

## **ACTIONS TO HELP SAVE (OR ESTABLISH) DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED STATES**

The Constitution of the United States as originally designed was far from defining a “democracy.” In fact, it defined a white male oligarchy or plutocracy. It accepted slavery, and slaves were not allowed to be part of the government or even counted as a whole person. Women were not permitted to vote. Even the majority of European-origin males were excluded from participation because of lack of property. The Senate was defined as a non-democratic institution representing the states, not the citizens of the country, with each state, regardless of size or population, having the same number of votes in the Senate. And Senators were to be chosen by the legislatures in each state. The President of the United States was to be chosen by an Electoral College, without regard to any popular vote numbers for such election. And Federal Court Justices were appointed for life rather than specified terms, resulting in many Justices serving for several decades and reducing their connection with voters and their current needs and issues.

Fortunately, there have been important Amendments to the Constitution to increase democracy: slavery has been eliminated, women have been given the right to vote, Senators are elected by citizens rather than legislatures, and most citizens now have the right to vote in all elections. But there remain several undemocratic provisions in the Federal Constitution, including the dominant role of the States in amending the Constitution, the undemocratic Senate, the excessive influence of money in our elections, the Electoral College method of electing the President, the undemocratic selection of the Vice President, and the life-time appointments of Justices.

In addition to these Constitutional impediments to democracy, the various state legislatures and the US government have established practices which prevent or inhibit an effective democracy.

The Congress has voluntarily delegated to the President a wide range of powers which have given the President much more potential power than was intended in creating the Constitution. And the inability of Congress to act effectively and quickly has created incentives for Presidents to try to assume greater powers.

State legislatures have established election procedures which result in “winner take all” results in elections, making it almost impossible for third parties to be represented in state legislatures or in the US Congress. This has reduced the

meaningful choices for voters, eliminated representation in legislatures for many voters, inhibited compromise and increased gridlock in legislatures, and reduced democracy.

State legislatures, supported by the major political parties, have implemented efforts to improve their chances of winning elections; this has been done by restricting voting eligibility, making it more difficult and time consuming to vote, and gerrymandering election districts to pack opponents into fewer districts,

Political parties have voluntarily given up their role in screening out unacceptable candidates for elected offices; it is easier and less expensive to permit party nominees to be selected by primary elections, without any role for the Party. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of voters participate in the primaries, and most of those voters do not have the knowledge or motivation to screen out anti-democracy candidates. This has resulted in the election of candidates to high state and Federal offices who **do not** support democracy or the rule of law.

The US Supreme Court, with its decisions equating election spending with free speech, and treating corporations as humans, has made it easy for big money to influence elections and governments, resulting in the very wealthy having much more influence than the typical voter. The Republican Party has benefited as a result.

The US Senate has established the filibuster and associated rules that effectively require a two-thirds vote in the Senate to pass substantive legislation unrelated to the Federal budget. This results in a minority of 40% of the Senate being able to stop legislation.

The US Congress has enacted legislation to arbitrarily cap the size of the House of Representatives, thereby resulting in an ever-increasing number of voters in each House District, ever-reducing contact between voters and their Representative, and with Representatives being less able and less motivated to represent the needs of their constituents.

In addition to all of these anti-democracy laws and practices, we now have one of the two major political parties, the Republican Party, that is pursuing a wide range of actions to make the country less democratic and provide ultimate political control to an oligarchy or plutocracy. The Republican Party is now an anti-democracy minority that is able to maintain (and maybe expand) its control of

governments because of the anti-democracy characteristics of many of the US election and governing laws and/or practices.

We are at a point where either we make changes to have a real democracy, or we will not have a democracy at all in the foreseeable future. It may be that it is already too late to attempt to make the United States a more effective democracy, because the Republican Party is in a position to continue to win elections at the state and Federal government levels due to their advantages provided by existing laws and practices. This is not new: most former Confederate states have lived with one-party minority governments during almost all of the existence of the United States. But we used to have two major political parties that supported and defended democracy and the rule of law. Now the anti-democracy Republican Party has abandoned that support.

