Because changing the rules changes everything.

CHANGE the RULES

CHANGETHERULES.ORG
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our political system is broken.

It is natural to focus on electing the best candidates in 2020. However, if we want better results, we also need to change the system itself.

Many citizens are beginning to pay attention to the structure of the U.S. political system, so that in the future we elect candidates that represent more than “the-lesser-of-two-evils.” We should be served by incumbents that produce results—or are thrown out of office.

This white paper explains the changes that are underway and how you can support these shifts.

In 2016, Congress had a 95% reelection rate and a 17% approval rating.
Our mission is to reform the American political system.

The vision is a system with open competition, where every vote counts, and money plays its proper role.

Large entrepreneurially-oriented donors enable Change the Rules to educate the public about ways to enact a set of structural reforms.

We provide citizens with a tangible way to achieve fundamental change by being objective and “strategic.”

Our approach works because we make it relatively simple to address multiple structural problems with “one click.”

We are a non-partisan non-profit that channels contributions to implement strategies that change the rules of our political process.
Why Should We Care About a Broken Political System?

Over the last decade, the consequences of our broken political system have slid from troublesome to disastrous. Our national problems are not getting solved. They are getting worse. This is true whether you are on the right or left. Think about the problems you care most about. Are we enacting workable solutions that make a difference to you and all the people you care about? Are we getting things done?

One way to get perspective on this is to look at the trends in the U.S. versus other countries. Harvard Business School studied this last year.

The red circles indicate the section of the graph where the US is relatively weak today and falling further behind: our complicated tax code, health care, K-12 education, deteriorating infrastructure, regulations. And the biggest sink hole of all? The big red circle representing our dysfunctional system—relatively bad now and rapidly getting worse.

The Harvard study concluded: It is the U.S. political system that has become the major barrier to solving nearly every important challenge our nation faces.
POLITICS IS SUCCEEDING AS A BUSINESS BUT FAILING AS AN INSTITUTION

Politics is a business. As recently noted, “It is not something enshrined in the constitution. The constitution makes no mention of political parties, party primaries, ballot-access procedures and the countless other rules that drive today’s politics.”

The primary purpose of this “business,” as it currently functions, is the reelection of incumbents and the protection of the two national parties.

As broken as this business appears in terms of serving the broader public interest, it is actually thriving based upon its own standards for success.

- The overwhelming majority of incumbents are reelected, not punished in any way for the collective breakdown of the system.
- Competition is waged based upon ideology, allocation of blame and being “the lesser of two evils.” While the RNC and DNC are undergoing deep ideological struggles, they continue to effectively block any “outside” competition. (These rules of the system are described in more detail in the pages that follow.)
- Money continues to pour into this business in the form of campaign financing, lobbying dollars, and well-paying jobs for an army of partisan consultants, think tanks, media outlets and support functions (including lucrative options when elected officials leave “public service.”)

THE BUSINESS OPERATES BY A SET OF RULES

This business operates by a set of rules (and these rules can be changed).

- Our overall goal should be to elect officials who are actually disposed to solving our complex national problems, and—conversely—throw out incumbents who do not solve these problems.
- As bad as things seem now, there is hope: there is already a set of reforms that are operating largely under the radar that are showing that they can change the system.
- It is not simple, nor easy. Our mission at Change the Rules is to manage this complexity on your behalf, in a nonpartisan way.
- A single donation to CTR funds a portfolio of nine organizations actively reforming complementary aspects of the system at the state and federal levels.

SMART MONEY WILL BE INVESTING IN CHANGING THE RULES

We believe that smart money will increasingly recognize that:

- At least one-third of political contributions should go to structural reform of the system (changing the rules)
- No more than two-thirds should go toward supporting “better candidates” (of any party) who will inevitably be constrained by what it takes to win primary and general elections under the existing rules of the business.

We simplify the complexity:
we manage the complimentary portfolio of nine organizations.

