

Democracy Thrives on Centrists, Not Radicals (part 2).  
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Foreign Policy. Only 10% of voters care about foreign policy issues, until we are at war, when 20% start to care. Democrats often think that our values matter in foreign policy issues. Republicans more often consider pragmatism, and are more inclined to recognize that there is no "world order" other than in our imaginations.

We need a mix of these two views: never forgetting that values do matter, but knowing that nations don't have "friends," they have "allies" or "interests." We are still first among peers in the defense of democracy and rule of law. We cannot just go "America first" and devil take the rest. We can learn "best practices" from other societies, but must reject the idea of a world court controlling us, since there is no common enforceable international law. We must be benevolent, but not naive. Good diplomacy (and good will) are as powerful as a big fist. Restore money to State Department and recruit future diplomats from universities.

Voting. Our country today touts "every vote counts." Indeed, we have evolved from when only property owners (White and male) voted, to all adult White men, then all emancipated Slaves (male), then all adult women. Adult (21 years old) was reduced to 18 because if 18 were old enough to serve in the military, it should be enough for voting.

Today, many Republican-majority states have been trying to suppress (and discourage) voters who might be Democrats. Polling places are eliminated or moved out of town; districts are gerrymandered, and even illegal dirty tricks suppress Black votes.

Democrats want the opposite: everybody to vote. Extend voting hours, polling places, transport elderly voters to the polls, voting on Sundays, well before election day. A new proposal is to lower the voting age to 15 and to make all voting compulsory.

Two wrongs do not make a right. Every vote cast by a person on their own volition makes every vote count. We need to return to one election day, and it should be, as it is in Europe, on Sunday. Voters at 15 are more likely to be unduly influenced by family or be airheads who shouldn't be voting at all.

Election Reform. Our election process is completely in the thrall of money. Reforms could include following the pattern of other democracies by having a six- to eight-week election limit to campaigning. Modern media could provide debate and interview formats so that voters could evaluate candidates. The national parties should once more be responsible for nominating candidates at their national conventions. (Primaries are now circuses manipulated by dark money.) Elections should be paid for by the taxpayers, which would limit spending. Reverse "Citizens United," as terrible a Supreme Court decision as the Dred Scott decision.

College for All. Colleges cannot be all things to all people. Vocational training does not require university. Universities should be reserved for professional education (including rescuing the Humanities from irrelevance). Graduate schools should educate professionals: doctors, scientists, lawyers, government services (including State Department), and educators of all levels. We also need more people in the crafts and trades, and basic techies. There should be funding available to educate or train students without financial means, and work-study and apprenticeship programs should be created.

Economic Inequality. This country has worked throughout its history to provide the greatest access to a large middle class. Taxing inheritance largess is a fair way of preventing ongoing inherited money. Housing programs opened home ownership to GIs returning from war, although Black veterans were clandestinely omitted from such benefits. Good neighborhoods are accompanied by good schools. These benefits, along with boarding schools in inner cities, can finally bridge this gulf.

We must once more enforce anti-trust laws, and break up the mega-corporations that now dominate the economy. They cannot be both media platforms and also competitive marketers of goods as one company. (Elizabeth Warren is right.)

Taking the money out of today's long and costly election process will help to promote economic equality and respect for law and good norms.

Our Constitution has been amended six times, reflecting social evolution. We can do

it again to fix the above issues.

688 words

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