## **REQUIRED CHANGES**

To help ensure a democracy, we will need to change several, practices, laws, and a few Constitutional provisions that prevent or inhibit democracy, including the following:

### **Changes That Should be Relatively Easy to Make**

1. **Congress must reclaim many of the powers it has delegated to the President over the past decades**, to reduce the power of the Presidency closer to the level that was intended in the original Constitution, and to restore the power of the Congress to the level originally intended. Failure to do so is likely to result in more efforts by Presidents to act as dictators. It is clear that the Constitution establishes the Congress as the dominant institution in the Federal government, but the common public perception today is that the President is the dominant power. Contrary to widely accepted beliefs, the Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary were not established as “equal” branches of the Federal Government; the Congress was to be the dominant branch; it was the only branch elected by the people.

Congress must increase its staff to perform many of the functions now under the Executive branch, such as some of the various regulatory authorities that produce regulations that are in effect legislation. There is no good reason that Congress is unable to pass legislation rather than relying on the Executive agencies to issue regulations. The Congress does not need to implement laws, but it can authorize an agency to make proposals to

Congress that only become effective when approved by Congress through legislation. Under this framework, the agency has no authority to act until a proposal is given legal effect through the enactment of legislation.

Congress also needs to remove various “national security” powers delegated to the President, including the power to establish tariffs. Congress has delegated excessive authority to the President in the expectation that the President can act more quickly, and that the President will comply with the intent of the Constitution and the historical practices of the government. The actions of Trump have clearly demonstrated that the Congress cannot rely on the good behavior of the President.

Congress should establish an office, or energize an existing organization, to describe and publicize the duties of the Congress, the President and the Judiciary, and to publicly correct misinformation about the roles of the President, including misinformation coming from the White House and from the candidates for President. For example, the President can’t change the requirements to be a citizen of the United States, contrary to statements by Trump; the citizenship requirements are set forth in the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, and can’t be changed by a President. There presently is an organization with the mission to inform the public, but it has not been effective. The National Constitution Center is “a nonpartisan, nonprofit chartered by Congress to increase awareness and understanding of the Constitution among the American people,” but it has failed to prevent broad misunderstanding of the Constitution and of the relative functions and powers of the three branches of the Federal government.

Members of both major parties and in both houses of Congress should be supportive of efforts to regain Congressional powers that have been given to the President in past decades. Likely future efforts by Presidents to assume additional powers should increase the support for these corrections. However, returning power to the Congress will require that Congress, particularly the Senate, restructures itself to be more effective in passing needed legislation.

2. **Establish an independent body, or name an existing body or bodies, to screen all candidates for President** to determine whether they support democracy and the rule of law; that they are competent in knowledge and character to perform the duties of the President; and that they have the executive and foreign policy experience to perform the duties of the

President. Any candidate for President who fails to pass such a review will not be eligible to be nominated by any political party or be named on any ballots in any state, for election for the position of US President.

In the past, the political parties exercised this function, back in time before primary elections became the means of determining the Presidential nominees of the major political parties. Now there is no effective review of the mental competency or capabilities of nominees to function as President, as has been clearly demonstrated in the three nominations of Donald Trump by Republican primaries.

Such reviews should be of interest to leaders of both major political parties, and Republicans are apt to be more supportive after Trump is gone, and if there is a Democratic candidate who acts even remotely like Trump. The leadership of the major political parties should be able to perform this review function, as they did for many decades before the general use of primary elections, and they could once again assume this role if they abolished the use of primary elections to select their nominees.

### **Changes That Will Be Difficult; Many Republicans Likely to Oppose**

3. **Stop intentional exclusion of opponents or potential opponents from voting** by such actions as restricting eligibility, restricting registration, and making voting difficult. This will require independent oversight of all state rules and laws that impact the ability of citizens to vote in all Federal and state elections, and the power to overrule or rescind such rules or laws. Republicans in Congress will oppose any meaningful actions to stop these efforts, because Republicans can win consistently only by restricting likely Democratic voters. It could become feasible to implement if the Supreme Court once again becomes controlled by democracy supporters, and restores the powers of the Federal government to monitor and revise state election rules.
4. **Stop the “winner take all” approach to applying all election results**, which gives an advantage to parties whose supporters are more widely spread geographically (presently Republicans in rural areas) versus those who are more concentrated (now Democrats in urban areas), and it prevents any meaningful representation in legislatures by smaller political parties. Proportional representation provides a more accurate reflection of voters’

wishes, helps create effective additional political parties to represent those citizens ignored by the two major parties, and increases voter turnout because fewer voters believe they will not win.