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1 Throughout this white paper, we are drawing heavily upon the research from Harvard Business School by Katherine Gehl and Michael Porter, published September 2017, and available at https://www.hbs.edu/news/releases/Pages/why-competition-us-politics-industry-failing.aspx
YOU INVEST THE DOLLARS. WE MANAGE THE COMPLEXITY.

- CTR is a non-profit that impartially vets the non-partisan grassroots activism that is making the biggest difference in structural reform.
- We maintain a philanthropic portfolio of complementary initiatives for changing the rules of the political system.
- CTR does not support any candidate, political party or policy—except changing the rules to create broader representation, more choice and greater accountability.

YOU CAN INVEST IN PUBLIC EDUCATION OR DIRECT ACTION.

We offer two ways of investing to change the system: Educate the Public and Enable the Public to Take Direct Action by managing the contributions to the nine organizations below.

Reference chart below to learn more.

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<th>Tactics</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
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<td>Web outreach, media campaigns, conferences, research, articles, whitepapers, conversations/blogs</td>
<td>ChangeTheRules.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Candidate donations don’t produce fundamental reforms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Structural flaws in the electoral system are creating the swamp and holding us back.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Take Direct Action</strong></td>
<td>Ballot Initiatives, legal challenges, legislative pressure.</td>
<td>Campaign Legal Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>• End extreme partisan gerrymandering.</td>
<td>City, state and federal levels.</td>
<td>Direct Vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Institute rank voting the state and federal levels.</td>
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<td>Open Primaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Shift to a national popular vote for president.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Voter</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Open primary elections to Independent Voters.</td>
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<td>Represent US</td>
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<td>• Catalyze independent voters.</td>
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<td>Issue One</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Money in politics: Enact grassroots anti-corruption initiatives.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Change the Rule</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Money in politics: Leverage the experience of insiders for federal reforms.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Voter Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open presidential debates to a third-party candidate.</td>
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understanding the business of politics

The Problems are structural

- In 2016, congress had a 17% approval rating and a 95% reelection rate.
- 75% of elected officials are winning office without having to communicate outside of their own party.
- Under the current rules, conservatives won’t get a smaller government, a simplified tax code or free markets. Liberals won’t get social justice, health care reform, gun control or environmental protection.
- In the business of politics, members of Congress buy top spots on the most powerful committees. To raise the money, they often collect from the very interests their committees are supposed to oversee.
- Under the current rules, nonvoters do not matter at all. Citizens who vote in general elections are only allowed to choose the least bad candidate.
- Under the current rules, independents are locked out of primaries in one third of the country.
- The only votes that really matter in our presidential elections are in the swing states.
- Voting for a third-party candidate often tips the election toward your least preferred candidate.
- Under the current rules, no third-party candidate will ever be included in the presidential debates.
- A Princeton University study finds that since the 1990s, public opinion has no impact on U.S policy.
- Since the 1980s, moderate representation in both the House and Senate has dropped from 50% to well under 10%, in both parties.
- The strategy of explicit polarization is working: About 1/3 of the country views citizens in the opposite party as “a threat to national well-being.”

Solutions are near at hand

- Beginning in 2010, reforms in California show what’s possible elsewhere: less partisan districts, higher voter participation, more voting across party lines to enact solutions, more incumbents voted out of office, and increased approval ratings for state legislators.
- The U.S. is two thirds of the way toward eliminating the electoral college system and the distortions it creates in elections and governance.
- In 2018, Chicago and Cook County passed the “Anticorruption Act,” which curtails the role of money by increasing transparency, prohibiting lobbyists bundling campaign contributions and increasing enforcement of existing campaign finance laws.
- In 2018, Maine became the first state to take Rank Voting from the city to the state level.
- Gerrymandering abuses are being litigated in the higher courts and in grass roots initiatives in five states.
- Independents are gaining political weight as the ranks of millennial voters increase and self-organize.
- Nearly 200 former congressmen and governors are pushing back on partisan dysfunction by advocating transparency, lobbying restrictions and other campaign-finance reforms.
- The Open Primary movement is succeeding in including independents in the political process.
- Opening the Presidential debates to 3rd party candidates would help create meaningful competition to the RNC and DNC.
In most organizations, structure and rules largely determine what is valued and how individuals behave. In politics, a self-serving set of rules has evolved that maximizes the chance of reelection while avoiding accountability. The first step to create new structures of a healthy political system is to understand why things are the way they are.

