

Chapter 13

Voting Reform
&
Other Evils of the Electoral Process

Electronic voting could be managed efficiently, honestly, securely and simply - if all voting machines used modified optical character reading systems, no too different from those that have been used for years in academic settings such as the standardized SAT and many, many others. In OCR tabulation, there is a paper or card upon which selections are made; and that paper acts not only as the score card but could also serve as a receipt if OCR were used as the basis of a voting system. If the ballot card were stamped with an identifying number, documented with the time and place of its issuance, in the event of an audit or recount, the number could be checked to see if it corresponded to a number issued at a certain polling place at a certain time. And, while the voter's identity wouldn't be associated with the number, the voter would maintain a bottom stub from the card; and the number on the voter's stub could be used as a challenge to a particular card tabulation if the voter so desired.

This system would not merely be an OCR based tabulation system as is used in most testing situations, but the OCR card would serve as the information / vote generator for an electronic / computer based voting ballot. As with many of today's electronic ballot screens, the choices and selections would appear on a screen, but the voting selection would be generated from the OCR card by way of a card reader. In this way there would be a correspondence from the card to the screen, and then to the final individual tabulation. The voter will be able to see their choices before terminating the process, and make whatever changes or corrections that need to be made.

At that point, of course, unless some foolproof method of preventing the software from corrupting the tabulation, the possibility of fraud exists. But what also exists in this method that doesn't exist in current systems are the original cards, and in any dispute a reading of the cards into a separate counting machine will be able to authenticate the count. In most of today's systems there is no intermediate step such as a ballot card. The input is done directly by way of the machine's keyboard. Also, there is no physical receipt of the vote, which is the control system lacking today.

In the name of modernization and the move to computers, "*direct recording electronic (DRE) voting machines began to replace paper ballots and lever systems in about 1980.*"^[4]

But, that is the system that is demonstrably prone to hacking, for the lack of a better term. And, as regards an improved system using OCR and a card receipt, it appears that I wasn't the only one concerned with potential fraud during some portion of the process. Somewhat after I began reading about computer based voting fraud and I began to put together my more perfect system, some very serious people began looking into the same potential problems of OCR tabulation, and they developed mathematical solutions.

From an IEEE paper as far back as 2009:

"Optical scan, however, is not without its own demonstrated and inherent integrity vulnerabilities (see, for example, [29]). Undetected errors, unintentional or malicious, in the scanning or tallying software can cause undetected errors in the electronic tally. Improperly printed ballots enable a variety of attacks on integrity. Misplaced ballots or breaches in chain-of-custody render even expensive manual recounts ineffective. Further, the

transparency offered by manual recounts is at best limited to those officials and observers in attendance." [4]

As in any computer based system, as has been conclusively demonstrated by the reputable Bev Harris of Black Box Voting, the Government Accountability Office, and Students at Princeton University, electronic voting machines can be manipulated to give contrary results. The software can be manipulated to skew the actual votes. There has been sworn testimony that software was purchased to skew election results in Florida [1, 2]

To repeat - the difference in the system proposed here is the additional elements in the selection and tabulation procedure, which minimalizes fraud by making it more difficult; and if suspected, it can be analyzed because of a physical hard copy ballot. That is not to say that some way could not be found to skew the vote so that what appears on the screen, although it may be a true reflection of what appears on the card, cannot subsequently be manipulated. There will always be frauds and crooks. The system is intended to dissuade them, and if necessary discover and reverse such fraud.

The use of a ballot card would allow absentee voting, but as with in person voting, each ballot card that is sent out will have an identifying number and the absentee voter still maintains a receipt stub with the ballot number. This system does not allow for on-line voting, a convenience, which I do not believe is a necessary voting option, and is a gateway to the greatest fraud.

With proper oversight and monitoring of card issuance by poll watchers, fraud would be at a minimum, as the number of issued voting cards would have to match the total voters casting ballots.

There are currently a few E2E systems being offered, such as Punchscan and ThreeBallot. The one I focused on is Scantegrity-2, which appears to be secure

and the most economical system to install. As a note, these systems are all based on programming utilizing mathematical algorithms to encrypt and decrypt the voting information, in much the same way that secure financial information is transmitted over the web and through large scale intranets used by financial institutions.

Every step taken to insure a more informed electorate and to guarantee an honest vote count strengthens the process and encourages voters to participate rather than staying away because of a basic distrust of the system. This all sounds very straight forward, and it is. So, why all the confusion and insecurity with electronic voting? I don't know. Ask the genius crooks who have set up the current systems.

