are really the outliers. We have found that through the calls that we get with companies, through the work that we do on the CPA Zicklin Index, I think what's very important is that companies have come to recognize that political spending poses a risk. They are taking actions to address this and, you know, I think what is very significant is that this is being done within the confines of Citizens United. So Citizens United really does not block all approaches to reform. There is a great sphere that's very important that needs to be addressed. I think there's a strong foundation that has been built in this area that needs to be built upon to be able to achieve further success, but it's an important lesson that you need to be creative and innovative to achieve results, which I think we have shown that we have been able to do, and that is a lesson for others.

So, thank you.

MR. EISEN: Thank you, Bruce.

MR. FREED: Thank you. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: If the 20 VIPs who we've already had speak here today can all remain exactly within their three minute limits how hard can it be to change campaign finance in America?

(Laughter) Lucas, come on up and tell us what the Pluribus Project has been working on.

MR. WELCH: So I like a theme that I'm pleasantly refreshed to hear on this table of really looking -- I forgot the exact terms that Bruce used, but to look at a broader sphere. I think there are a number of different levers we need to be looking at. And I'll start with echoing something that Fred

talked about, that we are living in a time of profound disruption, where every sector in our society is undergoing profound shifts in how they do their business. And so I think it's important that we think about how can we leverage that potential to the ends that I think brings us all together here.

And Fred talked about one very important part in terms of how do you generate the revenue for your campaign. And certainly the potential of broad grassroots fundraising I think is a critical component of that. I'd like to talk a little bit about what is the money good for, why do you need the money in the first place. Let's be clear, these people aren't getting rich off of the funds they're raising for their campaigns. They have goals to achieve, and the logic is that financial capital is the means to achieve those goals. Well, I think that it's important that we recognize that one of the trends that we're seeing in the internet is that's not necessarily always the case. In fact there are many instances in which having human capital is a much more effective way, if organized and leveraged properly, to achieve those goals. So let's think about, for example, today still the single largest expense is television advertisements. Now, tell me that in 10 years when millennials are the dominant potential voting bloc that television ads are still going to be the single largest expense in campaigns. Of course not. Now, so the conventional thinking is that that money is just going to move on line. There will be a bunch of micro targeted ads going to reach millennials on line. Now think that a recent industry study showed that 41 percent of millennials have browser based ad blockers installed in their computers, okay. (Laughter) And that's growing at annual rate of about 50 percent a year. They're not seeing those ads. Now what they are paying attention to is ads that are shared with by their friends, by people they trust. And think about what that does to the incentive structure, the carrots and sticks of a campaign. If you think, if I want to reach my target demographic I can spend all that money if I want, but that's not going to get my message in front of people. What will happen is if I have friends or I have people, a diversity of people, that I can count on to help share my message with those friends. Now, that's just one hypothetical example of what we see as a broader area of potential innovation. And I think this is important that we begin to think about how can we really game this system, whether that involves a pledge based model, that not only asks the candidate to make a pledge, which I think would be great, but asks citizens to make a pledge that, yeah, I am going to install an ad blocker. My political opinion is not for sale. And instead what I'm going to do is share content that resonates with me, I'm going to give \$10 to a local media station to make earned

media more important than paid media. But I think it's important that we look broader at how we can help change the way the game is played so we can help cultivate a viable way for a candidate who has strong social networks to translate that into effectively achieving their campaign objectives and mount a competitive campaign.

Thank you. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: Thank you, Lucas. Okay. Dan Berger.

MR. BERGER: So I'm Dan Berger and I'm a cosponsor of this program along with Brookings. And it's really been a pleasure to hear such an enlightened and enlightening discussion of this very serious issue. And we've heard many excellent suggestions to the campaign finance problem, and they take a number of forms. There are judicial suggestions of judicial action, suggestions of legislative action, suggestions as to actions that administrative agencies could take, and we also got an exceedingly thoughtful and original suggestion that grassroots organizing could take place at relatively low cost to deal with this issue.

But I think the bottom line really is political, it's electoral, it's a question of winning elections. And the reason why I say that is that judicial modification would involve overturning Citizens United. That's probably going to require one or possibly two new Supreme Court Justices. That's obviously political. Legislatively you need a super majority or a majority in Congress and even a super majority to pass legislation addressing this issue, let alone the 28th Amendment to the Constitution. Hopefully would be the 28th and not the 31st or the 35th, it would take so long to do it. At the agency level I think you would also need to change the composition and structure of these agencies. So, you know, what is the political situation? And possibly in the next segment of the program we'll hear why the political situation underlying change is not as dire as everyone thinks.

So there clearly has to be a realignment and I think the idea of a referendum or a referendum type approach to this, as has been hinted at or suggested by various people throughout the day, might be a way to go. There was a suggestion that the culture needs to change, and that would imply a mass movement. And it would have to be a grassroots movement to change the overall milieu and thinking on this particular subject.

So I think you would then want to ask well how could a grassroots amendment or cultural

change amendment be financed.

SPEAKER: That's why you're here. (Laughter)

MR. BERGER: No, but seriously there are some ideas along those lines. We've given thought to the idea of how you would, you know, finance -- we've done in the context of progressive ideas, politically progressive ideas which would involve going to the progressive elements of the oligarchy, the 10-15 percent of the oligarchy, and raising the money from them because billionaires, they don't get up in the morning every day, look themselves in the mirror and say, I'm only doing this for the money. Not all of them do that. There's 10 or 15 percent that don't do that (laughter) and they actually want to make the world a better place. So that's a possibility. But this issue, because it does cut across partisan lines, might actually have a bipartisan appeal, so it might expand the pool of money that would be available to fund that type of movement.

So those are my thoughts. (Applause)

MR. EISEN: Thank you, Dan. Okay. I'll ask everybody in the audience to get their tough questions ready for our panel and our interveners. John Pudner, are you here? I do not see John. When he comes back in I know he wanted to say something. I'm going to ask Mike Peabody to say a word. But first I'll exercise my prerogative as the Chair of the panel to put a couple of tough questions of my own to just a couple of the panelists.

Fred, what about Meredith's tough question? She's going up on the Hill, she's not feeling the traction, despite the grassroots energy that we've heard about and seen today on the right, she's not feeling the bipartisan love when she goes on the Hill. And others of us who travel up there feel the same way. Privately some members will tell you, both parties will say well I'd like to do something, but I'm concerned about leadership. How can we get more members to come out and make this truly bipartisan at the federal level on the hill, Fred?

MR. WERTHEIMER: Well, historically there has always been bipartisan support at the national level for reform legislation. And the reform bills that have passed have always passed with republican leaders as well as democratic leaders, and with republican votes, never with a majority, but a third of the republicans, a fifth of the republicans. For the past six, eight, ten years, we have not been able to get at single republican to cosponsor a bill, not a single republican. We had a couple of

republicans who cosponsored a disclosure bill in 2010 in the House. One of them lost his race for the Senate. And we have a leader on the Hill who is Senator McConnell, who has been the leading opponent of campaign finance reform for 30 years, who has made a concerted effort to make sure that no republican supports this.

This is going to change when the political dynamic in the country changes. It's not going to change from the inside. It is going to have to change from the pressures from citizens, from the demands from citizens. The New York Times did a poll that showed that 75 percent of self identified republicans support greater disclosure by outside groups than we currently have. And we don't have a single republican vote in Congress for that. The polling is overwhelming here; 79 percent, 78 percent across the ideological spectrum support overturning Citizens United. Eighty percent support fundamental change or completely revising the campaign finance laws. So it is out there. There is not a consensus about what to support, but the anger out there and the concern is as deep as we've seen in a long, long time. And the trick is going to be how to channel that concern and that anger into pressure on Washington. We can't underestimate the fear of republicans about being primaried by Tea Party people because they took one step over the line. That is a driving force up there right now. We can't do this from the inside right now, but it can be done. I mean as I mentioned and as Norm mentioned, every time we've had major scandals, we've been able to fight for major reforms and it is impossible that we will not have major scandals out of this system that's playing out right now. So this work has to be done around the country. People are working in the states to pass legislation at the state level, people are organizing at the national level. It will take time, but it will be done.

MR. EISEN: On that political disconnect I'm going to call on two others, starting with Roger, who is there in the states. You've heard what Fred said needs to be done there. There's a gap between the grassroots and the leadership. So I'm going to press you, because that's the point of this panel, Roger, actual solutions. What's the concrete practical solutions that can help that gap be jumped?