Politics is a business that is governed by three sets of rules.  

**1. A two-party monopoly practicing pseudo-competition.**

Political parties thrive by emphasizing social and economic issues—wedge issues such as pro-life vs. pro-choice—designed to drive people apart. These types of wedge issues present citizens with extreme alternatives that don’t actually solve any problems while promoting the view that “We are right; they are wrong.”

Approximately one third of Republicans and Democrats see the other party as “a threat to national well-being.”

Republican and Democratic establishments pretend to compete on solving important national problems when, in reality, the real focus is on blame, negativity and unworkable ideas that appeal to ideological extremes. We call this “pseudo-competition.”

The facts testify to the success of this system for the politicians: In 2016, a 95% reelection rate, despite a 17% overall approval rate.

Republican and Democrat candidates do not need to run on a record of genuine accomplishment. Under the rules of pseudo-competition, they only need to be viewed as the lessor of two evils. The competition is waged in terms of energizing your base and suppressing turnout for the other party.

The current rules make it difficult to run a viable campaign outside of this two-party monopoly as well as restricts the range of candidates offered within each party.
**Layers of rules that limit “Who Matters” to politicians.**

The current rules guarantee control by a small set of voters.

There are four layers of rules that severely limits “who matters” to politicians and the major political parties.

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**LIMIT 1:**

**NON-VOTERS DON’T MATTER**

40% of the eligible electorate do not vote even in presidential elections. In the critical primary elections (local, state, national), only 5%—20% of the electorate participate. The system cares only about the people that vote (and donate).

According to academic research at Princeton University over the last 20 years, desires of the average citizen have no impact on the likelihood of congress enacting any given law. This explains why 89% of the country can support universal background checks for gun sales, but nothing happens. In this case, the power of the NRA is not in direct contributions, but the grass-roots network to a committed “Second Amendment” base across the country.

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**LIMIT 2:**

**GERRYMANDERING EXCLUDES VOTERS**

“Gerrymandering” establishes a political advantage for a particular party by manipulating state electoral district boundaries. An independent study found that Republicans won as many as 22 additional U.S. House seats over what would have been expected in 2016 based on the average vote share in congressional districts across the country. Both parties do it. There are currently six gerrymandering cases pending before the Supreme Court—three claiming excessive Republican bias and three claiming Democratic bias.

Only 24 of 435 congressional districts (5%) were considered competitive in 2016. If you voted in one of the 411 non-completive districts, the outcome was predetermined. Your vote did not matter. The bias is so extreme that one or another of the major parties did not even bother fielding a candidate in 43% of the state legislative elections in 2014.
**LIMIT 3: UNAFFILIATED VOTERS EXCLUDED FROM PRIMARIES**

Primary elections determine the ticket offered voters by the Republican and the Democratic parties. Extreme partisan activists (the “far left” and the “far right”) play a disproportionate role in these outcomes. And, because up to 95% of the districts are considered “safe seats” for the major parties, the Republican or Democratic primary winner generally proceeds to win the general election.

Independent voters are entirely excluded from voting in primary elections in roughly one-third of the country and restricted in some form in another third.

More registered voters have declared themselves as “unaffiliated” than have registered within either the Republican or Democratic party. More than 50% of millennials are registering as unaffiliated. And if 17-year-old pre-registrations are any indication, the next generation is registering even more unaffiliated (57% in Colorado).

**LIMIT 4: THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE PRIVILEGES THE VOTERS IN THE SWING STATES**

The rules of the Electoral College system marginalize 75% of eligible voters in presidential elections. How? Only 11 swing states matter to the overall outcome.