Proportional representation should be used in all elections for state legislatures and the US House of Representatives. The Constitution gives states the authority to establish the process for electing members of the US House, but the Congress can pass legislation to override the state decisions. The Congress could require some form of proportional representation for elections to the House of Representatives. Republicans are likely to oppose these changes because they are expected to result in fairer results and work against Republican majorities. If Democrats can again gain control of both houses of Congress, with 60 votes in the Senate, they could pass legislation to require proportional representation for the House of Representatives, which would be of long-term value to democracy. However, it is unlikely that such a change would be a high priority for Democrats if they ever again have 60 votes in the Senate; they are likely to be focused on more short-term changes as they did the last time they had a 60 vote majority, in 2009.

5. Pending the implementation of proportional representation, it is essential to **stop the intentional carving up of election districts** to concentrate the support of the opposition party and minimize the number of districts that are potential winners for the opposition. Because the Republican party has gained control of the largest number of state legislatures, the party has been able to control the redistricting process in a majority of states after each decennial census. Republicans had complete control of legislatures and the governor's offices in 21 states after the 2020 Census, versus 15 states by Democrats,

Note that using proportional representation would largely or entirely remove the benefits of and the motivation for this gerrymandering. Considering the difficulty in establishing proportional representation in all the states as well as for the US House, efforts should in the meantime continue to be made to end gerrymandering.

Republican controlled legislatures will continue to work to increase Republican members in state legislatures through gerrymandering, but if Congress can implement proportional representation for US House elections, it will at least remove the motivation to gerrymander the US House districts.

6. **Expand the size of the Federal House of Representatives** so that each representative would have fewer constituents, to make proportional representation feasible and more accurate, and to reduce the ability to gerrymander districts. The current maximum size of the House of 435 representatives is not in the Constitution. It was established by the Congress in 1929, and there is no democratic basis for such a size limitation. When established, the 435 size resulted in about 280,000 people per representative, but there are now about 800,000 people per representative. Apparently, the desire to have comfortable seating in the existing House chamber was a factor in setting the number of representatives, but that should not be a consideration today since there is no essential reason for all members to be present in the chamber at the same time; votes can be cast electronically and this would not require simultaneous presence in the chamber.

If the size of the House were doubled to 870, for example, it would still result in over 400,000 constituents for each Representative. If the number of people per representative were reduced to the 1929 level of 280,000, it would require about 1200 representatives. Expanding the size of the House would be essential if proportional representation were to be implemented. But expanding the size of the House also should help reduce the ability of state legislatures to gerrymander the House districts, thereby reducing the minority power in the US Congress.

Republicans are likely to oppose action to expand the number of House members, because it is likely to increase democracy and reduce Republican power. Congress and an agreeable President could make this change with legislation, if it is feasible for Democrats to again gain control of Congress and the White House, with 60 votes in the Senate.

### **Change That Will be Difficult: Some Republicans and Democrats Likely to Oppose**

7. **Eliminate the Senate filibuster.** As the filibuster is now practiced, 60 votes are needed to pass virtually any legislation except budget related bills, and it does not even require Senators to speak. This is a Senate rule, not in the Constitution. There is nothing in the Constitution or in the history of developing the Constitution that supports the idea that the Senate should require more than majority rule. It grew historically from actions by southern states to prevent northern interference with slavery. This rule essentially gives a minority the ability to stop major substantive legislation

unless it is possible to include it as part of budgetary legislation under “reconciliation” rules.

Eliminating the 60 votes practice would make the Senate, and the entire Congress, more democratic, more responsive to the wishes of the electorate, and thereby reduce the current power of the minority that could still control the Senate because of the two Senators per state rule. The rules regarding filibusters and cloture require a two-thirds majority vote to change, so it has become impossible to change the rule, resulting in a huge reduction in the amount of legislation that the Senate is able to pass. The inability of the Senate to pass legislation has encouraged Presidents of both parties to use Executive Orders to try to bring about changes that the Senate cannot pass.

There have been several attempts in recent decades to remove or reduce the 60 vote requirement, without success; some Democrats as well as many Republicans have opposed change. And if Republicans are able to continue to gain a majority in the Senate, more Democrats are likely to oppose this change, because the current system would allow them to block legislation.

### **Actions Requiring Amendments to the Constitution – Extremely Difficult**

1. **Make it easier to amend the Constitution.** It is now almost impossible to amend the US Constitution because of the large ideological differences between the two major parties, and the relative balance of numbers of party members in each chamber. There has not been an amendment of the Constitution since 1992, and that amendment only clarified when a Congressional pay raise would begin. There has been no important substantive amendment since 1971 when the minimum voting age was set at 18 years. The current Constitution requires two thirds approval of amendments by both houses of Congress, and approval by 75% of the states. This should be revised to require approval of two-thirds of both houses of Congress, without any subsequent state approval.