Still More

But the obvious concerns over electronic voting fraud is far from the only issue corrupting the election process. The range of problems begins with election financing to the length of the term an elected official serves in office, and to the voters themselves.

The issues are simple -

A dumb electorate

In calling voters dumb, I am referring not only to the overwhelming mass of effectively illiterate or politically illiterate people in the U.S., I am also referring to the educated, ostensibly intelligent illiterates; those who, like their dumb counterparts, vote to satisfy their wants from government. Many of these dumb voters don't necessarily hope to have their personal wishes granted but to have their societal predilections fulfilled through the Federal Government. They want all Americans to be forced to live their utopian dream in the real world. But, it's

not just the loony Lefties, but also others - all who want the Federal Government to mandate how everyone should live - and give the bureaucracy permission to rewrite morals and traditions. To say that America is under attack from zealots on all sides is an understatement.

Wish List Government

Today, we vote ourselves gifts from the Government, doled out benefits - promised by politicians as something for "free". Free, of course, is when someone else pays for something. It's also free if you don't count an astounding national debt. In the earlier days of America, with a limited electorate, Federal representatives were neither voting on entitlements, nor on newly created social privileges, nor income tax rates, nor special income tax considerations, nor allowances for special industries. The vote was more directly connected to the more strategic areas of government policy. In most instances, what was voted on wasn't intended to immediately profit certain groups over others, albeit it would be intellectually naive not to state that since time immemorial some people have managed to profit from government action.

We now have two distinct forms of voter corruption, institutionalized by both major political parties, although each party uses one form of voter corruption to a greater or lesser degree over the other. There are the campaign pledges that are directly tied to getting voters to vote themselves gifts, mostly used by the Democrats. These are most apparent through the use of identity politics, where groups are defined as continuing victims and singled out for special benefits and privileges, including monetary benefits, in the form of "free this and "free that". On the other hand, there are the promises, usually seen in the form of passed legislation that promotes some or another business enhancement. This legislation, mostly used by Republicans, has been seen most in the form of trade deals, which have had the effect of gutting the American manufacturing

economy. These legislated deals for particular industries lead to contributors helping Republicans finance their election campaigns.

There has also been the political shenanigans that both parties have enjoyed playing when it comes to illegal immigration, which is why a simple fix at the border and proper attention to the problem has not been accomplished. Basically we are talking about intentionally allowing people to sneak into the country without proper visas. The Democrats used this to placate their leftist "social justice" open border base. This is a social conscience campaign supposedly intended to make America a golden utopian haven for everyone, even if it means killing the American goose that lays the golden egg of liberty and prosperity in the process. Over the long term it also served to expand the Democrat's voting base by enlarging the census based electoral vote of certain states with the presence of illegals, regardless of their voting or not. The Republicans want the same illegals here to work for many large companies at lower than standard labor rates. These mainstream Congressional Republicans have cared only for the favors they can do for their large contributors who will help them finance their election and re-election campaigns with little concern for the American worker. Immigration is also used for STEM technology workers who are allowed into the United States on H-B1 visas. The presence of these student / workers being paid less than the American citizen worker has effected high technology job loss among skilled American workers. The benefit here again is large campaign donations.

The radicalizing practice of satisfying either the 'social and religious wants' of American citizens for political benefit has allowed the avoidance of needed discussions on issues like realistic trade tariffs, or a new, more fair, less cumbersome, less invasive form of taxing to fund the Federal government, or ways to eliminate waste in the federal government, or dealing with the out of control national debt, or reinstating usury laws for banks, or promoting a joint federal / state pipeline project that would concomitantly ameliorate draughts in

the western states and control flooding along the Mississippi, or effectively dealing with the invasion of people swarming across our borders both illegally and "legally", or any number of important issues. Instead of being a Congress for Americans, the Congress plays tiddlywinks with America's future.

The scope of Federal law making must be reduced. In fact, the most beneficial thing the Government could do - would be to do less, to rescind many laws that shouldn't have been passed in the first place, to close down several agencies, to narrow its scope and tighten its belt. Much too much Federal regulation today is actually fiat legislation, which has come into being through Executive Action, effectively bypassing the Congress, essentially legislation never voted on by the American people. In a very perverted way, at this juncture of time and politics, the recent Congressional failures to control the Obama Administration from 2008 until 2017, is proving to be beneficial with the installation of President Trump. As so much of President Obama's body of "legislation" was done through Executive Orders, in the form of guidelines to various Federal Agencies within the Executive Branch, it can be undone in exactly the same way by the new President. And, as I write, most of the recent bureaucratic agency guidelines signed by Obama are being rescinded by President Trump. While this ability appears fortuitous now, it does not portend well for the future of legitimate legislation. Congress needs to take a stand on Executive overreach.