Given all these obstacles to participating in American-style democracy, it should come as no surprise that America ranks 14th out of 18 developed countries in voter turnout.

### INDEPENDENT VOTER ELIGIBILITY IN PRIMARY ELECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>U.S. Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Eligible</td>
<td>1/3 of the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Eligibility</td>
<td>1/3 of the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Eligibility</td>
<td>1/3 of the U.S.</td>
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</table>

*Fully Closed primaries in Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania*
Allowing big money to play a dominant role in elections and governance.

Pollsters, strategists, fundraisers, consultants, media experts, direct mail services, digital services and many other professions have a huge financial stake in the system.

Since the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United, the role of “outside money” in the form of SuperPACs has grown dramatically. Common practice permits SuperPACs to channel unlimited amounts of money through anonymous sources into the political debate. The anonymity of this “dark money” encourages more negative messaging.

Big money does more than finance elections. It also funds an industry of lobbyists seeking special treatments from the legislative processes. For example, one reason healthcare reform is so difficult is the need to navigate the political pressures generated by health care lobbying expenditures—$560 million last year alone.

Money also plays a role in well-paying—revolving door—jobs for elected officials and staff when they leave government service that blur the lines between the public and private sectors.

We now have a better understanding as to why voters keep reelecting incumbents in a system they hate.

• Because the rules are set up to preclude genuine competition.
• Because only a small fraction of voters determines who gets on the ballot.
• Because the system permits big money to play a dominate role in elections and governance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROWING ANIMOITY ACROSS PARTY LINES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEE THE OTHER PARTY “AS A THREAT TO THE NATION’S WELL BEING.”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEMOCRATIC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RATE THE OTHER PARTY AS “VERY UNFAVORABLE” IN 2014</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
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<td><strong>IN 1994</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>16%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Research Center
If we want different results, we need to create new rules. These rules are being built around three countervailing rules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Goal</th>
<th>Current Rules</th>
<th>New Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPEN COMPETITION</td>
<td>A two-party monopoly practicing pseudo-competition.</td>
<td>Competition is opened up within the DNC and RNC. And independents compete on a level playing field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERY VOTE COUNTS</td>
<td>Layers of rules that limit “Who Matters” to politicians</td>
<td>All voters can have a meaningful impact on selecting and electing candidates and holding them accountable for results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPER ROLE FOR MONEY</td>
<td>A system that permits big money to play a dominant role in elections and in governance.</td>
<td>Big money, while still important, is more transparent and less linked to lobbying and jobs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies for Structural Change

These changes require more than a single approach. At Change the Rules, we have identified a set of non-profit organizations that are currently implementing a set of strategies to implement these shifts.

To be included in the CTR portfolio, organizations must meet our strict criteria:

- The organization must be a non-partisan, non-profit (and not endorse specific candidates).
- The organization must have strong leadership and demonstrated results.
- The reforms must hit the sweet spot of changes that are meaningful, yet achievable.
- The reforms in our portfolio must complement one another.

OVERALL GOAL #1: OPEN COMPETITION

SPECIFIC GOALS

- Open competition within the Republican and Democratic parties
- Open competition from 3rd parties

STRATEGIES

- End extreme partisan gerrymandering.
- Institute rank voting at the state and federal levels.
- Adopt California’s Top-2 Primary System
- Open presidential debates to a 3rd party candidate

ORGANIZATIONS

- Campaign Legal Center
- Fair Vote
- Independent Voter Network (IVN)
- Change the Rule

End extreme partisan gerrymandering

When partisan state legislators redraw the congressional maps every 10 years, the bias can be so extreme as to “effectively nullify democracy.” For example, an independent study found that Republicans won as many as 22 additional U.S. House seats over what would have been expected in 2016 based on the average vote share in congressional districts across the country. This is not just a Republican issue. Legal challenges before the Supreme Court include cases of extreme Democratic gerrymandering (such as Maryland). A Supreme Court ruling in June (in Wisconsin and Maryland) could profoundly impact redistricting guidelines across the country.