MR. KATZ: Well, I guess I've got to agree with Fred, because once you get elected -- I'm a republican State Senator; we're in the majority and that means I get to be a Committee Chairman. I like being Committee Chairman (laughter). And the only way I stay a Committee Chairman is if we remain in the majority in the 2016 elections. So once you get there there is a tendency to start looking at things a

little bit differently. And when you realize that the republican Senate pack, their mission in life is to elect 18 out of 35 State Senators so that we will all maintain our Chairmanships. Frankly, you start to look at things not quite the same way. So the pressure does have to come from an outsider. There's a reason that this public financing referendum I just talked to you about was passed by referendum and that's because it wasn't capable of being passed in the legislature because leadership, and frankly a good part of the rest of us didn't see it in our self preservation to do it. That's the unfortunate reality of the situation, but it's got to be -- I'm a real opponent of government by referendum, and we're getting that way in Maine more and more it seems, but I agree that that's how it's going to come.

MR. EISEN: So you've given us one concrete solution, which is a referendum, a bipartisan referendum strategy in the State that channels some of this anger, not only leads to direct change but also sends a message to Washington.

I'm going to call on my friend, John Pudner, to address this question. John, what can we do to change the situation so instead of getting primaried from the right because you support campaign finance reform, you're primaried because you don't. And also our friend, Richard Painter, wanted to say something and he's given you some remarks to share with the group. So, you've got the mic, John.

MR. PUDNER: One misconception I think needs to be addressed is that the Tea Party or Freedom caucus are more resistant to campaign finance reform than other republicans. I can tell you walking the hall that's exactly the opposite. I mean a lot of these members feel like their primary opponents are big money opponents that have squelched them. And so this is an interesting left-right coalition I think on some issues. You can go issue by issue.

We were told when we started Take Back our Republic that no republican office would meet with us. We started making calls and two weeks later we had 22 meetings in 3 days with republican offices. In every case, though, it wasn't just us calling, we made sure they'd heard from 10 or 15 key constituents, and constituents who had been with them on a bunch of other issues. You need like minded constituents telling a member, no matter where they are on the spectrum, that hey, I've been with you on six other things, I helped on our campaign, I've knocked on doors, I've given money, whatever, and I mean small contributions as we're talking money and politics, but -- and this is an issue you have to address. That's the old, you know, man bites dog, they used to tell us about in journalism. If the

conservative goes to someone who has beating him up on issues, you know, for six past elections, then they tell him about campaign finance reform, it's not going to move the needle. So we saw that too and it was an interesting moment for us (inaudible). And if you look at the cosponsor of even our first bill, HR4177, I mean Freedom Caucus members signed it first. They were the first ones on the bill. So it's a very interesting dynamic there.

And I would say, just to once again come back to Dr. Painter's book, he spends a chapter in that on basically why every type of conservative should be concerned about this. He walks through social conservatives fighting entertainment industry or legalized drugs, he goes through libertarians, you know, not wanting the exploitation of -- you know, there's a different angle. And I think it's interesting just to go through that and this is we built at least getting in the door that we're first based. Don't get me wrong, but we've had good discussions and at least, yes, we want to sponsor some things and here's a bill we'd like to start with.

MR. EISEN: Thank you. Thank you, John. Okay. With that I open it up to the many hands which I already see flying up in the audience. And we're going to take the questions two at a time again. We'll start with this gentleman over here and then we'll jump the aisle to that gentleman there.

MR. GLUCK: Thank you. My name is Peter Gluck and I have a question for Fred Wertheimer. Could you be a little bit more specific about the kind of scandal you have in mind (laughter) because -- no, no, no -- seriously, if two brothers spending \$869 million on the current election cycle isn't a scandal, I don't know what is.

MR. WERTHEIMER: Well, you're absolutely right.

MR. EISEN: Hold on, Fred. We're going to take two questions at a time. Over here please. Thank you.

MR. CHECCO: Thank you. Larry Checco with Accountability-Central and Inequality.org. I guess I'm very heartened by this whole discussion that serious people are really talking about this issue. But I would like to get a better read, I would like to see where the needle is. I've asked off line one person who is up there, and they thought that there was no hope that Citizens United could be overturned. I've asked others and they've said it looks likely. How does this panel feel about it? Is it 50-50, 60-40? I would just like a need here someplace. Can we look forward to change or are we just kidding ourselves?

MR. EISEN: All right. So I'm going to put a sharp point on that, just to get the whole panel involved. I have an idea about the kind of scandal first of all (laughter) that it would take, but I'm going to ask -- we're just going to quickly go down the panel. What kind of scandal -- limit our panelists to a very short answer -- if it's not enough that you have enormous amounts of money, what kind of scandal would it take to make change? And we'll start with Justice Beasley and go down, ending with Fred.

JUSTICE BEASLEY: You're probably going to be a little disappointed in my answer because that's not really my focus. My focus really is the judiciary and it's up to really wonderful, great people like you to make those kinds of decisions.

I would like to say this, I do think there's hope. In 1986 Chief Justice Rose Bird in California was defeated because of a decision that she made about the death penalty, in 1996 Justice Penny White out of Tennessee, defeated also for the very same reason, 2010 three Justices in Iowa defeated because of big money came in and there they went, 2012 about \$4 million was spent on one race in North Carolina because the party balance was at play on our Supreme Court. Tennessee and North Carolina in 2014, lots of big money came into those races for six Justices and we were all successful. People are disheartened and they're disappointed when they see shenanigans like this happening before -- on candidates for the Supreme Court of North Carolina and across the -- don't think this is just one state, it's happening everywhere. The great news is that people are becoming more aware. And once they know they really don't fall for the big money solutions. They really do want to know more about the candidates, they want to know about a person's record, and they really do want to see that Judge's are committed to being fair and impartial and not that they come to the Court with an agenda. That's great news.

MR. EISEN: Okay, I'll go to Justice Loughry. Both of our questions, what kind of scandal, if any, you think in your opinion would it take, and what are the odds that Citizens United will be overturned? I have to sharpen that question a little bit, when. Because I'll say it's 100 percent that it will be overturned, but look how long Dred Scott was on the books. (Laughter) So the question is when.

JUSTICE LOUGHRY: Well, you know, Justice Beasley and I are not going to make a lot of specific comments. We're in a bit of a different situation from others as Judges, but I will say that can it change, certainly, but it would have to be with a different make up on the Court. I mean that is just that

simple as far as that goes.

As far as scandal, some of this is state by state. I wear a couple of different hats when I put together this book, and I went back decade by decade by decade and, you know 1984 to 1981 in my state, we had 77 elected officials who were arrested and convicted of specific election violations. A huge thing. You think that would have changed things drastically, but it does make changes. I'll be very brief. When I first went out and spoke to somebody they said things aren't the same as they were in the 1960s. And I say yeah, but so what. You know, they're still bad, we still need to make these improvements. I do think we are in many ways in spite of Citizens United, I think we are moving in a positive direction. Look at the election right now. Regardless of who you're for or against, honestly I think that they people looking toward Sanders, the people looking toward Trump, are really frustrated with everybody right now, frustrated with the entire system. Actually I think that in some ways is a positive thing. I think people are more open to discussing these issues.

MR. EISEN: Roger, we heard from you, so I'm going to take you -- I'm going to hold you because I want to come back to you. But, Dan, what kind of scandal? I'm going to give you the scandal question now and then I'm going to pose a question to John on the Citizens United one.

MR. WOLF: If hearing from an honest politician that up to 85 percent of his time was spent raising money is not a scandal -- this is like boiling the frog by turning the heat up a little at a time. This is a full-fledged scandal right now.

As far as Citizens United, I think it's purely a function of time. I think we can actually fix this where Citizens United becomes irrelevant. I really, honestly believe that. Using technology and hitting the reset button and taking a fresh approach rather than putting all of our attention on a Constitutional change. I think there are ways we could expend less energy and fix this in a very creative populist -- I underline populist -- way.

MR. EISEN: John Bonifaz, what are the chances that Justice Kennedy will get so fed up and sickened by this open scandal that you have that he changes his vote and flips in Citizens United? Is that possible?

