

For the Love of a Country– American Democracy’s Obituary

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Abstract

The United States of America is the oldest surviving democracy in the world yet the political discourse that is required for a democracy to function is wasted on trivial matters and petty differences. Being in the #1 slot has taken its toll on the country. People lack meaningful choices to alter their reality. The old democratic ways are, for all intents and purposes, dead. The overall structure and its supports will be examined in an attempt to answer the question, "What are we?" By combining a multitude of perspectives, it is possible to have a better understanding of the American system we live under than state-approved textbooks can achieve. Analyzing candidates' platforms displays more about the social changes than the political or economic changes they promise. All that will be stated is vital to understand so we may answer the question, "What do we want to become?"

For the Love of a Country– American Democracy’s Obituary

No country is perfect but its inhabitants love– or at least wish to love– it all the same. Maybe that love starts in an apartment or house, in a city, in a state, and gradually spreads to encompass a country. Maybe that love begins in a national park where the law preserves the natural. Maybe that love is found placing your right hand over your heart as you recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Perhaps later that day, you pass by a television screen and hear news anchors report on the dysfunction of the country that you hold so dear. The government has done something again. Can your love for your country be divorced from your love for the government?

The Founding Fathers intended for the United States of America to be a marvel, but nowadays no one can remember how we were meant to dazzle the rest of the world. World War II sent us to the top, an opportunity of a lifetime. We were war heroes, champions of democracy. Now American corporations have left us in shambles. For all the social progress we make, we’ve started to fall back into old habits. Political discourse has become ugly and shameful. The Founding Fathers have long been buried but we don’t need an excuse to say we don’t like what we are seeing and take action.

When deciding what the U.S. is and what we want it to become, we can consult the four theories of American government: traditional democratic theory, pluralism, hyperpluralism and elite class theory. Democratic theory is how the government is described to us in high school textbooks; we are a democracy because the power lies with the people. Pluralism states that groups compete for power while hyperpluralism argues that these groups are in a gridlock. Elite class theory suggests that the country is ruled by a few at the very top who hold all of the power.

In modern-day America, the elite rule under the guise of democracy. This grim reality is hard to grapple with if you are a part of the bottom 99%.

By investigating the means that American democracy is used to exploit its populace, an understanding of how to undo its treachery will be reached. Examining beyond the institutions that make up government will push us beyond state-approved textbooks into a world unfamiliar to the average American. Voters' choices— or lack thereof— do not change the structure they live under. Instead, it determines who flourishes under it. If America was ever great, we cannot return to that until we have unseated those who have lined their pockets with false promises of bringing us to the Promised Land.

The Ailment of American Democracy

If you grew up in the American public education system, you know the only way to get points on the question “What government do we have?” is to answer, “a democracy”. That is what our state-approved textbooks say. It is a point of American pride that we the people have the power to create change in our communities and country. It is because we are a democracy that we can live out the American Dream, where hard work grants abundance.

America cannot get enough of the story of the little guy. It is a staple story structure that has been used frequently throughout the country's history, both in reality and fiction. The story of the Rockford Peaches, a group of female baseball players who played during World War II, was turned into a movie in 1992 and more recently a series (City of peaches, n.d.). The story of Peter Parker, a scrappy young teen who gains powers and finds stardom as he fights crime, has been reproduced and reimagined numerous times in comics and movies since his first appearance in 1962 (Martin & Sanderson, 2025). Intuitively, a country with an origin of rebellious colonies

would continue to adore the thought of breaking through barriers and oppression. It is this concept that keeps Americans pulling futilely at their bootstraps.

A government of the people, by the people and for the people should evolve to accommodate their changing needs, yet our government is stagnant or moving backward. The American Dream is unachievable, and the little guy stays small. According to a poll in 2024, 77% of Americans responded that the political and economic system “needs to be torn down completely” or “needs major changes” (Navigator, 2024). These numbers are alarming. A society that rejects the idea of the status quo cannot be expected to remain its prisoner.

