

## Summary of MoneyOuttaPolitics.Org (MOP)

### **The MOP Elevator Pitch: The Single Issue**

[MoneyOuttaPolitics.org](http://MoneyOuttaPolitics.org) or “MOP” is a campaign to enact legislation that eliminates the corrupting influence of money in politics. It is based on the belief that a well-coordinated and highly focused effort directed at this core issue is the best way to address the litany of political and economic problems we face in the United States, including endless war, global warming, financial crises, polluted air and water, dangerous food, inequitable taxes, costly and inadequate healthcare, and growing inequality of wealth and incomes. MOP seeks to change the conversation from one that bemoans the loss of our democracy and its many symptoms to one that addresses the root cause of these and problems and more: money in politics. This shift of focus from trees to forest allows deployment of single-issue voting—a strategy which has proven very effective for the likes of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the National Rifle Association (NRA), anti-abortion groups and, historically, prohibition. But it has never been used for broad problems of democracy.

### **MOP Seeks Legislation (Not a Constitutional Amendment)**

The way to clean up the corrupt system of money in politics is with legislation that comprehensively outlaws corrupting uses of private money in politics, systematically closes loopholes, and prosecutes violations without compromise. Emphatically, this does not require constitutional amendment. Instead, all of the needed reforms can be written into law and enacted by Congress. Passing a comprehensive bill is achievable and far more expedient and effective than trying to pass a constitutional amendment.

### **How Do You Get Fish to Fry Themselves?**

Corrupt, wealthy politicians and their corrupt, wealthy benefactors are unlikely to embrace legislation that curtails all the fun they are having. But core reforms have been enacted in the past using tactics such as single-issue voting, which demands support for a specific reform in exchange for your vote. History shows that when twenty percent of the electorate, often less, organizes to act in concert on a single issue, they form a powerful enough voting block to swing most elections. Political parties and politicians mired in the system are not going to address this issue themselves, but they will have to respond if their job depends on how they vote on this one issue.

### **Why Now?**

No one else is going to build the solution if we don't! We desperately need a plausible, practical strategy, rather than just another tactic that has not worked and cannot work. Until then, political corruption in the U.S. will continue to destroy peace, the economy, health, the environment, the globe—every aspect of public policy that can be corrupted to further enrich the top 1% while impoverishing and abandoning everyone else.

The house-cleaning metaphors will be great fun: Since 1976, the Supreme Court majority (now the “Roberts Five”) has acted like a gang of perverse plumbers, opening up money spigots around our house of democracy until the foundation was completely undermined. Congress must be forced to exercise its constitutional authority to protect the integrity of elections by standing up to the five rogue justices. We must kick these corporatist plumbers out of our house, and then fix the plumbing. For that, we'll need a MOP! (You get the picture....)

### **Why MOP Will Succeed Where Others Have Failed**

Nearly all of the proposed remedies for saving our democracy employ strategies that have already been tried and failed, or they are implausible, incomplete or, in some cases, dangerously wrong. They do not even try to analyze or address the root of the problem, and how to strike at that root. Examples include:

- Demonstrations:** They can be emotionally satisfying and fun, but if a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, philosophers debate whether it ever happened.
- Democrats:** The democrats are at least half the problem at this point!
- Candidates like Obama:** After he raises his billion for reelection, he will be the undisputed king of money in politics.
- Third-Parties:** They are counterproductive in the U.S. electoral system and can't compete against money.
- Multi-Issue Coalitions:** They don't strike at the root, they spread resources too thin, they keep losing battles and are susceptible to divide-and-conquer tactics.

Instead, MOP utilizes our existing legislative system, under our existing Constitution, and succeeds by focusing on a single piece of legislation. The single-issue approach keeps resources from getting spread too thin, and forces politicians who want to keep their jobs to endorse. All that is needed is a twenty-percent voting block organized to act in concert—something that is surely achievable for a campaign to save our democracy!