MR. BONIFAZ: I think it's possible. I think it's possible that Justice Kennedy did not foresee this Speechnow.org v. FEC ruling of the DC Circuit which gave rise to the super packs. I think it's

possible that he didn't foresee the impact on judicial elections. When you look at some of the rulings coming out of the Court dealing with money in judicial elections they are far different than the way they treated the question of money in legislative elections. So I think that's possible. I also think it's possible they are going to be vacancies in the foreseeable future that will change the composition of the Court, but I also believe, as my opening remarks indicated, that it's possible to amend the Constitution. And that is why we have the power under Article V of the Constitution to do it. I'm not suggesting that we only do that, Dan, with all due respect. It's not a suggestion that we only focus on a Constitutional amendment, but we cannot give up that power when we are faced with this kind of egregious ruling. And beyond Citizens United, Buckley v. Valeo, which set us on this course of unlimited campaign spending.

I also wanted to answer the scandal question.

MR. EISEN: Go ahead.

MR. BONIFAZ: So I'll just quickly do it, which is I appreciate the point --

MR. EISEN: I've been trying to control Bonifaz since we went to college together (laughter) and failing for four decades.

MR. BONIFAZ: I appreciate the point that Fred is making about the importance of scandal, but I also think we have to take a long view here and look at history. Scandal is not what made the change for women to get the right to vote. Scandal is not what brought down Jim Crow. It's sustained peoples movements that make these changes, and that's who we have to build. And maybe it will take 10 years, maybe it will take 15, maybe it will take longer, but the long view is that history is on our side.

MR. EISEN: And the new technology as Dan points out makes it more -- those people movements have more potential power and more rapid power than ever before. So, Fred, what kind of --

MR. WERTHEIMER: Well, I do take the long --

MR. EISEN: Say whatever you want, Fred. I've forgotten the questions.

MR. WERTHEIMER: I'm going to. (Laughter) I've been doing this for 40 years so I do take the long view. But if you look at the Watergate, that led to the 1974 campaign finance amendments. If you look at the soft money scandals in the 1990s, that ultimately led to McCain-Feingold Bill. Scandals matter here.

Now, on your point, this is beyond scandalous already, but it doesn't work in terms of

triggering what has to be triggered. You need transactional scandals. You need the equivalent of the sale of government positions for money, you need criminal convictions, you need concrete examples that people can grab a hold of and say I'm not taking this anymore. Basta.

On the Supreme Court, I'd say there's zero chance that Justice Kennedy will change his views. I agree with Norm 100 percent that this decision will be overturned and it will be overturned most likely when we get a different 5-4 majority, 5-4 on majority on the Court. So it could happen at any time, it could take a long time. Many of us in this room may not even be here, but I would guarantee that this decision is going to be overturned. It just doesn't have any Constitutional grounding.

MR. EISEN: What Fred means is we may not still be here in this room (laughter) despite the length of our program today.

When Rosa Parks started the bus boycott she had much less power and influence than anybody on this stage, most anybody in this room. And that first group that organized and said, hey, what about that pastor, Dr. King, to lead our effort. They had far less influence, control, visibility, than all of us do. And if we take that spirit of indomitability, I do think, to answer your question, Citizens United will fall. I do think that what we're hearing is the different ingredients today, that the ingredients are there, that the pot is bubbling already faster than people may realize. Many think, oh, it's a hopeless cause. It's not a hopeless cause. We have the elements, we're looking for the catalyst.

I believe one possible catalyst is a quid pro quo scandal. So it's not enough to have the legal spending, it shouldn't be legal. It's not enough to have the legal spending, you've got to have a quid pro quo. One of the classic -- to Tim Wirth's question on the earlier panel, one of the classic elements of the quid pro quo is often the revolving door. So if you look at the Abramoff scandal, which helped stimulate the ethics reforms most prominently in the House, there was an element of people riding the revolving door. My friend, Craig Holman, is here in the audience, who is an authority on this, and that is often an aspect of these scandals. So that is one thing that we would look for. The scandal matrix has a very decided, relatively simple -- people give money, they want things in exchange for the money. And so I think that that is one -- like the spark of lightening striking the primordial soup and giving rise to life. That is one potential lightening strike in these very, very vibrant ingredients that the panel and the audience has laid out.

Mike Peabody, over to you. And we have a -- we'll pair your question with this gentleman's question over here.

MR. PEABODY: Okay. Well, my question was what are we going to do about hard money? And I think that's been very much answered by this group. So what I wanted to do is just to comment on something because I belong to the same club as Justice Roberts and I saw him there about two years ago and I was introduced to him. And I find myself next to him in the soup line shortly and I said, Justice Roberts, I want to congratulate you on the Citizens United decision. Oh, really, he said. I said, yes. It's angered so many people that I think we'll eventually solve this problem. (Laughter) And I think indeed today we are making good progress. Now I might add that the time -- the cure may be worse than the disease however. (Laughter)

SPEAKER: What did he say?

MR. PEABODY: What did he say? He didn't say in front of me. (Laughter)

MR. EISEN: He said, you've got to get that guy out of our club. (Laughter)

MR. PEABODY: But I wanted to point out that I'm more and more impressed with the history of this situation. And Trevor was very good about talking about the history of the TR time, but I'm even more impressed with the fact that we fought a revolution over this very same question. It was George III with the Stamp Act which erased effectively our consent to govern. And it took us 13 years from 1763 to be able to come to the Declaration of Independence. Well, we're on year six with Citizens United. We may have seven years more to go if we do this in the historical fashion. But I think we're going to get there; it's going to take time.

MR. EISEN: Okay. And may I see other hands of those who want to comment? Yes, you're next.

MR. GREYTAK: This is Scott Greytak from Justice at Stake. It's good to see Judges on this stage. I'm curious, even under public financing systems for Judges in Wisconsin and, Justice Beasley, obviously North Carolina, about 85 percent of total spending came from outside organizations. What do you think about the merits of an appointive system? A merit selection system that half the Courts in our country are currently using?

JUSTICE BEASLEY: I think you make a really good point. Frankly, I don't know if the

issue is whether we are appointed or elected. Now in North Carolina, after my election in 2014, this year we will have retention elections only for the Supreme Court. The Court of Appeals will still run regular statewide elections. However, the Court of Appeals is the only Court which will now run partisan races, but the other Courts will not.

But the issue I think even with retention elections is if there is now outside money coming into elections, in some ways that endangers the candidate more than you have a retention election because you don't have a candidate to name that you're actually running against, and so it's harder to raise money. You can't go to people and say well I kind of think that something is going to happen and so will you help me. That's just not going to fly. And so it's going to be really difficult to figure how that's going to work out. But I think knowledge is power, and the more people know about the importance of the role of Judges in their everyday lives -- because we are a co-equal branch of government, and most people don't even realize that, the more people know that and the more people realize that so many of the legislation -- the cases that come as a result of legislation being passed come directly to State Supreme Courts and not to the U.S. Supreme Courts. Did you all see the statistics about people think that Judge Judy is on the U.S. Supreme Court? It's frightening. (Laughter) So the more that people know, the better I think we are.

Frankly, I've had the benefit of being appointed and then therefore elected, and then just straight out elected. And so that piece I don't know if -- if there's all of this millions of dollars, that's the real issue. Retention election, Florida, Tennessee, you've seen it. I mean they have retention elections in those states. Iowa, retention elections. But millions of dollars being poured in, it's just hard to combat that when you're -- judicial candidates are competing against presidential candidates, U.S. Senatorial candidates, and these races are just not that sexy.

JUSTICE LOUGHRY: They're not that sexy, but they're very, very important. First of all, Judge Judy is not on the Supreme Court? (Laughter) But you learn something every day. I will tell you this, I've looked at this issue, I've thought about the issue a lot, and states have struggled with this issue since the Declaration of Independence. And if you go back and look historically you'll see, you know, how states have gone from appointment to election to appointment to all kinds of different ways to do things. And it's almost like the gentleman that went to the small town one day and he said there are only two

places to eat, where should I eat, and the storekeeper said well you can eat at one but you'll wish to heck that you'd eaten at the other. (Laughter) So, you know, states can figure out how they want to do that.

And with regard to my election, I can tell you the amount of money from out of state -- it was zero. And every single -- with regard to me that is, with regard to my election -- every campaign donation that -- and Judge's aren't allowed to ask for the money in my state, so I had to have people on my behalf do that. The contributions were from \$1 to \$100, okay, and they had to come from registered West Virginia voters. So that was something else that happened. And I can tell you, the freedom, you just can't imagine. We have a decision come out in a couple of days, it's a huge decision in our State and it will impact things drastically. And I can tell you the freedom to sit on that Court for 12 years and there aren't multi millionaires calling me to say you need to vote this way because remember when I held that fundraiser, remember. It just didn't happen, so.

