



DEMOCRACY REFORM TASK FORCE
BY THE PEOPLE PROJECT
HOW TO FIX OUR DEMOCRACY AND RETURN TO
A GOVERNMENT OF, BY AND FOR THE PEOPLE

[The By the People Project](#)

Too many Americans feel that Washington is hopelessly out of touch with their priorities. They are angry at a political system that appears to favor the wealthy and well-connected while caring little about the needs of average families.

President Trump promised to “drain the swamp,” but the reality is that Big Money and Washington insiders have more influence today than ever before. We need real reform, not lip service.

The Democracy Reform Task Force – convened by Democratic leadership in Congress – is launching the [By the People Project](#) to address conflicts of interest and ethical lapses in the White House, fight back against special-interest influence in Congress and improve overall accountability and transparency in government.

Reforming our democracy is how we secure [A Better Deal](#) for the American people.



[Fix Our Broken Campaign Finance System](#)

Special interests have too much influence in our democracy. We must bring secret political spending out of the shadows, overturn *Citizens United*, and give a voice to all Americans. Here’s how we do it:

- The [Government By the People Act](#) will build a small-donor matching system to fund our elections.
- The [Democracy for All Amendment](#) will rein in Big Money by effectively repealing the *Citizens United* decision.
- The [DISCLOSE Act](#) will draw back the curtain so that we know who is pouring money into our elections.
- These important reforms will be joined with others, such as [fixing the Federal Election Commission](#), to ensure that our democracy works for the many, not the money.





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Strengthen Our Nation's Ethics Laws

President Trump has shown blatant disregard for the laws and norms in place to prevent public corruption. His conduct, and that of his political appointees, has exposed the weaknesses in our nation's ethics laws. We must do better.

- Reform the [Office of Government Ethics](#). This critical oversight body needs more enforcement authority to ensure that Executive Branch employees are upholding the highest standards of public trust.
- Apply [conflict-of-interest](#) rules to the President.
- Tighten restrictions on [financial self-dealing by candidates](#) for elected office, including the required disclosure of federal tax returns as a condition for the presidency.



Empower the American Voter

The right to vote is the keystone of American democracy. But across the nation, Republican-controlled legislatures are blocking access to the ballot box and working to diminish the voice of the people. Here are some highlights of how Democrats are fighting back:

- The [Voter Empowerment Act](#) will simplify the registration process, increase training for poll staff and establish national standards for voting machines.
- The [National Redistricting Reform Act](#) will end partisan gerrymandering by requiring states to use independent commissions to draw district lines.
- The [Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) will protect access to the ballot box for historically marginalized communities.





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About the Democracy Reform Task Force

Rep. John Sarbanes, Chair

The [Democracy Reform Task Force](#) – chaired by Congressman John Sarbanes of Maryland – is spearheading a legislative agenda that will put the public interest ahead of special interests. Specifically, the Task Force:

- Conducts Oversight of Ethical Violations
- Challenges Special-Interest Policies
- Advances Positive Democracy Reforms

Our country's strength comes from the American people's confidence in our institutions of democracy – earned through fair elections, responsive governance and a robust system of checks and balances. The [Democracy Reform Task Force](#) is fighting to restore the public's trust in those key principles.