### **Provisions of the MOP Legislation**

*In the same way the 342-page Patriot Act was a single bill containing a set of laws that comprehensively eliminated our right to privacy and political liberties, the MOP legislation is a single bill designed to comprehensively eliminate the corrupting influence of private money in politics. The MOP bill will be drafted by a team of legal experts, and it will:*

- 1. Reinstate the *Political Question Doctrine*.** Congress has the authority under Art III, Sec. 2, cl. 2 and other constitutional powers to reject the Supreme Court's interference in elections. The MOP bill will exercise that authority to reinstate the longstanding *Political Question Doctrine*, which forbade the Court from deciding political matters, like elections. Penalties include impeachment and imprisonment of judges who continue to undermine democracy in violation of MOP. If the Court sticks to deciding cases rather than interfering in politics, many other reforms become possible.
- 2. Retroactively Restore Campaign Finance Legislation.** From 1976 to 2010, the Supreme Court rendered illegitimate decisions that repealed campaign finance laws, beginning with *Buckley vs. Valeo* (money is speech) and most recently with *Citizens United* (no limits on independent corporate money in elections). The use of money in elections is a political question, outside the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Their illegitimate decisions can therefore be legislatively rescinded, thereby reinstating the campaign finance laws declared unconstitutional.
- 3. Stop Politicians From Enriching Themselves.** MOP reinforces conflict-of-interest and revolving-door rules against politicians and their staffs, and eradicates all private campaign financing or other payments to or for politicians.
- 4. Reinstate the *Fairness Doctrine* and other restraints on broadcasters.** Stopping money from flowing into campaigns and politicians will not solve the problem if it continues to leak into politics through the corporate media. From 1949 through 1987, the *Fairness Doctrine* required holders of broadcast licenses to both present controversial issues of public importance and to do so in a manner that was, in the FCC's view, honest, equitable and balanced. Cross ownership limitations and antitrust prohibitions are also reinstated by the MOP bill. The mass media is protected by the First Amendment to provide information, not to provide public relations services that promote candidates or policies.

**5. Clean Up the Election Process.** An election commission with elected leadership, securely funded, will be established to carry out a clear, anti-corruption mission and eradicate the influence of private money from state and federal elections. The commission will establish election machinery that cannot be fixed, districting that does not distort, and voter qualifications that do not exclude. The commission will be tasked with developing procedures that facilitate, rather than deter, voting. The commission will have a marshals service with the power to arrest and prosecute offenders, as well as other powers needed to carry out its mission. This new agency will reflect the fact that preventing the overthrow of democracy by corruption is as important as preventing its overthrow by violence.

**6. Pay for Elections with Public Funds.** Public funds will be used to pay for elections and electioneering, with funds coming from the tax on lobbying and electioneering. All federally licensed broadcasters will be required to allow use of the public-owned airwaves to facilitate political broadcasts for candidates and issues free of charge.

*The following two provisions have not been blocked by the Supreme Court. They can be implemented at both state and federal levels as transitional provisions even before the Supreme Court is put back in its proper place—outside of politics.*

**7. Impose Excise Tax on Lobbying and Electioneering Expenditures.** Not all private money in politics is banned under MOP, but all private expenditures used to lobby or electioneer are taxed—heavily. There is plenty of precedent for taxing activities that are known to have a social cost, as well as for setting tax rates to fully recover the costs. The tax applies to all lobbying and electioneering expenditures, including all media expenditures targeting public policies that can be purchased for profit.

**8. Prohibit Certain Corporations from Lobbying and Electioneering.** In the same way felons lose their right to vote in some states, it is far more appropriate that corporations found guilty of one or more crimes should lose their right to participate in electioneering. Corporate laws are revised to preclude managers working for corporate convicts from spending money on politics. Corporations with pending or active government contracts, grants, subsidies or other benefits are also prohibited from lobbying or electioneering, as are foreign-owned corporations and foreign countries.