MR. EISEN: Roger, I promised I would come back to you. I was saving you for one of these questions because of the engagement of the legislative branch with the judicial. Do you have a view? Feel free to hold.

MR. KATZ: I do. Because in my other life I practice law. So I'm a lawyer and a politician and on weekends I'm going to sell used cars and go for the trifecta. (Laughter) But I grew up in a state where we don't -- I can't imagine living in a state where Judges are elected. And these are two obviously very fine Judges, but the idea that I could call up -- you know, the rules of ethics are so different in the legislature, people can lobby me, people can give me money, but the idea of a judge now sitting on a case where one of the attorneys was a major donor and a major campaign worker for him, as opposed to the woman on the other side who worked for his opponent, it just isn't a good dynamic I don't think. And I have never been able to understand the wisdom of having elected Judges.

In Maine, and I suspect in other states as well, we've had good governors, we've had bad governors, but most every -- no comment on the current situation (laughter) -- but I think all governors, at least in my memory, have taken the power of judicial appointment extremely seriously, and accordingly we've had a real independent bench. I wonder, not in these particular cases, but in general about how you can maintain that with elected Judges.

SPEAKER: Just a very brief response on that, I can tell you that I meet with the Chief

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Justices each year from all of the states and the territories and we have discussions about all of this. Anyone who thinks that the appointment process -- maybe not in Maine, but in many places -- anyone who thinks that that is not political -- in fact that can be among the most dangerous political selections that you're ever going to see. It just is. I mean it's incredibly -- and who makes that choice? So the argument would be would you like the voters of your entire state to make a decision, do we want this individual to be on this bench, or do we want one individual -- coming back to the issues that are discussed here today -- do we want one individual, one governor who maybe had to raise millions upon millions of dollars to choose five Justices on the Supreme Court in my state, 158 Magistrates, 70 Circuit Court Judges, and 45 Family Court Judges. So it's not that simple and trust me, there are issues on both sides of it.

JUSTICE BEASLEY: Can I tack on just one little thing?

MR. EISEN: Yes.

JUSTICE BEASLEY: I just want to say too that the impact of outside money in state Supreme Court races will also determine who is available to serve. Everybody will not be able to compete against that kind of money. And so we need to be cognizant that not only if we want a fair and impartial independent judiciary, but if we also want a diverse judiciary, we've got to really be cognizant of the impact of that kind of money.

MR. EISEN: Okay. Thank you. I love it. As a long-time practicing lawyer I love it when a Justice asks me if she can add one more thing. (Laughter) That's a total role reversal. I have to tell a funny -- since Mike told his Justice Roberts story, I had the privilege when I was Ambassador in Prague to have multiple visits from Justice Roberts and got to know him and actually invited him to stay with us in the beautiful Ambassador's house in Prague. And he's a very -- he's a nice (inaudible) friend, but he's a very congenial housemate; stayed with us for about a week. And I neglected to tell my other houseguests who would be there for dinner, so we had Shabbat dinner, we had Friday night dinner, and my other houseguests come in and sit down and there Justice Roberts walks in the door. Boy, you should have seen the double takes. One of the kids said, mommy, that man looks just like Justice Roberts. (Laughter)

Okay, back to the audience for questions. We have one from that gentleman back there and we have one from this lady here in the gray scarf.

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MR. BEILENSEN: Actually, I don't have a question but just a very brief comment. Tony Beilenson, a former member of Congress. On the issue of campaign finance legislation at the national level, I've always felt that the necessary ingredient is a president who goes to the country with this issue. If he or she uses the bully pulpit properly, then you can excite the 70, 75, 78, 82 percent of the people out there who are basically with us on it. I think it can only come -- I think that groundswell of support -- perhaps not can only come, but certainly will be helped along if a president speaks out on that subject and we've never had that.

MR. EISEN: I do think that just by way of context you have had strong words from President Obama recently in the State of the Union. While it's not precisely a posit speaking about the fundraising fatigue and of course he famously called out the Supreme Court, which had not -- since I was in the White House at the time and was involved in the decision whether or not the president could express his feelings, we researched how many years it had been since a president had criticized the Supreme Court in the State of the Union. It had been decades and decades. But there could always be more, and I know our next panel --

MR. WERTHEIMER: (Inaudible), Norm?

MR. EISEN: Yes, Fred, but I'll finish my sentence before you exercise our privilege. I will say that our Nick Penniman, who is busily taking notes in the back of the room -- I'll put in a plug for the next panel since we're winding down. We'll have one last question from the lady in the gray scarf after Fred speaks. We'll talk about another presidential prerogative, the executive order, but that's for the next panel.

Okay, Fred.

MR. WERTHEIMER: With all due respect to Norm, President Obama has been a tremendous disappointment on the campaign finance issue. He's had seven years to do something to be proactive, and until now he has failed basically to do anything to promote and push for campaign finance reform. He did address it in the State of Union, he is talking about it now, they are looking at an executive office. But it's been six years since Citizens United and there has been no response, no active response from the White House on Citizens United. Tony Beilenson is right, we've never had a president who has taken this issue to the country.

MR. EISEN: Okay. Fred, I'm going to have a heated argument in the hallway afterwards. (Laughter) We'll be selling tickets. But the clock prevents me from doing it now. Okay, yes. Say who you are, and we're giving you the last word.

MS. SHARP: I'm Cassidy Sharp; I work for a nonprofit that's a part of the Democracy Initiative. And I was curious, I think one of the panelists or interveners had mentioned that it's mainly business spending all this money, and if you really look into it it's mainly energy and finance industry, so I'm curious if there are any solutions that are more specific to those industries when you have that corporate influence blocking urgent policy on an issue, like climate change, solutions that are maybe a little quicker than a Constitutional amendment.

MR. EISEN: It's a fascinating question, and it's what you get when you start looking at solutions very seriously, drilling down whether you can target industries. I'm going to give -- we gave you the last question, I'm going to give the last answer to Dan Wolf, and then keeping us strictly on time, we'll take our next coffee break.

Dan?

MR. WOLF: As a corporate person, which I don't generally say about myself, I don't understand why corporations involved in politics do not require a shareholder vote before taking a position. And we do have legislation in Massachusetts which would require that, not just disclosure. By the way, I think we're way overstating the effect of disclosure, because the fact is a lot times people just don't care about disclosure, they're going to do it anyway. But I think a shareholder majority vote should be required before a penny gets spent on politics from a corporation. That's one step in the right direction.

MR. EISEN: Okay, Bruce, yes. The interveners have not had their fair share.

MR. FREED: We've addressed the issue of the shareholder vote. And when one takes a look at where the vast body of shares are held among institutional investors, a shareholder vote is not the way to go because the shareholder vote from the large institutional investors will ratify what the company is doing. Our engagement with the companies where the companies adopt disclosure and accountability, I think we are seeing indications that that does lead to a change in behavior. You know, we've looked at that very seriously.

MR. WOLF: So we'll take this outside too. (Laughter)

MR. EISEN: Yes. I'm going to be on Dan's side in this debate, with almost as much trepidation debating Bruce as I do when I debate Fred, but since I have Dan in my corner I'll do okay.

I want to thank the audience for your very stimulating questions. I want to thank the panelists for being disciplined in their timing and rigorous and creative in their answers.

And I'll leave you with one final anecdote. When I arrived as Ambassador in the Czech Republic the worst problem in the country was corruption. And everyone said nothing can be done. And the embassy and I engaged with Czech leaders, and it was a Czech driven thing, and NGOs, and back to the idea of voter engagement, these NGOs came up with the notion of doing a very simple one page agreement where they would go to people running for office and say will you support the following bills or not. Lo and behold, when the dust cleared after the parliamentary elections, over 70 percent of those elected had signed that agreement and those bills have been falling into place, one after the other. It's not easy to get people to honor the agreement, but it's happened and it's had a transformative effect. It's a much smaller place, it's a smaller electorate, but it's an example from my personal experience and an international example of how the impossible can happen in just a few short years if the public, the people get behind it with good leadership. And that's what everyone in this room represents.

And I look forward to welcoming you back now in 10 minutes to learn why the time is now. Thank you very much everyone. (Applause)

(Recess)

MR. PENNIMAN: I feel like the conversation has been very lively. Everyone stuck to the time, great questions, fascinating questions. It's a superb group of people, and we're very honored to be able to support Brookings in this effort. Thanks again to Brookings, to Norm, to my staff for having helped support Brookings in this effort. It's really marvelous.