Even with this proposed change it will be difficult to amend the Constitution unless there is broad support for an amendment. The Constitution has several anti-democratic provisions which should be changed to make our system more democratic, and it is clear that the current requirements for three-quarters of the states to approve will prevent any meaningful changes to support democracy. There is very little possibility of this change or the following proposed changes to the Constitution unless there is essentially a



political revolution in the country that overthrows a minority government kept in power by the anti-democracy provisions of the Constitution.

- 2. Restrict donations to political campaigns and candidates for Federal offices**, to a specified limited amount for each individual citizen, and prohibit such contributions by any corporation or other association, **and establish a cap on total expenditures by a candidate for Federal offices.** In 1974, the Congress amended the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act to set limits on total campaign expenditures, set limits on individual campaign contributions, and establish publicly financed presidential elections. In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled that parts of the 1974 legislation were unconstitutional, particularly the part setting a ceiling on total campaign expenditures by presidential and congressional candidates. The Court concluded that spending on election campaigns was equivalent to speech, which was protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution, so there could not be a cap on expenditures. This decision resulted in a continuing growth in campaign spending in the following decades, as well as a great increase in the time spent by Congressional candidates in raising money for their campaigns.

In 2010, the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court made this problem much worse, by concluding that corporations and similar “associations” were **humans** and it was unconstitutional to restrict their contributions to candidates because it was restricting free speech. This ruling effectively permits corporations, nonprofits, unions and other “associations” to contribute an unlimited amount of funds to support the election of candidates to Federal offices. The Republicans are the primary beneficiaries of this ruling, and it has resulted in a further major increase in expenditures for campaigns, but also massive increases in donations from big money sources to support specific issues and candidates who support those issues. Most notably, it has permitted Elon Musk to contribute over 275 million dollars to promote the election of Trump and his fellow anti-democracy candidates in 2024.

We can hope that the Supreme Court will come to its senses someday and reject the ideas that campaign money is the same as speech and that corporations are humans, but that is highly unlikely. These decisions were made long before Trump was able to appoint three right-wing justices to the Court, so it is unimaginable that there will be any progressive actions by the current court any time soon. Therefore, the only way to overturn this

decision is with an Amendment to the Constitution. There are now organizations hard at work promoting such an Amendment, including *The Brennan Center for Justice*, but there seems little hope of enough support for this amendment in the near future.

- 3. Eliminate the Electoral College and provide for election of the President only by total popular vote** by the entire country. Today, the President is the only government official who is theoretically elected nationwide, but the Electoral College has the effect of making only a few “swing” states relevant in the process, by providing that whoever has the most votes in a state receives all the electoral votes from that state. Accordingly, the campaigning for Presidential elections is conducted almost entirely in a small number of “swing” states with a good chance of giving the majority of votes to either major party candidate. The Electoral College also has recently resulted in the President being elected by fewer than a majority of the voters; G. W. Bush lost the popular vote in 2000, but “won” the Presidency when the Supreme Court ordered the end of vote counting in Florida. In 2016, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by a wide margin, but Trump won the most Electoral College votes.

If eliminating the Electoral College is not feasible, the House of Representatives should be given the power to elect the President, after the newly elected representatives have been seated following an election. If proportional representation can be established, and if the size of the House can be expanded, the newly elected representatives would be a better indication of voter preferences than what now results from the Electoral College process.

- 4. Change the Process for Selecting the US Vice President.** The current practice is to give the power of selecting Vice Presidential candidates to the Presidential nominees of each political party. Traditionally this happens at the parties’ national conventions when the person officially named the party nominee for President then selects someone to be his or her running mate as the candidate for Vice President. General Election ballots show the party Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates as a pair, so voters do not have the choice of voting for a different Vice President. The effect of this process is to remove any voter input into the choice of Vice President, and it gives a great deal of power to the Presidential candidate. This anti-democratic process has given Vice Presidents a major advantage in becoming the President or a Presidential candidate in the future. In the recent past, we have had Harry

Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, George H. R. Bush, and Joseph Biden who were appointed as a candidate for Vice President who later became President. In addition, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale, Bob Dole, Albert Gore and Kamala Harris were appointed as Vice Presidential candidates and later became candidates for President. This anti-democratic process has also resulted in the selection of some really poor candidates for Vice President, including Sarah Palin and Dan Quayle.