Arguing before the court, one Campaign Legal Center (CLC) attorney argued that the modern gerrymander is not “your father’s gerrymanderer. It is instead gerrymandering on steroids, fueled by computers, new kinds of voter data and a polarized electorate... If you let this go without judicial oversight for the outliers, in 2020 you’re going to have a festival of copycat gerrymandering the likes of which this country has never seen.” Ironically, if the Democrats take the house in 2018, they would be the party to benefit from these excesses. It serves to underscore that these structural issues are a feature of the system, not simply the practices of one party.

Beyond the legal challenges, there are active citizen-lead initiatives in seven states (Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon and Pennsylvania) to create non-partisan methods of creating assembly districts.

Organization:
- Change the Rules
Institute rank voting at the state and federal levels

FairVote.org focuses on the adoption of Rank Choice Voting (RCV). Since 2013, 15 cities have passed ranked choice voting. Research confirms that the process promotes majority support and reduces negative campaigning.

On June 12, 2018, Maine voters were the first in the nation to rank their choices in primary elections for U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, Governor, State Senator and State Representative. This is a massive primary with 12 Democrats and 5 Republicans running to replace the term-limited Governor Paul LePage. Voters will also decide whether to keep this process in place for all primary and general elections.

As the benefits of RCV become more widely appreciated, momentum is building toward the goal of 10 governors elected in 2020 with ranked choice voting.

Organization:

FairVote

Adopt the “Top Four” Primary system

Research from results in California and Washington has found that the best outcomes come from

- Replacing party primaries with a blanket preliminary election
- Advancing the “Top-4” to a general election.

This approach preserves the successes from the “Top Two” primary system in California while eliminating some negative side effects. The Top Two system, when combined with non-partisan redistricting, was been credited for higher voter turnout, more competitive elections, more bi-partisan legislation and high approval rating from state legislatures.

By advancing four candidates to the general election using a Ranked Choice Voting process, voters are offered an expanded choice of Republican, Democratic and Independent candidates.

Organization:

IVP
Opening presidential debates to a third-party candidate

One organization is devoted entirely to changing the rule for presidential debate access. There is ample evidence that the current 1.5% polling hurdle (established by a private organization called the Commission on Presidential Debates) is designed to exclude qualified 3rd party candidates. It is interesting to note that, in one poll, 62% of Americans said they would have voted for an independent for president in 2016.

The effort by Changetherule.org (singular) was unsuccessful in opening up the 2016 presidential debates but remains in litigation with the Federal Election Commission. If successful, in a single stroke it would create a viable national platform for an independent 3rd party candidate.

Organization: Changetherule.org

Direct vote: shifting to a national popular vote

We all recognize the distortions caused by the electoral college system, where 11 swing states representing only 25% of the eligible voters determine the outcome of presidential elections—and distort ongoing political priorities. Think about it: In the winner-take-all system within every state, if you vote for the ultimate loser, your vote is thrown away. And extra votes from the winner don’t count either.

Changing the system does not require a Constitutional Amendment. In fact, it is already happening. States representing 60% of the needed votes have already enacted the national popular vote legislation. Amazingly, it has also passed one house in enough of remaining states to put it over the top.

Organization: Making Every Vote Count
Opening primary elections to independent voters

Independent voters are entirely excluded from voting in primary elections in roughly one-third of the country and restricted in some form in another third.

For example, in Florida, when Parkland High School students register to vote, will it make a difference? Not if they register as Independents. Those who do not align with a party are not allowed to participate in primaries, where 84% of Florida races are decided. A similar situation exists in 12 additional states. And the national data shows that 75% of elected officials are winning office without having to communicate outside of their own party.

