

# The Passy Press

## Letter to the Editor

**From:** Peter Moore [peter.moore@undisclosed.com](mailto:peter.moore@undisclosed.com)  
**To:** Nick Gardiner [enpg@thepassypress.com](mailto:enpg@thepassypress.com)  
**Date:** October 12, 2016 at 4:19:22 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Essay on Mandatory Voting

Dear Sir,

If George's proposal were put into effect it would probably have beneficial effects. Not long ago I heard someone propose that the voting day be changed to the first Saturday in November rather than the first Tuesday, so that people would not have to take time off from work to vote. A measure like that, which ought to improve turnout a bit, might be easier to sell politically because it would be less coercive. However, the ills that currently afflict the body politic today are not going to be cured by increasing the fraction of the population that turns out on Election Day. They are too deep.

Many (most?) of the problems we have today are consequences of the influence of money on politics. What we are talking about is not old-fashioned corruption, although it sometimes verges on it. It has to do instead with the incredible amount of money it takes for someone to run successfully for president, or for statewide office. It costs a fortune to communicate effectively with the electorate, and, of course, this aspect of politics is a never-ending arms race. The more you spend, the better you do.

In a recent 60 Minutes report it was revealed that the party organizations of both the Dems and the GOP recommend that their House members spend **7 hours a day** (!) raising the funds needed for their next election. And the Supremes, in their wisdom, have ruled that the expenditure of money on politics is free speech, that corporations and individuals can do whatever they want, and that it is not even necessary for them to acknowledge what they are up to in public. You might describe this as the "No Dollar Left Behind" doctrine, or, if you prefer, the "All Dollars Are Created Equal" doctrine. (I have long thought that politicians should wear jumpsuits like automobile race drivers that have the logos of all their sponsors glued to them. Hilary might have a Goldman-Sachs sticker on her suit, and Donald's suit might say Renaissance Technologies. Truth in advertising.) Another source of malaise is the Internet, which enables the loonies on both sides - and there are lots of them - to reach audiences many orders of magnitude larger than those they were able to access in the past at close to no cost. There is a lot of black helicopter, neo-Nazis, gun-nut, and white power stuff going down these days.

How we emerge from this mess with a system of government that can be relied upon to respond in a mature, considered way to the crises of the day, and that puts the public interest first is beyond me. What the GOP is in the midst of learning is that most of the voters it has relied on for decades no longer give a damn about what its elected leaders

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think. When they run sensible stuff up the flagpole, which is not all that often, nobody salutes. The Sanders uprising provides evidence that the Dems have similar problems of their own.

We live in interesting times.

Sincerely,

Peter

Dr. Peter B. Moore, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, Dept. of Chemistry-Yale University