It's great to see so many people here, too, who probably should be on the stage in addition to the great folks that have been on the stage, like Meredith and Larry and Sheila, John Rawls, a champion of this cause for a long time.

We will have to do this again at some point.

We're here to talk about why the time is now. I just talked to Congressman Sarbanes and said in addition to talking about why the time is now, we would love to hear specifics of what people think is needed to create the type of momentum and velocity necessary to create a legislating majority on behalf of this issue.

We see a lot of indications that kind of velocity is picking up. There have been 600 anti-Citizens United resolutions passed over the course of the last six years. That's really significant.

We see in poll after poll that 80 to 90 percent of Americans think this is a big problem, but we also see in a Pugh poll from about three months ago that the intensity is increasing also. In fact, in that Pugh poll, when people were asked what the number one dysfunction with Government was, they said corruption as a result of money influence.

We see rising heat in the public. We see all kinds of new efforts popping up. I think John Pudner's Take Back Our Republic is a great example of something that just came out of the blue sky, and John is such a force of nature, so we all want to support you as best as we can to begin doing the kind of organizing that hasn't been on this issue that's critical to it.

I want to just read one thing that I think my staff has heard me read before, so they are probably going to roll their eyes in the back. I feel like one of the things that powers me as I work on this cause is the tremendous audaciousness and idealism that fueled revolution.

I stumbled across this passage from the Massachusetts State Constitution that John Adams himself crafted in 1780, and then the Massachusetts Charter actually served as his inspiration and a guide for the U.S. Constitution.

Here's the part that I love. Part 1, Article 7 of the Massachusetts Charter reads "Government is instituted for the common good, for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people, and not," and I love this, "and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men. Therefore, the people alone have an incontestable, unalienable, and indivisible right to institute Government and to reform, alter, or totally change the same when their protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness require it."

Given the historical trends they were facing, given the massive might of the British empire, the fact they put those words in writing, and not only put them in writing, but by God, instituted them and created a nation based on that idealistic principle will forever give me goosebumps.

I just want to remind us all that's the one thing that unites us, why we are all sitting here in this room.

The other thing I want to say is this town is toxic on this issue. I have lived in Washington for 11 years now, mostly as a journalist, magazine publisher, reporter. I have been doing this work for four years. You ask anyone in this town about money and politics, and you get one of two responses, basically.

One is this kind of patronizing, oh, you poor soul, look. Like, you poor sucker, like I can't believe you're doing something so impossible. The other one is people will say you know, that's really important, God bless you, and they will give you a pat on the back. (Laughter)

What you don't get is you God damn right, what can I do for you, it's time, let's get mobilizing, let's go.

I can't tell you how important this kind of a forum is with the kind of fire power we have in this room to begin changing the tenor and nature and temperature on this issue in this town. I agree we will need a grassroots movement. That's absolutely necessary, but as most of the people who live here know, the thickness of the glass on the fish bowl that is Washington is so thick that unless we also are warming up the oven here, that grassroots movement will bounce up against that glass and fall backwards.

So, it's a "both/and" scenario. It's both build on the outside and also change the dynamic on the inside.

To carry this conversation forward, I have wonderful guests with me. John Sarbanes, Claudine Schneider, Zephyr Teachout. You can read their bio's. Many of you probably already know them. We're going to start with John because he as any member of Congress is out talking to people about this issue, beating the bushes on this issue, stirring up energy on this issue, has wonderful stories to tell and a great perspective.

John, take it away.

CONGRESSMAN SARBANES: Thanks, Nick. I want to thank everybody for being here for a full day on this subject. I wasn't here earlier, but I heard the discussion has been terrific and enlightening, and brought kind of new angles of understanding and prisms of understanding to this issue that's not just gripping the country but increasingly is gripping Congress and gripping this city.

I'm pleased to be here with Senator Schneider and with Zephyr Teachout, and I want to thank Nick and Issue One for all the great work they are doing to bring this issue to the floor and put it in front of not just audiences like this one, but really put it in front of the country.

I gather there was a lot of discussion earlier about the problem, and I think we can just stipulate at this point to the problem, and the fact that the deep cynicism, anger, and frustration out there in the country cuts broadly across the political spectrum.

Every town hall I have, and I begin every town hall with this topic, turns into a group therapy session within about five minutes, because once people are actually convinced that you do want to hear from them, they sort of let it all out.

We know what the problem is. The question is what is the solution. Donald Trump would have you believe that the solution to the problem of money and politics and its undue influences is to elect him because he doesn't owe anybody. James Madison, and I said this to someone earlier today, is a more reliable source of good thinking on our democracy. (Laughter). He would say the solution is to make Government dependent upon the people alone, to build systems of financing campaigns that really do depend upon the public and the people and every day citizens out there.

The beauty of that is not only do you cure the situation of undue influence operating in Washington, but you address the deep cynicism and frustration that people feel, because if they see themselves in the solution, then they will have hope again.

I think exploring these alternative ways of empowering people at a time when they feel so kind of frustrated and left out and locked out of their own democracy, that's where we have to put our attention.

We are seeing at the state and local level efforts like in Maine and in Seattle and other places that reflect that people are willing to take this anger in a constructive direction.

I'm going to run out of time in a moment, but I want to bring your attention to the fact that on or about November 3, there was a poll that was conducted by the Wall Street Journal, I think, NBC poll. In it, 7 out of 10 Americans said they agreed with the statement "I feel angry because our political system seems to be only working for the insiders with money and power like those on Wall Street or in Washington."

That was pretty upsetting to see, but on that same day, November 3, in Seattle and in Maine, every day citizens were taking that anger and frustration and channeling it into positive solutions that are restorative of the democracy.

So, people are angry, but they're starting to take control again and do things that are constructive and hopeful for the democracy, and that's why I have so much hope and I do believe the time is now. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. PENNIMAN: Claudine, please.

SENATOR SCHNEIDER: No question but the time is now, but I would like to see a show of hands. How many in this room consider themselves -- hopefully you have done some personal reflection -- optimists? You all now have an assignment to carry the ball on this issue and whatever else you are working on.

I had the good fortune of teaching at Harvard for a bit, and I had a plethora of students, undergraduate, graduate, and including some from the community. I was very curious. I was supposed to be teaching leadership. I thought my God, I think I know how to do it, but in terms of teaching it, this is something else again.

I did this experiential survey. I found out that those people who considered themselves optimists -- I started the class by saying I'd like the optimists to sit on this side of the room, and the pessimists on that side of the room, and I said don't worry about it, I'm taking a mental photograph of who is who and we will follow up later.

Overwhelmingly, the optimists were able to execute a number of different projects without -- there were some difficulties, but they were the successful ones.

That is my scientific research I wanted to share with all of you today, that if you believe you can do it, you can do it. I have spent my life, my career, being told I can't fight cancer, I can't fight city hall, I can't do this and I can't do that.

Well, guess what, I've proven the odds wrong, and that is why I am very selective in what I do with my time and my energy, and I am very grateful to Nick, to David, to Gabriela and the team at Issue One for inviting me to be part of this initiative. This is a winning initiative.

All initiatives have to focus on two things, the message and the messenger. Now, when I introduced the Global Warming Prevention Act, which was the first revenue neutral bill on climate change in 1988, I had 140 co-sponsors before I dropped the bill, thank you very much. We got portions of that bill passed. People said it can't be done, but we got portions of it through.

Well, this initiative that we're involved in here, campaign finance reform, also does not require a silver bullet. It's not just overturning Citizens United. It's all the different strategies that have been articulated here today and then some that we may not have even thought of as yet.

The bottom line is that galvanize around whatever approach/strategy you feel you can win with, and I happen to believe that Issue One is embarking on one that collectively we will make a difference.

Quickly, I have 30 seconds. How many members of the media are here? Five. Really, guys.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible)

SENATOR SCHNEIDER: Well, thanks a lot. (Laughter) Really. This is an issue for the media, because we can talk in closed rooms all we want, but if we don't get this message out to the masses that there are solutions, leave your cynicism at the door, we're going to make a difference here.

