

Corporate Manipulation and Indoctrination of American Voters: Empowerment - Not a New Party

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If nothing else, the election of 2010 has taught us that a “third” political party is not the answer. Like the two existing major parties, it too would simply become another political commodity to be purchased by the corporations and wealthy elite for their own purposes, rather than serving the interests of ordinary voters. Political salvation will come when the voters of every party decide to exercise, rather than dissipate, their power.

Political parties have been around ever since the founding of the United States, indeed from the time of ancient Greece and perhaps earlier. There will always be legitimate differences of opinion about the extent and role of government, and the give and take of those differences are the foundation of democracy – at least as long as voters are informed *and* they are not being manipulated by insidious forces.

Commonality of Interests

Members of the newly minted Tea Party and disaffected Democrats have far more in common than the corporate-controlled mainstream media would have them believe:

Both resent the loss of freedoms experienced by everyone, including electronic surveillance, airport full-body searches, and the ever-more-intrusive national security state;

Both are suffering from unemployment and watching their jobs being shipped overseas;

Both fear the loss of their unemployment insurance checks and the hunger of their children;

Both lay awake at night worrying about how to obtain health care for their families;

Both are angry about bank bailouts and are worried about how they are going to make their next mortgage or rent payment;

Both fear corporate power and resent the role of lobbyists and special interests in their government;

Both are aware that neither the Republican nor Democratic party really cares very much about their concerns; and they

Both know, deep down inside, that their votes for the candidates of both parties are meaningless, and they feel powerless to do anything about it.

The MSM would also have us believe the country has been swept by a tidal wave of conservatism and that liberalism has been cast overboard; however, the overall difference between the popular votes cast for the House candidates of both parties was [less than 3%](#). If the election had been a public opinion poll, the results would have been statistically insignificant.

The primary shift of votes from Democratic to Republican occurred among [white working-](#)

[class voters](#), who have most to lose from conservative policies. Why did they do it?

Manipulation of the Electorate

It should come as no surprise to most voters that both major political parties are ultimately controlled by the same corporate and wealthy interests; however, many of the disenfranchised voters of both parties who have been swept along by the Tea Party Patriot movement would feel betrayed if they learned just how manipulated they have been.

As oil companies continue to make exorbitant profits by cutting corners on safety, both for their workers and the environment, and by raising the price of the gasoline needed for workers to get to their jobs, how many tea partying patriots are aware that their movement is being secretly underwritten by [Koch Industries](#), one of the oil companies that is siphoning their hard-earned wages into easy profits?

Koch is the second-largest private company in America, whose annual revenues exceed a hundred billion dollars. [It is also](#) one of the top ten air polluters in the United States, which concealed the discharge of cancer-causing benzene from its refinery, which stole money from Indian tribes and which was convicted of negligence and malice in a leaky pipeline explosion that killed two teenagers.

Each of the Koch brothers has only one vote each, but by spending a few million of the billions they divert from wage earners every year, to educate, fund and organize the tea party, they have been able to [“turn their private agenda into a mass movement”](#) against the interests of those who will ultimately pay the tab. They were not alone in this endeavor.

As Jenny Beth Martin and Mark Meckler were “flying for freedom” around the country attending Tea Party Patriot rallies during the last weeks of the 2010 campaign, Meckler complained that the rival Tea Party Express (which was funded by a GOP consulting firm) was a “fake, they’re not from the grass roots. These are longtime Republican political activists with their own agenda.” However, the Dassault Falcon executive jet flown by Beth and Meckler [was provided by Ray Thompson](#), the founder and former CEO of Semitool, whose [workers are being](#) laid off to preserve profits.

Tea Party opposition to health care reform was undoubtedly a factor in the watered-down version ultimately passed by Congress and signed by President Obama. Opposition to the final bill (which primarily benefits only the health care industry) by both progressives and patriots is understandable, but it is more difficult to grasp why realistic health care reform, such as Medicare For All, was opposed by tea partiers.

Hundreds of rallies against healthcare reform, including “Kill the Bill” protests outside the Capitol where Democratic lawmakers were cursed and spat upon, [were funded by the Koch brothers](#). However, in the corporate battle against meaningful health care reform, the Kochs did not stand alone.

Funded by giant insurance companies, [including](#) United Healthcare, Cigna and Aetna, America’s Health Insurance Plans provided \$86.2 million last year to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to help it pay almost \$150 million to lobby against health insurance reform and to mislead small business owners (and their workers) about the benefits of healthcare reform, particularly a “public insurance option.”

This year, the Chamber raised and spent nearly \$33 million for political advertising to elect opponents of health care reform to House seats; however, [since the donations are secret](#), it is unknown if the campaign was once again underwritten by the insurance companies.