This is significant because 50% of millennials (age 20—37) are registering as unaffiliated. And if 17-year-old preregistrations are any indication, the next generation is registering even more unaffiliated (57% in Colorado). What’s more, older generations are defecting from the RNC and DNC in the face of partisan dysfunction.

Open Primaries.Org succeeded in opening the primaries in Colorado in 2016. They are fielding grass-roots operations in the 11 remaining states with closed primaries and in the 10 states with some type of primary restrictions for state, congressional and presidential elections.

Organization: Open Primaries

Catalyzing independent voters

Independentvoting.org serves as a strategy, communication and organizing center to connect and empower the 40% of Americans who identify themselves as independents. This large and growing group (50% of millennials) is a natural constituency for all the identified structural reforms designed to break the two-party monopoly on our political system.

Independent Voting provides activist training in the form of organizing kits, online trainings and linkage of local affiliates into a national network.

Organization: Independentvoting.org
Enacting grass roots anti-corruption initiatives

In February 2018, after nine months of work from Represent.US, the city of Chicago and all of Cook County voted to adopt a binding Anti-Corruption Act. While more than 30 cities have passed these Anti-Corruption initiatives since 2014, this represents the largest population (5 million) to do so. This success reflects the growing momentum of this grass roots movement.

Represent.Us takes a pragmatic approach to limiting the role of money in our political system. Provisions of the Anti-Corruption act:

- Prohibit lobbyist contribution bundling
- Extend revolving door limitation for member of congress and staff
- Seek to prohibit fundraising during congressional working hours
- Require full transparency on fundraising and spending
- FEC enforce the existing rules for Super Pac coordination and lobbying disclosure.

The Anti-Corruption Act also reinforces the initiatives for Open Primaries and against extreme gerrymandering.

Organization:
represent Us

Leveraging the experience of knowledgeable insiders

IssueOne.org is a “reformers caucus” of 194 former member of congress, cabinet officials and governors from both parties committed to increasing financial disclosure, ending lobbying conflicts of interest and conducting experiments at state and local levels to improve civic participation. As former members of Congress, the ReFormers have the experience and expertise to amplify Issue One’s ongoing political reform efforts—like urging the passage of the Honest Acts Act—on Capitol Hill, in the media and at home in the districts they formerly represented.

This effort is nicely complementary to the grass-roots focus of Represent.Us.

Organization:
issue one
TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO A COMPLEX PROBLEM

At Change the Rules, we believe a portfolio of complimentary change efforts are required to decisively change the structure of our current political system. Our goal is to help you understand and impact this system in a balanced and comprehensive manner. The strategies we described in this paper are summarized in the following table.

Summary of Goals, Strategies and Organizations

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<th>ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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<td>All R and D Voters Matter</td>
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</table>
about us

WE OFFER TWO WAYS OF INVESTING TO CHANGING THE SYSTEM: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND DIRECT ACTION.

Fund the Non-Profit Portfolio

With a single donation, fund a portfolio of reform efforts. Every week, 100% of these funds are passed through to selected non-profits dedicated to structural reform of the U.S political system.

VIEW THE PORTFOLIO YOU ARE FUNDING.

Fund our Marketing

Invest in the social media platforms and live events needed enroll the public in the potential for structural reform. 100% of these funds go toward national outreach.

Click to Donate Now

Change the Rules, Inc. is a non-partisan non-profit that channels contributions to a selected set of nonprofit organizations that are implementing complementary strategies that change the rules of our political process. We manage this complexity for you by vetting other direct-action nonprofits to ensure that your contribution makes the biggest impact possible. We transfer contributions to these organizations on a weekly basis. We are supporting reform concurrently at both the state and national levels. We are working toward 2018, 2020 and beyond.

Our status is pending as a 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions are not tax deductible, as we are funding organizations taking direct action to change the political system. Change the Rules, Inc. does not support any political party nor endorse any candidate for office.

