

The American Experiment - Changing for People, not Politicians

Trial and error: compromise and negotiation: all represent the American Experiment with democracy. The Founders of our nation recognized they could not build a new form of government overnight which is why the Articles of Confederation happened before the Constitution. They understood that to have a long-lasting government, it would need to change over time to meet the demands of the people “to build a more perfect union” as seen in the Preamble. Present-day society needs to recognize the changes in the people and reform the government to fit the needs of the people to create a truly representational government by reforming electoral policies.

Reformation needs to start with campaign finance laws. I have worked in campaign finance on multiple US House of Representatives elections and a Town Council race, and I saw how much money goes into campaigns. It baffled me and frustrated me to see these enormous sums that politicians receive, and I can only imagine how impactful that money would be if they spent it directly towards schools, mental health services, and more. According to Open Secrets, a website for donor research, the 2020 presidential election accumulated 6.6 billion dollars - three times higher than the last three presidential elections, all of which hovered just under 2.8 billion! Granted, we were in a global pandemic with many facing financial inequity. This is just for presidential elections not even other federal, state, or local elections. 41% of the funding came from large individual donors. The FEC should increase regulation on campaign finance and take a more aggressive stance on large sum donations to candidates. Additionally, reintroducing the Disclose Act of 2014 would require politicians to disclose their spending of funds over \$10,000 and it will root out the influence money has on politics. At the end of the day, politicians should

focus on people, not dollars and with these regulations, politics can become more like a democracy, not a corporation.

In addition to the campaign finances, the electoral college is flawed. This system ignores voters and excessively pressures swing states as seen in the 2020 election. For example, in California, there are 400,000 voters per electoral college vote whereas in Wyoming that number is 76,000. Someone voting in Wyoming has a greater impact on who gets the electoral votes, and that is not right. There are many occasions where the popular vote and electoral college votes do not match, as in the 2016 election. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote but lost the presidency and the electoral college. The original argument for the electoral college was to help override young, uninformed voters, but this is no longer issue. Due to modern technology, civics education, and having one the most politically active generations since the 70s, voters are now more informed than ever. Overall, this system is outdated and pits voters against each other. By following the popular vote, it promotes equity and fair elections.

All in all, politics and presidential campaigns have perverted to be about money and sneaky tactics like gerrymandering to gain votes. While these systems have worked in the past, they are no longer viable nor democratic. The beauty of America's government is its fluidity; we can change. This election is groundbreaking as it can be the catalyst to a new movement of anti-corruption and anti-big money in politics. Lawmakers and people alike must change to continue the great American experiment that has made this nation prosper over the past centuries.

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