Even much criminal prosecution that has come under Federal jurisdiction must be returned to the states for adjudication. There is just too much Federal law, and much of it is just too complicated, running hundreds of convoluted pages, and spawning much too much bureaucratic authority, drastically exceeding any legitimate authority granted by Congressional legislation.

What the voting populace does get to vote on through their Congressional representative are either issues that belong to the states, or are patently unconstitutional, or are aimed at abridging individual liberty, or granting favors to

large business interests, or merely doling out more freebies to special interests or constituents. So, because a vote in Congress is often no more than a paid favor to campaign donors or a bribe to constituents for their vote, a ballot has for many voters become a letter to Santa asking for a Federal gift. Sadly, we still believe in fairy tales and have created the Santa Claus government .

Issue Driven Elections

The trend of voting for candidates, especially the presidency, focuses more on the personality of a candidate, on the candidate's charm, or their ability to awe an audience by their mere status or reputation, or the candidate's generalized promises of great changes for a better life, or promises of one kind of handout or another, and less on factual solutions to the actual existential issues facing the nation. When an election is based on the cult of personality and promises of gifts, and less on what the government is doing and needs to do, we run the risk of running headfirst into tyranny. And, once a smooth talking devious President, who is thought of as a benign Santa Claus, is fully ensconced in the White House, we will be done for.

A fact that may have eluded Americans in their study of history is that Adolph Hitler went around Germany kissing babies and making great promises for financial betterment through a stronger national government when he was campaigning for office prior to subjugating a highly educated democracy, and fundamentally transforming it into one of the worst tyrannies the world has known. Prior to the Third Reich, the Weimar Republic was a republic with strong 'staaten'. It was Hitler who weakened the states and centralized government power, creating a new ~~homeland~~ fatherland for the German people.

It would appear that the more voters base their selection on personality and illusive promises, the less they vote on substantive issues.

To accomplish bringing the focus back onto issues, several changes must be made:

Campaign Funding The Best Government Money Can Buy

I suspect that some will read a few words and immediately refuse to any further once they arrive at the section about limiting campaign financing and campaign speech.

But, reform is needed if we are to inhibit the slide into being a sham democracy.

Election funding has to change. It wastes the time of our elected representatives who are in continual campaign fundraising mode. Much too often it influences their votes in Congress and affects decisions made in the White House. It creates the appearance of corruption even when corruption doesn't exist. The length of time over which an election campaign extends must be shortened. We are being inured by the amount of campaigning that takes place, especially for the presidency. The message a candidate wants to disseminate must be disseminated easily and clearly.

The 2016 debates were not debates. They were vulgar and insulting media oriented spectacles. It is inexcusable that the debates were hosted by media companies rather than by a neutral not for profit organization such as the League of Women Voters. If there are twenty candidates on a stage, every candidate should be asked the same question, and have the same time in which to answer them. If a candidate wants to sidestep a question with some politician's savvy, that is their prerogative. Probably not a great choice, but it would be their choice. There could be a series of debates with fewer candidates on stage at each debate, and if all candidates were presented the same questions at each of the

debates, a particular candidate's polling numbers for inclusion in a large stage or small stage debate would be unimportant, as the probing for information in the questioning would be the same. The candidates' demeanor, ability to present their ideas and their positions would be easily discernible. A public website should be created that will allow all candidates to have a page in a uniform setting, all candidates required to address a standard set of issues, and containing whatever additional special information the candidate wants to share. There is no reason why each and every candidate shouldn't complete a standardized questionnaire, with room for exposition that could be used by the media in discussing the candidates. This would be aside from a candidate's personal campaign website, through which donations are made. Candidates should be held to a high standard in explaining how they see their job.

Campaign Financing Must be Changed.

I understand that many feel that Citizens United levelled the playing field. I don't believe it did. Candidates should still be allowed to collect "small" personal donations, but the current system must be changed. There are too many behind the scene players who are skewing the process. Attack ads are so very effective, yet they add nothing informationally substantive to campaigns, and they need to be held in check one way or another. How this can be done without instituting legislation strangling the freedom of the press needs to be addressed. I might even wryly suggest that we get the judge from "Jeopardy" to oversee the information and check on its veracity. I am not referring to limiting one's ability to call an office holder a son of a bitch or damn liar. They often deserve the name calling. I am referring to baseless scurrilous accusations against political opponents during a campaign. Sadly, the news media is more guilty of skewed untrue reporting about candidates than PACS. Of course, however egregiously the news media act, there is nothing that can be done about it - except maybe having a site that has honest answers to accusations. I have no idea how that might be done - but, news reports like the one at the time of this edit that

reported that President Trump removed MLK's bust from the Oval Office as soon as he moved in, only serves to denigrate the entire system. This false report occurred at the same time as an ongoing nation wide discussion about fake news; which leads one to believe there may be no solution - and that as a nation we may just have to 'suck it up' and suffer the effects of yellow journalism at its worst.