Change the Rules. Org is a non-partisan, non-profit that educates the public about the need for reform of the U.S. political system. We enact our mission through web outreach, media campaigns, conferences, research, articles, whitepapers and conversations with concerned citizens like you. Our status is pending as a 501(c)(3). We anticipate that contributions will be fully tax deductible. Change The Rules. Org does not support any political party nor endorse any candidate for office. The sole focus is education about the need for structural reform of the U.S. political system.
Structural reform is complex. At Change the Rules, we manage this complexity on your behalf.
TOM CURREN, FOUNDER

CTR is founded and managed by Tom Curren. Tom is also founder of Hawthorne Consultants, a firm specializing in the integration of strategy and organization change.

For more than 20 years, Tom Curren has been developing a successful practice in aligning top teams, improving strategy execution, and shifting organizational cultures. He works primarily at the CEO and Division President level as a consultant, “thought partner,” coach and facilitator. He has done substantive work in media, oil and gas exploration, leisure products, health care, home building, financial services, retail, travel and industrial products.

For 13 years, Tom served as the Senior Vice President, Corporate Planning and Business Development at Marriott Corporation, where he contributed significantly to Marriott’s long-term growth. During Tom’s tenure, sales increased from $1 billion to $7.5 billion, with a compound profit growth rate of 17%. Tom was a member of the Finance Committee and considered one of the top 10 executives in the corporation. He created and introduced Courtyard by Marriott, currently a $500+ million business and the most preferred brand in the moderate lodging market.

Tom has also been employed by McKinsey & Company, first as an Engagement Manager in the New York Office, and subsequently as a Fellow at the McKinsey Change Center, where he helped pioneer more comprehensive ways to improve performance and strategy execution.

Tom began his career learning about marketing at Compton Advertising as an Account Executive on Procter and Gamble’s soaps and detergents business.

He has served as an officer in the United States Navy, managing 120 employees at a naval station and operating off the coast of Vietnam on the USS Tappahannock.

Tom holds an M.B.A. from the Wharton Graduate Division at the University of Pennsylvania, with honors and a double major in marketing and finance. He has a B.A. from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

We are business people who take a strategic view to solving complex business problems.
CHRIS MAHAI, DIRECTOR

Chris Mahai is President of Aveus, a global strategy and operational change consultancy division of Medecision. Through Aveus Chris has led client engagements around the world. In this capacity, Chris has worked with more than 100 companies from global giants to startups across most major industry categories. Her background is as diverse as her interests, with significant experience as a corporate executive, entrepreneur, consultant, investor, writer, speaker, and board member. Prior to Aveus she held corporate executive roles in the financial services, media, and professional services businesses.

In addition to Change the Rules, Chris serves on the Board of Directors of the Macquarie (Australia) MGU Fund (NYSE: MGU), the National Council of GrayWolf Press, one of the foremost independent presses in the world, and the Advisory Board of Ad Fontes Media, a new start up whose mission is “making news consumers smarter and news media better.”


Chris hold degrees from Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota, Master of Arts in Liberal Studies; University of Minnesota, Master’s in Business Administration; University of Wisconsin, Superior, Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Economics (Highest Honors); and Northwestern University N.M.C. Advanced Executive Program.

ADAM HARTUNG, DIRECTOR

Adam Hartung is an accomplished senior executive and Director who has generated more than $20 billion in total revenue growth and value creation for public and private firms, including Fortune 100 companies. He has held broad international leadership roles including sales and marketing, corporate development, M&A, intellectual property and licensing experience. For the last eight years Adam has written a leadership column for Forbes.com (with over 50,000 readers) as well as a leadership column for six years for CIO Magazine.

His book, Create Marketplace Disruption: How to Stay Ahead of the Competition (Financial Times Press, 2008), helps leaders and managers create evergreen organizations that produce above-average returns.

Adam holds a degree from Wichita State University, BBA, Summa Cum Laude. He graduated with Distinction with an MBA from Harvard Business School (1982).

To learn more, go to ChangeTheRules.org or email Tom Curren at tom@changetherules.org