

Let's Change Our Politicians

The existing situation – Many Americans believe our political system is broken and in serious need of reform. It may not be the system, more than likely the real problem is the individuals we have chosen to administer our system of government.

The founding fathers provided for the people to be represented by those among us that choose and are selected to serve. Over time what has evolved is a pseudo-democratic process where only professional politicians thrive and millions of dollars are required just to participate in the electoral process. We have allowed self-serving "professional" politicians too much authority, they are out of touch, and they are often not following the will of the people.

Our national politicians have become expert at, and content with, deferring the difficult challenges in favor of wasting elaborate amounts of time on issues with little or no actual [national] value. They appear to be often and instantly distracted by the most insignificant issues preferring gridlock instead of working through and solving the important issues that continue to plague our society.

There are many distinct factions that are distracting and dividing the voting public. As a matter of practice "we the people" are being deceived and divided into small individual interests units that tend to cloud our collective ability to focus and thus insist on a successful unified national strategy. Our politicians seem to be primarily focused on getting elected and re-elected rather than doing the job they are elected to do.

The existing bureaucracy empowers and encourages lawmakers to do as they please. The senior Congressional leadership has an established system founded in cronyism and the few new Congressional members each year have no opportunity to change the process or introduce new ideas because of this long established "system." If practices or procedures were changed the senior members would lose some or all of their power or authority they have "earned" while serving for many years.

We are governed nationally by one president, five hundred thirty five Congressmen and women [435 Representatives and 100 Senators], and nine Supreme Court justices. The Justices are appointed for life, the president is often a figure head with limited authority (except, of course, for his military power), so let's focus on the members of Congress and apply our "will" to insist on reforming their behavior and the way they conduct their daily business.

How do we do it?

Mandates for Reforming Our National Politicians Within 10 Years

[These ideas would apply to state and local government as well]

Don't Re-elect Anyone in Congress [DRAC] - To change the way Congress is managed "we the people" should not re-elect any current politician (Federal, State or Local) for a minimum period of 10 years [or until the current mess has changed for the better]. As we all know, Congressional members are not compelled to work together, so if they can't or won't work together let's get rid of the entire group. Obviously they are not elected in the same years, so it will take several years to vote them all out, but it can be done.

Initially, the concept of not re-electing any (national) politician appears to be a harsh or radical idea that is impossible to accomplish. We all have favorite politicians that

are (in our individual opinions) doing "a good job." It would seem to be stepping backwards to remove them and lose their positions of seniority.

If we stay focused and DRAC for an extended period of time Congressional members will eventually understand completely what we the people are requiring. If you are concerned about their "well being," be reassured, the existing members of Congress are protected by the lifetime pensions they appropriated for themselves, so don't feel bad for them. If you are worried about finding qualified people to serve, don't. If we eliminate the "old boy or seniority system" the best qualified people will come forward to serve. Just remember, "DRAC" [Don't Re-elect Anyone in Congress] until we have candidates and a process we can directly control.

Also, if, for a period of time no qualified people exist in particular area of the country, the system can and will function without a few members here and there. There is a process "in place" to handle the new incoming political members, yes, the process will still function if all the members are considered junior members.

Election Reform New Rules - As we transition to electing new members of Congress we must insist on election reform. No more starting the election process the moment after the past election. So, a new rule is; in any election the candidates are limited to campaigning no sooner than 90 days prior to the election. If this strict time limit is instituted immediately the officials would keep to the business of government and not be wasting time and money seeking election.

Politicians get the same pension as the rest of us. No politician is awarded any special pension for serving. The special pensions that have been awarded are honored, but the pension "for life" is rescinded. This pension for life practice is ridiculous and attracts the wrong applicants. It will be cheaper to stop the practice now and pay them to leave than to continue this inbred process.

Politicians running for an office cannot run for election [for any new office] while serving in an existing office. For example, a serving Senator cannot run for U.S. President while in office as a Senator. Historically this has been allowed to happen, but is a bad practice because the politician's attention is always divided. The local people support an ambitious candidate, but the candidate's salary is paid from the national pool of money. Let's prohibit all officials from the practice of double dipping.

Require a Clear Annual Agenda – Lawmakers appear to have no clear agenda to follow. As a body they seem to drift from crisis to crisis with little resolution. Lawmakers are often easily interrupted by business better represented by our judicial system, for example steroids in baseball.

Determine and Control the Cost of Government – Currently politicians are over spending our ability to pay and the business of politics continues to cost too much. We spent billions on the last election. Do we really want our elections to be determined by the amount of money one candidate or another spends.