Political ads by candidates should inform the voters of how a candidate has either voted in the past, or how they stand on certain issues. Ads by groups not directly affiliated with a candidate should be disallowed during the actual campaign. Industry and issue groups have a place in serving to inform and promote, but, currently they hold too much sway over elections. Otherwise honorable organizations and some somewhat less than honorable organizations, too often have a negative effect on elections in several different ways. For example, most organizations will not contribute to third party or independent candidates. We often ask why so many incumbents or similar mainstream candidates are returned to office. Part of the answer lies in the fact that independent and third party candidates find it difficult to obtain the same funding as Democrat and Republican candidates. And, candidates who run with a different message also find it difficult to obtain funding.

For example, if an independent candidate were running on a platform that, among other things, demanded an end to allowing anchor baby citizenship, balancing the Federal budget, and was also a staunch Second Amendment defender, and might even be an NRA Safety instructor, the NRA would not fund them. The NRA might fund a Republican candidate in the same race who has a wishy washy stand on issues, may meander on the immigration issue and may only pay lip service to Second Amendment protected rights. And still, if there were a Democrat, who was opposed to most positions that are usually considered "Republican", but was strongly pro-Second Amendment protected rights, the NRA might support them against a lukewarm Second Amendment

Republican candidate. The NRA is a single issue organization, it will support a candidate who may oppose positions supported by its membership in a particular district, because it will only contribute to a major party candidate. In this case the NRA's funding skews the election, and someone who might better represent a constituency is denied funding. I reference the NRA as a culprit of sorts because it is a single issue organization. But the NRA's money and other organizations' money should only be used to promote and clarify their issue. It is then up to the candidate to enunciate their position on an issue, and for the voter to decide upon the candidate.

The current method of funding is partly responsible for the schism in our politics. It is a reason why the Democrats have become so Left and anti-American and the Republicans have become so morality based. A solution would be to allow candidates to only accept money from individual voters. There should also be a reasonable limit on contributions. This limit will also apply to the candidate themselves. No PAC, Union, organizations such as Code Blue or the several organizations George Soros has backed, such as the Open Society Foundation (Institute), and the Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity Political Action Committee should be allowed to donate to a candidate. All candidates who meet an established set of requirements to be on a ballot should be provided an amount of air time. Possibly, some of the cost of that time would be reimbursed to the media stations by the State and Federal governments.

Organizations of any type, including PACs, should be prohibited from endorsing particular candidates. Any information presented in commercials, handouts, mailings etc, by any organization should be limited to a discussion on issues. The truth in advertising laws should apply to all ads. I say this with the understanding that this would be a very touchy in practice, in that there is often more than two sides to an issue, and available data can be conflicting. Still, something must be done about the falsehoods and misleading information paraded before the public. However this issue is addressed, something must be done, because unless an

individual citizen is an expert in a field or has the time and ability to fully research a topic, they are often really left in the dark at the ballot box as a result of false claims made during a campaign. And, that's not the way to run a country.

Again, I don't know it would be done, but candidates should be made to refrain from accusing other candidates of anything more than supporting a particular issue or having voted on particular legislation. The negative ad syndrome must stop. It creates lies in the campaign and distracts the voters from the issues.

The goal of election reform must be to refocus campaigns about issues, and how the candidates stand on those issues. What occurs after an election should not be a wait and hope game that the former candidate, now an elected office holder, will perform as promised; but rather what should result after an election is a government that truly reflects an educated, informed electorate's decisions. For this reason, there is great validity in having Senators once again represent state interests - the state legislatures will be very familiar with the candidate they select. Those elected would more closely represent the voice of the people and the interest of the states, as opposed to what we have now, a nest of writhing slippery snakes in office for as long as they can raise enough money from lobbying groups to keep themselves there. The 2015 leadership rebellion in the House of Representatives, which the leftist media portrayed as chaos, was more of an attempt to bring the majority Republican Party into the hands of the voters and away from the Republican establishment party leaders. It didn't work.

