

purposes.²

tives of citizens from disparate regions would come together and meet face to face, going through extended periods of debate and deliberation across factional and partisan lines. This model would enable the representatives to understand each other's viewpoints and ultimately reach some form of consensus in policy-making. Those who lost out in the deliberative process would be satisfied that they had been given ample time to make their case, adding to the likelihood that they would accept the legitimacy of the decisions made, and communicate that acceptance back to their constituents. Of course, in contrast to a parliament, it was a process that made swift action extremely difficult. But the trade-off was that government power would be constrained and that Americans would be more likely to accept the decisions and implement them fairly and smoothly.

Debate and deliberation could not be limited to governmental actors. For the system to work and be perceived as legitimate, there had to be debate and deliber-

sans in both houses. A bipartisan plan to create a meaningful, congressionally mandated commission to deal with the nation's debt problem, the Gregg/Conrad plan, was killed on a 50-48 vote in the Senate; once President Obama endorsed the

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these pathologies lead to more acrimony inside Congress and between Congress and the executive, and a diminished sense of confidence by Americans in their political and policy institutions.

At the same time, the administration of elections has been politicized. Partisan legislatures have passed stringent voter ID laws to narrow the vote; several of these laws have been thrown out by courts for targeting or unfairly affecting minorities. In other cases, shortened voting hours and restrictions on early voting, in states such as Florida and Ohio, were also aimed at constraining minority voters. Fortunately, the 2012 election was not close; had it been more like the 2000 election, it is very likely that it would have further reduced public trust in the fundamentals of democratic elections.

The world of money and politics has also taken an alarming turn toward at least the appearance of corruption, of democracy driven by big money and large interests. A combination of factors ...the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, an appeals court decision called *SpeechNow*, a Federal Election Commission that is unable or unwilling to enforce campaign finance laws, and an Internal Revenue Service that allows the operation of faux social-welfare organizations set up to influence elections but not required to disclose donors...has given wealthy individuals, corporations, and other entities an overweening influence on elections and on the policy process. If super PACs did not determine the out-

coalition in presidential elections may be dates, but can cast unmarked ballots) and the start of that process. But it can be do not have a written excuse are subject boosted and accelerated by the groups modest ½nes, the equivalent of a park-discussed above speaking clearly and ticket. This system moved Australian forthrightly about the damage caused turnout from around 55 percent, similar constructive public policy by tax pledges to the United States, to over 90 percent. debt limit hostage-taking, the abuse of Most important d/(ty ba52.2727 * -.0008 Tc .2234 the ½libuster, climate change denial, the demonization of government, and ideological zealotry. The mainstream press could also do its part by shedding its convention of balancing the conflicting arguments between the two parties at the cost of obscuring the reality. Voters cannot do their job holding parties and representatives accountable if they do not have the necessary information. Some in the media think it is biased or unprofessional to discuss the many manifestations of our asymmetric polarization. We think it is simply a matter of collecting the evidence and telling the truth.

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More significant, for both parties, would be to enlarge the electorate to dilute the overweening influence of narrow, ideologically driven partisan bases that dominate party primaries. As a result, these bases have an outsized role in choosing candidates, who often do not reflect the views of their broader constituencies; and as a means of heading off primary challenges, the bases can intimidate lawmakers searching for compromise or a common good into moving away from solutions. Meanwhile, the enlarged influence of party bases pushes campaign operatives and candidates away from broader appeals and toward strategies to turn out one's own base (often by scaring them to death), and to suppress the other side's base. The politics of division trump the politics of unity.

To counter this set of problems, we propose adoption of the Australian system of mandatory attendance at the polls, where voters who do not show up (they do not have to vote for specific candi-

of the larger populace has other roots, including especially the post-Citizens United campaign finance world. When groups like the Club for Growth, wealthy individuals, or "social welfare" organizations funded by anonymous sources threaten lawmakers with massive negative campaigns sprung in the final weeks of the election season, or threaten to finance primary opponents against them, it gives immense leverage to the well-heeled few against the viewpoints of the many. Absent a new Supreme Court, a multiple public match for contributions from small donors would give additional leverage to the broader population.

The pull toward tribal politics and away from a focus on the common good has also been shaped by the emergence of tribal media, via cable television and talk radio. The tribal media have established lucrative business models built on apocalyptic rhetoric and divisive messages that guarantee regular audiences within select demographics. These business models have emerged in large part because of the dramatic technological changes that have created hundreds or thousands of alter-

Finding the
Common
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