A fairly simple change for giving voters a voice in selecting Vice Presidential candidates would require any candidates for President to also name a Vice Presidential running mate at the time of announcing his or her Presidential candidacy. This would permit party officials or primary election voters to consider and vote for the candidates as a pair, the same as the general election voters must do, But voters still would not have much of a voice in who becomes the Vice President.

A better option would be to eliminate the role of Vice President. He or she has no official role except to vote in the Senate in the event of a tie vote by the Senators, and be prepared to replace the President if necessary. A constitutional amendment could provide that rather than a Vice President, the leader of the President's party in the Senate would become the Acting President until a replacement is elected. A special election to elect a replacement would be held within three months if there is more than 12 months remaining in the term of the departed President, to avoid a situation such as that with Truman who served almost the full remaining term of FDR, or with Lyndon Johnson who served the remaining 14 months of Kennedy's term. There is no need to have a Vice President to vote in the event of a tie vote by Senators; a tie vote would mean a failure of the vote.

5. **Set term limits for all appointed Federal Justices.** The Constitution does not provide for any term limits for Federal judges; they “shall hold their Offices during good Behavior”, which is interpreted to mean that they can be removed only by death, by voluntarily resigning, or by impeachment and conviction. This has resulted in the majority of Justices serving until death, with many having served for 30 years or more. The current process can result in one very partisan President appointing three or more Supreme Court Justices in one four-year term, as was the case with Trump's first term, resulting in a highly partisan majority on the Court which is not consistent with the views of voters. Also, long-serving Justices may lose touch with evolving public opinion and practices.

There are some experts who argue that Congress can set term limits for Justices by legislative action, but it seems clear that the current Supreme Court would find that such action is unconstitutional, and that an amendment to the Constitution is required, President Biden has recently recommended that the terms of Justices should be set at 18 years, and that no more than two Justices should be appointed in a four year term of a President. If such a change were made, a President serving two terms could appoint no more than four Justices, or less than a majority on the Court.

- 6. Eliminate the minority power of the Senate.** The Constitutional provision of two Senators from each state gives significant minority power to low population states. This characteristic was needed in order to gain support of the states when the Constitution was created, but today it only prevents real democracy. The Constitution says that “no state without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate,” so changing this provision would require approval by all states, since “equal Suffrage” would be ended. It is highly unlikely that all states would agree to this change, even though such an amendment is likely to have high popular support.

Rather than changing the way Senators are allocated to States, it may be more realistic to focus on reducing the power of the Senate, to make it more of an oversight or review body than a legislative body. For example, the Senate’s role in legislation might be limited to rejecting legislation passed by the House, and requiring a two-thirds vote to exercise such rejection. This would reduce or eliminate the minority power of the lower-population states, while still making it difficult for the House to enact highly controversial or unpopular legislation.

The Senate’s role in approving Presidential appointments of government officials also could be modified to require that such approval must include some number of approval votes by Senators who are not members of the President’s political party. This would help prevent a minority party from approving a President’s appointments with no bipartisan support and would help reduce the chances of clearly unqualified people being appointed to critical Judicial or Executive positions. The Senate’s role in the Impeachment process could be unchanged, and the Senate could continue to have a broad oversight role, including holding hearings regarding program implementation or on the need for new legislation.

It is unlikely that two-thirds of the Senate would vote to reduce the power of the Senate, on a bipartisan basis. It is likely that such a change could happen only if one party had at least two-thirds of the votes in the Senate, and if there were very strong voter support for the change. Such lopsided pro-democracy control of the Senate seldom happens.

## **IS IT REALISTIC TO EXPECT TO EVER MAKE THESE CHANGES?**

A realist is likely to conclude that the above changes are not going to happen because the existing system works against these changes, and the anti-democracy Republicans are certainly going to oppose the changes.

An optimist can look at the long history of the American experiment and conclude that these changes are possible. This country accepted and lived with slavery for nearly 90 years before it was made illegal. This country tolerated segregation and Jim Crow laws for over 100 years after the Civil War before taking action to end such practices. This country accepted a second-class role for women in the electorate for over 140 years before finally giving women the right to vote. This country forced gay sexual practices into hiding, with legal discrimination against all such practices, before gays were legally accepted. This country has lived with and accepted white male domination of our governments and almost all of our other institutions for much of its existence.