Term Limits

An Old Idea Whose Time Has Come

The idea of term limits being touted as a new idea to control corruption was in fact a major issue after the Federal Convention. The Anti-Federalists wanted the Constitution to be redrafted to include term limits. The Anti-Federalist tract, *The Federal Farmer*, discussed the lack of term limits as a major fault in the

Constitution. The author of the Federal Farmer foresaw the capitol city of the Central Government becoming the seat of corruption for those wanting power and profit and favors through manipulation of the public purse. He correctly predicted that those remaining in power for extended periods of time through successive electoral terms would inevitably become corrupted.

Direct Election of Senators and the Electoral College

We must decide if we are going to continue down the path of converting this country into a Democracy consisting of several administrative districts, or return to our roots as a Democratic Federal Republic. For many, the term democracy, republic, democratic republic, Federal republic and constitutional republic are merely interesting, quaint and somewhat interchangeable terms that have no real distinction - one from the other. But, the reality is that the form of government we settle on going forward will decide whether or not we survive as a free people. Democracy in a country of 300,000,000 people is an exercise in insanity. One indication of that is the 2016 election campaign for the presidency, which was in many ways, a complete sideshow, an abomination. The campaign may have yielded a person who was willing to address many of the problems facing us, but the way we arrived at that decision was arrived at without a full investigation and discussion of the issues

Many look at President Lincoln as a great hero. He appears to have been a compassionate man, but in pursuing a war against the Confederacy he destroyed the basic framework of this country and dramatically shifted the balance of power from the states to the Central Government. As far as I am concerned, while I believe the South needed a good kick in the butt over slavery, I will say something that will anger many. From a certain vantage Lincoln was an abomination. The Civil War not only destroyed the basic structure of the Republic, but was directly responsible for creating a Black underclass that still exists because of post war Federal policies and a nursemaid philosophy that has

continued to this day. The second step in the march away from republicanism took on momentum with the passage of the 16th Amendment, allowing a direct tax on income. Quickly, on its heels the 17th Amendment was added, changing how Senators are selected. Originally, Senators were representatives of their state, and they were selected by the controlling faction of the legislature of the state government. It was the House of Representatives that was to be the people's house, and elected most frequently, every two years. The influence of the state government over the Senate was severely reduced once Senators were elected by statewide ballot. This also severely unbalanced the authority of the state in favor of the Central Government. There is now a confluence of electoral constituencies, with the choice of Senators and, to a great degree, the President - all being elected by the same voters in each state. This change, touted as an enhancement to democracy, is anathema to a large Federal Republic.

Democracy, with all its attendant problems, and it has many, works best in small settings. Corruption and manipulation of the public good is rampant, and the best interest of the citizens is infrequently the prevalent concern on most levels of government. The local Democrat Party in my district, which hasn't won a Congressional seat since time immemorial, prefers to field candidates with connections to their clique than support a candidate who could conceivably put up a credible fight, but is outside of their control. Even on the local level, the news media will do a hatchet job on a strong willed outsider candidate as a favor for their "friends". Corruption begins at the local level and runs its way up from municipalities to counties to states to the Federal Government - and as we have seen fairly recently - right into the United Nations, where justice is no more than a subjective practice. It is difficult enough to have informed elections in a city of fifty thousand, let alone a country of 300,000,000. Look at the campaigns of the Democratic Party. They are campaigns filled with promises of gifts to each and every definable group of people that can be convinced they need Washington's help, not even limited to citizens. And, while the Democrats loudly divide the nation through identity politics, making promises of goodies for each identifiable

group, the Republicans quietly meet with big donors to get their share of campaign contributions. This is not to say that the Democrats do not have their own large institutional contributors for whom they mold beneficial legislation. It is all about votes and maintaining power. If 90% of the voting age population were challenged to a factual discussion of the issues facing us today, you will get pabulum as discourse, in the form of tired political phrases, complete untruths, a wish list of what the government should give them or do for them, or how the world should be reconfigured in someone's utopian image of the world, or an impassioned speech touting the imposition of a particular morality on the entirety of the country. The absolute corruption of the education system and the degenerated behavior of the news media allow for no real information to be disseminated into political discussion.

All that a pure Democracy can achieve in a large country is a leadership based on a cult of personality, beholden to corrupt individuals with access to power. The founders understood that. So, when someone asks what a bunch of tired old white men, some of whom owned slaves, gave the country - you might say that they gave us the first republic in the world with a written Constitution based on power emanating up from the individual to the government and a Bill of Rights acting as a shield, attempting to limit the authority of the Central Government to infringe on the individual's liberty. It may not be Nirvana, but it ain't all that bad, and a hell of a lot better than most.

Citations:

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