Each of you who held up your hands at the outset saying you're optimists, I now charge each of you to write an off ed page to whatever media outlet you choose and let's get the job done. United we stand, divided we fall. We can make this happen. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. TEACHOUT: I guess you guys are stuck with a couple of professors, because I also have an assignment. I'm a law professor. We use the Socratic method. Write down the percentage, at

least in your brain, chance that you think we can have public financing in over half the states within the next six years.

Write down, at least in your brain, the percentage chance that you think we can have a constitutional amendment in the next 10 years.

Now, we get to the fun part. Dan, what percentage chance did you think that Donald Trump would be leading in the polls a year ago today, on the fifth anniversary of Citizens United?

(Laughter)

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) (Laughter)

MS. TEACHOUT: What percentage chance did you think that Bernie Sanders would be leading as against Hillary Clinton in two states? What percentage chance did you think that the Comcast-Time Warner merger would be stopped?

My guess is that all of you would write down numbers on those three things, Bernie, Trump, and the Comcast-Time Warner merger that are even lower than your little three percent/five percent number that you wrote down on public financing.

The reason the time is now is the pundits are wrong and they keep being wrong about the same kind of thing. They were wrong -- I'm sitting at the table with a couple of winners, I did not win in my campaign for Governor, but I did start out with 8 percent name recognition and 18 percent of people not liking me. (Laughter) Figure that out. (Laughter) Polls are great; right?

I ended up with 32 percent in a three month period. I give my team a lot of credit, but I will tell you the reason the pundits are wrong is because they radically underestimated the particular political moment we are in right now.

It's not just a few polls showing intensity. You know it, you feel it, you feel that incredible anger.

Here is your job. By the way, we now have two presidential candidates that are running on campaign finance reform, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. I don't agree with Donald Trump's campaign finance reform proposal.

It is basically have only billionaires run the country, but it is a campaign finance proposal, and with Bernie Sanders, I am with him on Citizens United, and I'm with him on building a grassroots movement, but I wish he talked about public financing a lot more; right?

The candidates who are winning are all about this thing. Comcast-Time Warner was not just about Comcast-Time Warner. It was about Comcast having way too much power in Washington, D.C., and that's why so many people got together and tried to stop that.

Here is your job. Your job is just to stop saying things can't happen. When you're in a conversation and somebody says I want a constitutional amendment, and I give a big apology to John Bonifaz here, because I have been that person, stop saying it can't happen.

When you're in a room with somebody who says we can't have public financing in over half the states in five years, stop saying it can't happen. I'm not an optimist. I'm not a pessimist. I'm a gambler, and I think the stakes are incredibly high, and we have to fight for this.

The question should be is you have to stop being pundits and start being patriots, not ask about the percentage chance that something can happen but whether or not it's the right thing to do. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. PENNIMAN: The great thing about this session is we have a lot of time for audience interaction. It is nice, too. This is our last session. I would like to go down the row very quickly and then open it up to the audience and ask what else you think we need in place.

This is a room that consists of people who do this work for a living, who are very interested in this work. What else do you think we need in place to be able to create the phalanx necessary to blast through the gates?

I'd love for John to start. You are fighting for this every day. What do you not have at your back?

CONGRESSMAN SARBANES: Well, I think the most important thing is to help people connect the dots. In other words, create a narrative out there behind changing how we fund campaigns, addressing the influence of big money, that understands that most people don't get up in the morning and before they eat breakfast run around the room talking about money and politics, right? They get up, they care about the environment, they care about their small business, they care about health, et cetera.

What we need to do is meet them where they are. We need to build a narrative that says if you care about the environment, then you need to understand how money is getting in the way of progress on that issue. If you care about main street businesses, having a fair Tax Code, then you need to understand how Wall Street often dominates that.

These issues I'm talking about are issues, they are not about any particular place on the political spectrum. People just want to feel that the thing they care about will have a hearing in the place where laws are made. If you explain to them their ability to get the thing they are passionate about receive the attention it deserves in our public policy, that is being prevented by the current way in which campaigns are financed, then you enlist them in the cause.

I'm certainly embarked on trying to educate my colleague that what I call "caffinating the message" with this idea of what money and politics is all about is extremely compelling when they stand in front of an audience.

If we can build on the way people feel about the stuff they're passionate on and lead them that way to this need for reform, then we're going to build the kind of broad, deep coalition that will achieve success ultimately.

There were a couple of other things I wanted to say, but I'll come back to them later.

MR. PENNIMAN: Okay.

SENATOR SCHNEIDER: I was appointed, I think, to one of the first taskforces on campaign finance reform when I was a freshman in Congress. I sat there for the first couple of minutes and listened to my colleagues, and then I joined in the conversation, was pretty excited that we were going to get a resolution.

Then the day of the press conference came along, and I noticed that the senior Democrat winked at the senior Republican and the Republican winked at the Democrat, and then they went out to meet the press, and I sort of slipped away because I didn't want to be part of this, and the message to the media was we could not come to a resolution.

Then it struck me, oh, my God, this is not having to do with Democrats or Republicans. This has to do with incumbency. It's the same thing that was mentioned a little earlier on one of the panels, that with the Republican Majority in the Senate and in the House and the resistance of the

leadership to support change, I don't think the focus can be there with the outcome that we want, but I think the focus should be there.

More optimistically, as I said before, you need several different solutions. You need several different voices working on this, so the grassroots organizations are fantastic. Issue One engaging the former members of Congress to also be the voice to address this is absolutely critical, to have Brookings host this.

But we need many, many different voices, and one of the things I do, and you know I've advocated for this, is a pledge to have members of Congress take a pledge. It's very easy to circulate it among the candidates and the incumbents, so there is this transparency and we know who is with us and who isn't with us.

The last thing that I really want to continue to emphasize is the role of the media because they are the conduit. We here could be coming up with solutions, ideas, messages, pulling data, et cetera, but if it doesn't get out to the masses, what good is it.

We need to keep pounding the media with letters to the editor, with editorial press conferences, with a broad spectrum of media strategies where we can get the attention of the masses because once the masses rise up, I believe that's when we're really going to get the change, from the bottom up and the top down.

MS. TEACHOUT: I don't know what we need. If I look at it like a chess board, we have all pawns. (Laughter) I don't have a particular path. I'll tell you we have a few more pawns than we did say in 1900. That chess board looked a lot worse than this chess board.

I am often skeptical of people who tell you if we do precisely this, we're going to get there. I do think we need to bring a lot of heart into it and morality into what we do, because honestly, you guys are all saps for being here, right, and somewhere you have this patriotic sappy heart that is pushing this, and you can still push it out in this arid, bloodless way, but bring a little heart into it.

I totally agree with the media. You in Washington, you have another job besides stop saying you can't do it. Every time you see a column that says Washington is in gridlock, here's the solution, and it doesn't talk about public financing and it doesn't talk about a constitutional amendment,

call up your friend who knows the person that wrote that article and say what are you talking about if you're not talking about the two key things involving money or politics.

You can actually have an influence. Right now, they're not hearing. They're hearing gridlock, you know. That's a problem, the money and politics.

I think we need to be very clear this is a feminist issue, far more women run for office in public financing systems, and you have seen the number of women get involved. It's a race issue. Far more people of color run and support candidates. Color of money reports are fantastic. The base thing is it's a class issue. We have a system that doesn't allow a bus driver to run no matter how deep the grassroots space that he or she has.

Connecting on those three, I think, is also really important.

CONGRESSMAN SARBANES: I think the media may be missing the next big story. If you look at a lot of the coverage, it's about the super backs, the Koch brothers, about Sheldon Adelson, it's about whether super backs are as powerful as we thought they were, maybe they're not as powerful as we thought they were.

None of those stories are ones that average people see themselves in. If you're just a person out there in the country and it's another story about the Koch brothers, you're not interested in that. You don't see yourself in the story.

What is so incredibly powerful about these solutions that lift up every day citizens is they can see themselves in the story. I think that's the next big story out there.

To Zephyr's point, if you start seeing articles about a candidate who could never run because she couldn't raise the money, like Diane Russell up in Maine, a grocery store clerk for 10 years and wanted to enter the main legislature but she didn't have the money needed to run, and then when they put public financing in place, she could do that because she could collect \$175 donations. That's a human interest story that's incredibly powerful. Everybody reading that story sees in Diane Russell the potential for them to run for office and sees the 175 people who gave her \$5 themselves. They see they can have power.

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My message to the press is there is amazing stuff happening out there in the states and in localities where people are taking ownership again of their democracy and finding these constructive powerful solutions.