Changes have been made. Slavery was abolished. Segregation and Jim Crow laws were abolished. Women were given the right to vote. Gay marriage is legal. Women and racial minorities have been able to have an increasing role in our society, although it is an ongoing process. So much progress has been made that many white male residents are fearful that they are losing their privileged position in the country. Major changes in society often require a long, persistent campaign to succeed.

If we look back at history, it is obvious that conditions will change. The parties will have their ups and downs, and sometimes there are external circumstances that change the political situation, such as world wars, the Great Depression, the Civil War. But history also shows that we can't assume that democracy will always win. This country has always had several very anti-democracy laws and practices, and Trump has proved that a large percentage of voters do not give high priority to maintaining democracy.

Following are some possible scenarios for the future of democracy in the United States:

1. **Just wait for the anti-democracy Republicans to self-destruct.** We can expect voter dissatisfaction with the controlling party in Washington and in some of the states. It will not require much of a change in voters to reverse the results of the 2024 election, But can we afford to wait for anti-democracy Republicans to self-destruct? If the existing anti-democracy laws and practices are not changed, we could see continued success by anti-democracy voters, long into the future. And as anti-democracy individuals are in power they are in a position to increase the anti-democracy practices and weaken the people who have promoted democracy.
2. **Wait for inevitable changes in conditions to weaken the anti-democracy Republicans.** There will be population shifts in the country that may hurt the anti-democracy forces or help democracy forces, They may be the result of technology changes, health considerations, etc., that make it practical and economically desirable for progressive voters to gradually move from urban areas to rural areas, thereby changing the map of voter preferences. There may be wars or pandemics or natural disasters that change the way people vote and change the dangers to democracy. But does it make sense to just wait and see what might happen over the next few decades? We must keep in mind that the existing laws and practices in this country favor anti-democracy forces.
3. **Wait for the traditional Republican Party to reassert itself** and return to reliable support of the Constitution and the rule of law. Many Democrats now look at the Republican Party of the pre-Trump years with some respect, acceptance, and sympathy, and would not be unhappy to have that Party return. But we need to accept the reality that the Grand Old Party is dead and gone. This new anti-democracy party has the same name but almost everything else is different. The new party still relies on and supports the wants of the ultra rich, but that's where the similarity ends. The old party appealed to a base of conservatives who avoided risks, disliked change, and liked the opportunities to conduct a sane, respectable business, with minimal disruption and interference; they were the successful strivers in school and as employees and as successful business people. The new party appeals to an entirely different base of voters; they are people who like to blame others for their failures and inability to be economically or socially successful. They like the thought of disruption and change to overthrow the "elite" (who were

part of the old party) and they see a future where they are the elite, without having to work hard to achieve that status. It is just wishful thinking to expect the new party base to give up their new “status” in the political world that they believe Trump has created for them.

4. **Focus on using every opportunity to make the changes in the laws and practices that give an advantage to the anti-democracy forces.** It may take years or decades, but we must make the changes if we want to make the country safe for democracy and reduce the chances for anti-democracy oligarchs, plutocrats and dictators.

## **KEEP ON FIGHTING**

To achieve real democracy in our country, we need to set the goals we want to achieve, and then work to make them happen, recognizing that it may require many decades or even centuries.

There are several organizations that have the mission of defining and promoting some or many of the above changes. Below is a list of just a few of these. If you would like to work with others to help save democracy, get involved.

- The Brennan Center for Justice
- American Civil Liberties Union
- Black Lives Matter, founded after the murder of Trayvon Martin
- Protect Democracy: democracy is in retreat; six steps to protect it
- March for Our Lives: to end gun violence
- Republicans for the Rule of Law
- Fix Democracy First; nonprofit in the state of Washington
- The American Democracy Project; a national multi-campus initiative
- Fair Vote Illinois: promotes ranked choice voting
- Utah Approves: promotes “approval voting” to ignore party labels and vote for any candidates you approve
- Progressive Multiplier Fund: providing resources to progressive nonprofits for innovative fundraising

If you are really interested in connecting with others working to save democracy, go to the **Citizen Connect** website, which lists over 600 organizations that are involved in some aspect of saving democracy.

What is the alternative? The alternative is to accept the status quo; accept a political and government system that is largely controlled by a minority, and probably a minority of very wealthy white men. Call it an Oligarchy or a Plutocracy, or some other name, the result is the same: rule by and for a few wealthy men, while the remainder of society is without much real representation.