Not unsurprisingly, the newly-established congressional Tea Party caucus was [primarily funded by corporate interests](#), including the health care, real estate and oil and gas industries, and the largest contributors were committees associated with AT&T, Honeywell International and the American Bankers Association.

Hiding behind the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, Karl Rove has established a "Shadow Party" to coordinate conservative political groups in channeling [more than \\$300 million in secret corporate donations](#) to pay for more than 60,000 television ads during the final months of the 2010 election campaign.

The final piece of the "wealth" vs. "us" puzzle can be seen in corporate efforts to extend all of the tax cuts approved early in the Bush administration. While "tea party patriots" want to balance the budget, and the Obama administration wants to extend the tax cuts for 98% of tax payers, including everyone who does not earn more than \$250,000, [corporations and the wealthy elite are taking an "all or none" position](#) while lying to the voters by telling them the government wants to raise their taxes. If Congress goes along with the scheme, the very wealthy 2% will save \$700 billion in taxes, which will be paid for by everyone else.

The corporate indoctrination and manipulation of American voters continue to result in their being represented, not by peers, but by wealthy representatives who could care less about the rights or interests of ordinary voters of either party. The [wealth of Congressional members increased](#) by 16% between 2008 and 2009, just as workers lost millions of jobs and the net worth of American families [fell by \\$11 trillion dollars](#). The average house member is now worth \$765,000 and the average senator lays claim to \$2.38 million.

More than 43½ million Americans, one out of every seven, [are now living in poverty](#), more than at any time in the last 50 years. Those without any health care coverage rose to 16.7%, or 50.7 million. Save for Latvia, the United States is tied for the [worst infant mortality rate](#) in the world. One in five American women of reproductive age is uninsured, resulting in a death rate of women giving birth in the U.S. being worse than in [40 other countries](#).

Is there anything that the victims of the corporations and wealthy elite can do to avoid being manipulated into fighting the battles for those who seek to enslave them?

The Empowerment of Voters

A government of the people, by the people and *for* the people can only be achieved if the people maximize the power of their individual vote. Even though 1% of [the wealthy elite enjoys 70%](#) of the nation's wealth, they only have one vote each! Corporations are now allowed to secretly spend untold millions to manipulate the vote, but they can't vote!

If America is to survive as a free and democratic nation, voting must become a sacrament in the national political religion. Everyone must vote, everyone must cast an informed vote, and every vote must be counted!

Here are some of the things that are needed to ensure control of the government by those who elect it:

A National Paid Voting Holiday. The Congressional elections every two years should be one of the most important dates on the national calendar. All paid political advertising should cease at least a day before the election and everyone should receive [a paid voting holiday](#) on Friday, and the polls should remain open through Saturday, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to visit the polls. Votes should be cast with joy and voters should celebrate the election with real parties.

Ranked-Choice Voting. All national ballots should provide the opportunity for voters to [select candidates in order of their preferences](#) for every office, irrespective of party. This would allow voters to cast their first choice for candidates of the minor parties, such as Green or Libertarian, and, if none of the candidates receive more than 50% of the vote, to count secondary choices until such time as a successful candidate emerges. Not only does the method allow voters to support candidates they believe in, without generating a “spoiler effect,” it also discourages negative campaigning.

Publicly Financed Elections. [“Clean Elections” reform](#) is currently the law in seven states and offers a workable solution for Congressional candidates to avoid relying on special interest donors. Once elected, House and Senate members can consider legislation on its merits, without worrying about pleasing or displeasing wealthy donors or corporate lobbyists.

Eliminate Corporate Personhood. Every voter of every party should demand that every candidate for national office take a pledge to place the highest priority on a [Constitutional amendment](#) to ensure that, “Only natural persons shall be protected by this Constitution and entitled to the rights and freedoms it guarantees.”

National Policy Referendum. By voting yes or no on the 12 most critical questions facing the government every four years on the presidential ballot, voters would be able to [effectively make policy](#), not law, on the issues that most concern them. Candidates would be forced to actually take positions on the real issues, and better informed voters would cast more meaningful ballots.

Write-In Protest. Perhaps the only way for voters to force these reforms is to [exercise their power by writing in](#) their choices for president and vice president every four years. Granted, it would take longer to count the ballots; however, it would be a far more active demonstration of voter choice and resolve than by passively relying on corporate-controlled, computerized voting machines.

Revolution or Evolution?

Two hundred and thirty-four years ago American patriots violently established a new form of government which has, ever since, served as a model for other countries. That government has now become politically corrupt and has allowed economic chaos to risk the lives and happiness of those the government is elected to serve.

Voters now have the opportunity to nonviolently demonstrate they are in charge of their own government and that they have the ability to chart a new direction for its future.

Rather than a violent revolution, American voters have the duty and obligation to peacefully evolve towards a new system of government that will better serve to provide freedom, justice and prosperity to all who share this fragile planet.

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