

# CHALLENGING AMERICA'S PLUTOCRACY: The Power of Individual Voters to Transform Their Government

By [William John Cox](#)

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*America is once again in crisis! All three branches of its government and its major political parties are controlled by a plutocracy composed of large corporations and the wealthy elite. Irrespective of the candidates they elect, the voters are neither represented nor protected. Every American is at great risk, not only for their freedoms, but for the very safety and well being of their families and for the future of their children.*

Individual voters are the essential element of every democracy. Their effectiveness and the power they exercise determine the quality and extent of the freedoms they enjoy and the protection of the government they employ.

U.S. voters appear to be increasingly powerless to fight the plutocracy which runs their government. As a result, Americans are living in an ever more repressive police state that is illegally committing acts of violent aggression around the world.

The only thing that can possibly transform the U.S. government to one that cares for the voters who elect it, rather than for the plutocracy that controls it, is a unified opposition by *all* of the People, irrespective of their social class or political beliefs. The energy driving such a mass movement must flow from the personal actions taken by each of its individual participants.

The existing political situation in the United States can be compared to that of India prior to its independence. There the people were ruled by a foreign country, and in the U.S. the people are ruled by a government controlled by a plutocracy of privilege. As in India, the U.S. government has little care or concern for the people who contribute their hard-earned taxes to support it and the lives of their young people to defend it.

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of India, led a mass movement of nonviolent civil disobedience participated in by Indians of every class, religion and political party for more than 30 years until they forced the granting of independence in 1947.

Gandhi repeatedly demonstrated the collective power of individual actions, such as the refusal to purchase government-controlled salt and the march to the sea by hundreds of thousands to gather their own salt.

All Americans, irrespective of social class, religion or political party, are being cynically manipulated by an unaccountable plutocracy which turns one against the other. Once they come to realize this, they will find the courage *and* the ability to reverse the power structure and to transform their government into one which is concerned about their welfare and that of their families.

The People are not unaware of the crisis. Republicans and Libertarians are alarmed by the massive federal budget deficits, and Democrats and Greens are concerned about cuts in health, education and social programs. All are worried about government intrusion into their privacy, the curtailment of their civil rights, corporate personhood, and unfair taxation.

Political activity is rampant on the right, left and the middle, with hundreds of organizations taking aim at one or another of the issues that most concern them; however, there is no single focus to unify all elements of political activism into an effective defensive force which will ultimately provide a political mechanism to peacefully resolve everyone's concerns.

Gandhi taught that people have the right to defend themselves when their lives are threatened, but he also believed nonviolent civil disobedience was the most effective defense of freedom.

As in India, the power of a mass movement of Americans will be an aggregation of the basic strength of each individual participant, and their vote is the only effective, nonviolent power that every individual citizen possesses and controls.

The faceless plutocracy that controls the U.S. government promotes an illusion of legitimacy by allowing the people to vote for a variety of political candidates, the majority of whom have been bought and paid for by the plutocracy. The fiction extends to the "independent" judiciary, whose members are carefully selected by the plutocracy and who promote its agenda.

Gandhi recognized that "A government builds its prestige upon the apparently voluntary association of the governed." Thus, the legitimacy required by the plutocracy to remain in power depends upon misleading voters to vote against their interest. This leaves alarmed and informed American voters with two choices: They can either refuse to vote or figure out a way to make their vote count.

Already, more than half of all qualified voters do not vote, which makes it easier for corporate-controlled candidates of both major parties to dominate elective politics. Therefore, the American People must find a way to cast their votes in a manner that emphasizes their personal strength and which diminishes the corporate power of the plutocracy.

There is one simple expedient that can be used by every voter to demonstrate their power. When voting for president, or for any other office they choose, they can take their ballpoint pen out of their pocket and carefully write in the name of the person they want to represent them. Whether or not that name is on the ballot!

There will be little or no effect if only one voter, or a hundred, writes in their choice; however, if thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or millions of voters, nonviolently as in India, do the one thing each has within their personal control, they can and will defeat the plutocracy and will take charge of their government and direct its activities for their benefit.

The Voters' Rights Amendment (USVRA), which provides all of the People with the right to cast effective votes and guarantees that each write-in vote is counted, is intended to serve as a catalyst for the discontent that is widespread among American voters. It will operate for the benefit of every citizen and it will serve as a common cause for everyone, irrespective of

their social, political or religious beliefs.

There are no leaders of the USVRA. To the contrary, every voter is a leader, and every voter has the power and obligation to make a difference – for themselves, their families, and their country.

In 1776, Thomas Paine called “not upon a few, but upon all: not on this state or that state, but on every state: up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it.”

Now, 236 years later, with the nation once again in crisis, let it be said in the future that the People once again rose up and demanded the true freedom and democracy that had been for too long denied to them.

**William John Cox** is a retired prosecutor and public interest lawyer, author and political activist. His efforts to promote a peaceful political evolution can be found at

[VotersEvolt.com](http://VotersEvolt.com) and [USVRA.us](http://USVRA.us). His writings are collected at [WilliamJohnCox.com](http://WilliamJohnCox.com) and he can be contacted at [u2cox@msn.com](mailto:u2cox@msn.com).

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