You start reporting on that and it will have a ripple effect across the country, and you will see within six years half of the states with these kinds of empowerment solutions in place.

I think it really is the big story, and I would encourage the press to focus on it more.

MR. PENNIMAN: I want to open it up. Hedrick?

MR. SMITH: I almost hesitate to start here. You're right on about the media. Let me just tell you --

MR. PENNIMAN: If I can just give Hedrick's credentials. He was the Washington Bureau Chief for the New York Times and is an award winning documentary film maker.

MR. SMITH: I have a website called "Reclaim the American Dream," and it's loaded with your stories. Professor, I said 100 percent chance that we would have 25 states because we already have 25 states. You didn't know it. Nobody knows it. There are 25 states with some form of public financing of political campaigns in America today. The media is so cynical about any of this happening, and part of it is because we're uninformed.

There are 21 states today that are working on gerrymander reform and have either replaced legislative redistricting with an independent commission or they have challenged it in court. This is a popular movement underway. There is a better campaign finance law in the State of Montana than there is in the United States of America. These things are happening and you're absolutely right, Congressman. The media is not covering them.

Part of it is what you were saying, Zephyr. What you were saying is we're cynical, we're saying it can't happen. You can't get, name your talk show, any talk show, to talk seriously about whether or not there is a chance for gerrymander reform or campaign financing reform.

If you listen to the participants when the subject is brought up, it's all negative. We need to take a lot of time with my colleagues and the media and talk to them about what is being done, not just what can be done, what's being done.

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Reclaimtheamerican dream.org, there are maps of the country on one issue after another, you can get it right now. I'm sorry. This is not meant for advertising, but the information is not out there. I've committed myself to try to put the information out there. We have to turn the media around. It's critical.

MR. SCHNEIDER: Jim Schneider from the State Constitution Convention Clearinghouse. My question is directed to Zephyr. A few weeks ago, Brookings had one of the leading constitutional scholars in the United States here, and somebody from the audience asked him well, what can we do to reclaim our democracy for the American people, and he replied with a Brandtian "states are laboratories of democracy" answer, and he said he was looking to New York, the Constitution Convention Referendum in November 2017, that could show the way for the future.

Last week, the person you ran against, Governor Cuomo, allocated \$1 million for a constitutional preparatory commission, and now there have been a half a dozen off ed's in the New York press saying this is the only way to bypass the legislative gatekeeping power that is such a problem, so many states don't have the initiative to address the types of concerns you have.

What is your position on that vehicle? It's very controversial.

MS. TEACHOUT: Yes, I know. I didn't know I was coming here to answer tough questions on New York politics. (Laughter) I also think we have some big companies we should break up.

My position on the New York Constitution Convention is that I'm actively supporting organizing efforts assuming it's going to happen, and I don't have a public position on whether or not it should happen.

The reason to be concerned about it is whether it's going to get taken over by big money, but I tend to be on the side of favoring it. I just want to before have a locked down position. I thought what the Governor said recently was good.

QUESTIONER: Gail, National Democratic Press. I just wanted to make a follow up point on this issue of access to every day candidates who are not from the wealthier echelon.

Beyond the point of whether or not they can afford to run for office and raise the money is the other point of whether they can afford to serve in office. I'm talking mainly about the state level now,

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the paltry salaries that are paid to state legislators that are not enough to replace a full time decently paying job, certainly not enough to allow

-- I'm thinking of Florida where it is \$27,000 a year.

You can say it's part time. You can't hold another full time job while you are a state legislator, unless you work for maybe a law firm or some place that will let you do that. The every day person cannot survive on that salary and pay the mortgage or rent or car note.

CONGRESSMAN SARBANES: Let me react to that because I believe if the public starts to feel like they have ownership again of the political apparatus and of the Government machinery, they're going to be more generous about providing the resources to make that work.

Part of the problem is that if you think that the system is owned by somebody else, you begin to resent it, you begin to punish those who are in it. We certainly feel that in Washington. The worse things you can imagine about members of Congress are being sent around the Internet every single day, and people consume that because they have decided the institution and the members in it don't really work for them any more.

I think actually the path back to supporting people and investing in the while structure of good government is by making people feel again they have an ownership stake in their government.

That's why I'm such a strong proponent of these small donor driven sort of public financing models because if those are in place in the Maine's and Seattle's and New York City, and Zephyr can comment on this, people start to feel better about their government.

Then they will look at the question of whether someone can afford to be an effective representative on the salary that they are earning, and maybe they will want to invest more.

We need to invest on Capitol Hill in making the resources that are available to members of Congress stronger, not continuing to cut them to the bone, right, so we can go do the job and we can pull on those resources to help us analyze the issues and so forth. Because the public feels so angry about it, it's easy for the cynics to come along and keep cutting away at it.

I think the path back to good government and support for good government lies in the sort of solutions that we're talking about here today.

MR. PENNIMAN: Right there, the gentleman.

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MR. COLLINS: Thank you. My name is Wayne Collins. I'd like to have your comments on the effect gerrymandering reform and the length of the campaigns have on campaign financing.

MS. TEACHOUT: I'm in favor and I'm opposed. (Laughter) The length is because of our current court, but in other countries, you have more of a limit, but with our current court, again, I think the efforts on new jurisprudence are really important, and the new jurisprudence isn't just about particular cases. It's about a fundamental reimagining and new understanding of the core principles of our Constitution, and the life of campaigns is a real problem.

There are exciting efforts happening with independent commissions on gerrymandering.

SENATOR SCHNEIDER: Having been part of the media once upon the time, I feel that it's okay for me to be somewhat critical of them, and I even audited some classes at the new College of Media in my state, and I thought oh, my God, I'm terrified at what is being taught and I'm terrified of the students who are paying more attention to shopping online while they're in class than they are in fact listening to the professor.

Insofar as the length of campaigns, I think the media has an opportunity to provide some leadership here, granted, their decision making is tainted by all the money that they make from the campaigns, but I still feel when I say we need to talk to the media, we need to urge them to change, I'm convinced that if television stations, particularly local television affiliates, do not change their current business plans and the way they operate, they're going to be out of business very soon.

I think part of the change could and should come in terms of how much they are willing to take from campaigns, and they should be under attack as much as those decision makers who could be bringing about change.

MR. PENNIMAN: One more, and then we have to start wrapping up.

MS. ROSENBERG: Hi, thanks. Lisa Rosenberg. I work for an organization that covers a lot of issues, immigration reform, education issues, and democracy reform issues. We work pretty middle of the road, not partisan, and with a lot of coalitions that are sort of the inside the fish bowl type organizations you mentioned before.

To get those organizations that are with us on all those other issues to commit to democracy reform issues is really challenging because they are really afraid that they're going to lose their advantage by irritating, you know, members of Congress or whomever, on their other issues.

How do we get them -- they understand. It's not about connecting the dots. They have connected the dots. They don't want to lose their advantage. I'm just trying to figure out how to kind of move to the next level where they are willing to take a stand on these issues.

MR. PENNIMAN: John, do you want to take that on?

CONGRESSMAN SARBANES: I don't quite understand what the reluctance is that you're describing. I guess you could tell them that it's not like members of Congress, for example, aren't feeling this and thinking about it every single day. I don't think anyone is going to be punished for coming forward and articulating support behind a solution.

MS. ROSENBERG: (Inaudible) (Laughter)

CONGRESSMAN SARBANES: Well, just how I like to say 300 million Americans are more powerful than two brothers named Koch, I think 300 million Americans are more powerful than one person named Mitch McConnell. We need to get over that.

We just waged a battle against a rider that Mitch McConnell wanted to embed in the Omnibus, and we were successful in pushing back on that, in large part simply because we were able to bring a light of day to it.

I think the more people in Congress are hearing that the public cares about this and that organizations that assemble the advocacy of the public also care about it, the more sensitive to the issue they are going to be, and the more ready to take it up and discuss it and push back on whatever the penalty is that someone like a Mitch McConnell could impose for just having the discussion to begin with.

I also think the public is going to insist ultimately in a way that creates an undeniable force in this movement that these things be discussed, and in the same way that feeling from the public is being felt now, more and more every day by elected officials, I think organizations that are out there in the public talking about an important issue are going to start to feel that also.

I remember talking to the head of one of the major environmental groups, and he said our group was beginning to become defeated and have a sense of resignation come over it because they felt

like even though they cared about the environment and wanted to work on it, money was standing in the way of progress.