We must require an **annual balanced budget** or at least the budget must be planned and balanced within the current term of the existing U.S. President.

The solution is to require [for example: Federal] government agencies to spend "less" money than budgeted each year. In addition, any budget percentage saved and returned to the national treasury is applied directly toward the promotion and tenure of that individual. The current bureaucratic practice is to spend at least what was budgeted if not more. The thinking is; "if I don't spend the money I have

budgeted I won't get that same funding next year." We must immediately stop this notoriously wasteful [unwritten] practice.

Political Action Committees [PACS] – An abundant amount of professional special interest groups are focused on indirectly influencing and controlling the body of politicians by assisting in their election process and financing. Let's allow special interest groups and organizations to continue their efforts but their financial contributions to politicians must be limited to \$1000.00/year. [Violations are 5 year jail term]. Obviously, reducing the money PACS spend on government will refocus the politicians' attention to the needs of the majority of people.

Pork Barrel Politics and Earmarks – It is obvious we can no longer allow Congress to continue without closer supervision. As voters we must explore every opportunity to eliminate the existing "pork barrel" style of politics. As you know lawmakers have historically "packaged" legislation together as a method [as they describe it] to "increase efficiency." Let's streamline their voting procedures and processes using the latest technology. Let's require them to vote on each piece of legislation as individually presented bits of law that we all can understand and comment on at least two weeks "before" their vote. This practice would essentially create the presidential **line item veto** and would effectively balance the influence of special interest groups, and curb the usual party politics. Requiring each piece of legislation to be created, reviewed, and voted on individually would expose the source of credit or blame and stop the twofaced rhetoric that exist currently.

Responsible and Timely Reporting – The print and visual media appear to be selling air time and product advertising around their commenting and analyzing rather than just reporting information to the public. There is usually 30 minutes of "new / important" news each day, but takes 24 hours a day [on every network] to deliver the intended message? Before the 1960's news people reported the news, over the next forty years television began what is now titled entertainment news, and in the last few years we are now subjected to the "speculation and prediction news." There are very few existing independent news voices / sources remaining. News is released by corporations where it is contrived, packaged, and controlled very carefully. Spend a few moments and do a Google-search of the owners of the major broadcast and print media. The search results are a real "eye opener."

Let's allow the news media to become the secondary reporting tool that it really should be. Politicians must be required to contact their constituents directly [at least weekly] on a Congressional session basis. All positions and reports are posted in the public media and in a language that we the constituents understand and approve. All sources for broadcast and print news reporting is gleaned from these official reports and the usual individual political "grandstanding" is not encouraged.

Timesheets and Progress Reports – Let's require our lawmakers to keep an accurate accounting of how they spend their time representing us. If they are not working on exactly what we assign them they don't get paid.

At least weekly, every working government employee must report what they worked on that week and how much time was spent on those tasks / accomplishments. The collective reports are summarized upward and each agency provides a summary listing of progress. This time accounting practice must be applied to the Congress as well. Remember, politicians are elected locally, but are paid nationally which infers a certain [perhaps forgotten] national responsibility and obligation.

A Less Distracting Meeting Place – It appears that Congressional members have an inflated sense of self worth. Over time our public servants have distanced themselves from the realities of daily life (as the rest of us know it). Also, there are too many people making an extravagant living from politics and the political machinery that is geographically centered on Washington D.C. The Washington environment has too many distractions that apparently interfere with an individual politician's ability to finish their assigned annual tasks. We should require [at least for the next 10 years] Senators and Representatives to meet in a Midwestern State. They would meet at the local convention center and stay at the local hotel / motels [just like the rest of us do]. They would have a modest staff, sit in folding chairs, and stay until the full business agenda is accomplished. We rent their palatial office spaces in Washington to private businesses to offset the costs of doing the normal Federal business. When not "in session" the elected officials stay in their respective states making themselves available to understanding the current will of their people.

Conclusion:

We, as a single minded group, must insist on political reform and now is the time to begin. This document is not a particular political party sponsored set of ideas, rather it is an outline for reforming the behavior of all politicians and the people that influence and profit from their elongated and biased process.

If we organize around the [DRAC] idea and not re-elect any politician [and keep that policy in effect] until all the goals outlined here are implemented by the House of Representatives and the US Senate we will all share in a deliberate power that can over time help us regain control over our bureaucrats. This is a powerful and timely idea that will work if we vote them all out, together without regard to party affiliation.

Who is in agreement?

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