When they brought the let's fight big money issue into the mix, all of a sudden they began to reenergize and activate a membership that had become defeated or had a sense of resignation.

I think the public is going to demand it. Nick, that is why the time is now. The broad public has arrived at a moment where they are demanding a response to the way they feel. If they don't get it from some of the solutions we're proposing because we don't educate them that those solutions are there and put them in front of them, they're going to grab a pitch fork and they are going to go somewhere else, but there is plenty of evidence that the public will not be denied some remedy to the way they feel, right?

Let's make sure the remedy we put in front of them is one that restores the democracy and what our government can do for us instead of undermining it.

MR. PENNIMAN: Very quickly.

SENATOR SCHNEIDER: Nobody in this audience would grab a pitch fork, John, but grab your computer. I think one of the points that I want to emphasize that John just made is we have the facts and we have to arm the public with the facts. Hedrick Smith's facts, Issue One's facts. We have the information there to arm the public and to create the change that we envision.

MS. TEACHOUT: Just briefly, what you are doing is incredibly important. We talk about media, but working with organizations. Every voice that I work with a lot has done a lot of work with environmental groups and others to say let's make money and politics at least one of your top three or four issues.

What is so critical, I think, in those conversations is if you're talking to somebody from Pfeiffer 15 or whatever, you can win next year, but you have no assurance or security of any policy victory if you keep basically -- it's all about power, right, as the Congressman was saying, if you basically leave power in the hands of 150 people.

There is no security in your victory unless you include public financing and other money in politics reforms.

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MR. PENNIMAN: Great. Now, we're going to bring up Tim Roemer. Before I do that, I have to selfishly, because my publicist will kill me if I don't do it, plug the book that I have written with my dear friend, Wendell Potter, called "Nation on the Take" about this problem. Half the people in this room are mentioned in this book and their organizations. (Laughter)

The publication date is March 1. Feel free to buy a number of copies online. It was a great project and Wendell and I are going to hit the road March 1. We have seven cities lined up and a bunch of media. We will be out there talking to people about this.

Let me just say something about Tim very quickly. I have to say Tim and I met maybe a year ago through our dear Board member, Whitney Hatch, started having some exciting conversations about this topic. We eventually figured out how to get him on board with this, and he has been like a blast of energy.

He's a fantastic guy, fellow Midwesterner, full of enthusiasm, but also a lot of wisdom, and I have to say that Hillary Clinton would be very wise if she wanted to beef up her reformist bona fides and also her Midwestern bona fides and get a nice blue dog Democrat who used to know how to reach across the aisle and work with other people, she would be very, very wise to put him on the short list of her VP candidates.

AMBASSADOR ROEMER: Thank you very much. Thank you for that endorsement. (Applause) I came here this morning as an optimist, Zephyr and Claudine, you would be glad to hear that I would say I am generally positive about almost everything I approach in life, but thanks to John and his wise and hard work that he does every day in Congress, Claudine and Zephyr and their challenge to all of us, I'm not only an optimist, I am really fired up, I am really ready to go out there with all of you in the important jobs, organizations, avenues that you have, and fight, fight for this democracy to bring it back.

How many of you are more optimistic right now than when you walked in here this morning? All right. That's a step forward.

I want to tell you a quick story about our youngest, Grace, who is also an optimist, but she was trying to learn the Lord's Prayer, and we all know how it ends, deliver us from evil, amen. She came to us and said dad, I've got it. Come and listen to me say it.

She got to the end and she looked at me and she pounded her chest a little bit and she said and deliver us some eagles, amen. (Laughter) Great new ending as far as I'm concerned. Shows you what young girls bring, her originality.

I say the Lord's Prayer the way Grace says it now, because of that optimism. That, of course, is what we bring as Americans to almost every issue, every crisis we take on. We are an optimistic people. We don't come to this campaign issue saying oh, boy, this is really going to be tough, give me five reasons why we can't do it. That is not our nature as a people. That is not the way we approach problems and that's not the history of 235 years in our country's overcoming so many things together to make a more perfect union.

Let me list quickly four or five reasons why we should be optimistic, engaged, and successful. The American people are soundly with us on this issue. We have heard all day long today 70 percent of Republicans, 80 percent of Democrats, huge percentage of independents, wherever you go in all 50 states, the people are with us.

It's Washington that doesn't have their ears and eyes open. My favorite poll on this, and what really gives me that optimism is the Iowa Caucus Governors poll, and they were asked are you unsatisfied or mad as hell about money and politics. Ninety-four percent of Democrats, 91 percent of Republicans said I'm mad as hell.

That gives us great optimism, one of our early states, in taking that forward into other states to support that mad as hell and that positive effort to take our country back.

Secondly, and I think Rick said this very articulately, the states are with us. You go from our cities, like San Francisco, Seattle, New York City, the great cities in America, to our states, red and blue, Arizona, Montana, Maine, Idaho will have an initiative on their ballot, the states are fighting for our democracy to take it back and to empower the voter, not the donor.

Third, and Zephyr and others have mentioned this, this is a presidential year. We have candidates that have to stake out positions orally in primaries and we are hearing many of them stake out these positions.

I agree that Donald Trump's position, I don't know what it is in terms of solutions, I'm not sure there is one, but he has certainly ripped open the wound of money buys access to anybody. He keeps saying, and I will tell you, I think that is one of the issues that is galvanizing some of his voters.

Hillary Clinton announced when she said she was going to run for President that one of her four platforms would be campaign finance reform. I hope she will find her voice and her heart and talk even more about that issue.

Bernie Sanders, of course, is not just talking about economic inequality, he is talking and fighting for political equality for people and changing the system.

Lastly, I would say issues -- we could bring this issue front and forward and make money and politics issue one. Issue one because it's not a Republican or a Democratic issue, a red or blue state issue, it is the American issue for us to take this democracy back so we can solve the different problems in our country, whether we're fighting for our kids in Flint to get clean water and decent education, or we're fighting for a balanced budget, or somebody fighting for the Second Amendment.

Republic or Democrat, the reformers' caucus is comprised of both parties and fighting on Capitol Hill to advance this.

We have lots of reasons, folks, to walk out of this room and be fired up and optimistic, but also smartly engage with the media, with the politicians, with the presidential candidates, on why we can win this issue.

We have done it. We beat the British, we fought for women's right to vote, we prevailed in civil rights, time and time again in American history, we have done bigger things. Not more important things. This is as important as it gets for the integrity for our democracy.

Let me just conclude with a personal note. In the fifth grade, as a young kid, in a Catholic school, a Nun asked in that class who wants to run Bobby Kennedy's campaign for President. This was 1968 when I was in the fifth grade.

My hand shot up like a rocket ship. I knew that's what I wanted to do even back then. That was my dream. I didn't want to be a scientist or an astronaut. I wanted to be in public service and in Congress. That was my dream, and I came from a middle class home, worked my way and paid my way

through college, at a zoo, at a golf course, working and laboring for that right to go to college, that privilege to go to college.

Bobby Kennedy was my hero. Well, and my dream was to come to Washington and fight for my state and my country. Fast forward to 1990 when I first ran against the incumbent, outspent, out raised, but not out worked, and we won. We came to Washington.

I then got a chance to meet Senator Ted Kennedy, and we became friends. We worked on legislation together. When we worked on a bill and passed it through the Congress, I went back to my office one night and there on my chair was a present, and I opened up the brown packaging around it and undid the string, and there was a picture of my hero, Bobby Kennedy, framed. Underneath it was written in personal handwriting, like only he could do, "Dear Tim: My brother, Bobby, would have loved serving with you. Ted Kennedy." A dream come full circle.

It's not my dream. Every kid, girl and boy, in this country, should feel empowered to not just want to run for office and feel they can do it and their checkbook doesn't matter, but their vote matters. We are losing that trust across the country in this system.

As they said, and Zephyr said it well, turn from pundit to patriot, we haven't begun to fight on this issue, let's go out of here today, let's join together, organization and organization, person and person, Democrat and Republican, let's fight back for this great democracy of ours. Let's put pride in it and make it issue one until we win it back.

Thank you for attending today. Thank you for your energy and patriotism, and let's go win on this issue. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. PENNIMAN: I want to add the appreciation of all of us to all of you for being here. I have a very important announcement. There is an open bar in the Sommers Room. The staff will point you in that direction, across the hall.

What a marvelous day. We look forward to continuing the conversation with all of you. Thank you very much for being here. Thank you. (Applause)

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

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706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190