As the oldest surviving democracy in the world, are our undemocratic acts permissible? American democracy is sick, plagued by something we cannot touch. State-approved government textbooks speak only of a flourishing democracy. As one of the last exposures to political science most Americans will have, its goal is to propagate this idea to every young American. There is an underlying, intangible illness in the United States. Has the soil of our democracy become so infertile that only rancid things can grow? Answering these questions will be unsettling but the only way we can get out of this cycle of finger-pointing and the era of turmoil.

The search for answers begins in O’Shea’s *Magruder’s American Government* (2023), one of the six state-approved government textbooks in California. By examining it critically, traditional democracy does not appear as rose-colored. There are three ways we could assign power in our government: autocracy— rule by one, oligarchy— rule by few, democracy— rule by many. Our state-approved textbook is written under the assumption that the United States is a democracy. It does not debate the legitimacy of our democracy by looking critically at how the system affects its people. Instead, it rules out other viewpoints as a means to maintain its core

foundation. O'Shea explains how we are not a dictatorship by listing "state control of the media, lack of political and personal freedoms, corruption of political officials, a lack of government transparency, and the lack of any mechanisms through which citizens can change the government" as things only a dictatorship would do (Textbook pg. 6). If that is all that keeps us from becoming a dictatorship, then we are headed down a dark path. Forty-one states have abortion bans in place, 12 of which are full abortion bans (Guttmacher, 2025). These bans restrict the freedoms of the American people. Mears notes that "Over the past decade, states have adopted at least 94 laws that make it harder for Americans to vote, and every year, state legislators continue to introduce hundreds more" (Mears, 2024). By silencing groups of voters, the power of the people diminishes. Textbooks, like all sources, are biased and cannot bring us to the conclusion that we are a democracy.

Cleverly, *Magruder's American Government* (2023) evades a key point of questioning when discussing the longevity and health of our democracy: capitalism. It is the invisible hand that puppeteers our daily lives. In one of the rare instances in which the textbook talks about America's democracy and capitalist system it states, "...both are firmly based on the concept of individual freedom. America's experience with both systems clearly suggests that the two reinforce one another in practice" (p. 38). This could not be further from the truth. Wolff explains, "Capitalism's political problem arose from its intrinsically undemocratic juxtaposition of an employer minority and an employee majority" (Wolff, 2020). Wolff is pointing out how capitalism gives power to the few when democracy is a system that gives power to the many. There are a few instances in which someone without power is free. Furthermore, the textbook discourages the idea of other economic systems by citing Russia and China. They began as command economies and incorporated elements of free enterprise as time went on. While not

explicitly stating it, the textbook argues that capitalism is the only economic system that can survive and sustain itself (O'Shea, 2023, p. 638). That is capitalism's longevity shown in a positive light. Its true nature can be described as such: "Capitalism acts like cancer. It grows unceasingly with complete disregard for humanity or nature" (Hermeto, 2022). This is an apt description of the economic system. It is eating away at us and will kill us if we do not take serious steps. By seriously considering the economy's effect on politics, we can have a nuanced understanding of the system we live under. This is why we cannot solely rely on one state-approved textbook to tell us what our government is.

Because the health of our democracy cannot be solely confirmed by textbooks, we must examine its vitals and its capitalist symptoms. Active citizenship is a factor we can test in the soil of our democracy. Moularadellis gives a good definition for this, saying, "To be an 'active' citizen implies carrying out responsibilities and exercising rights in a balanced way, being part of the community through individual civic engagement" (Moularadellis, 2021). In the U.S.'s 2024 election, voter turnout was at 63.7%-- lower than 2020's voter turnout but higher than election years since 2004 (Ballotpedia, n.d.). The American formal volunteer rate was 28.3% in 2023 (NonProfitPro, 2024). The numbers are rebounding since the pandemic which stood at 30% (Vision Monday, 2024). The bustling American lifestyle makes being an active citizen a lesser priority. We cannot hope to see change until more people organize to advocate for change.

When citizens do not act to maintain democracy, other forces will corrupt it. Two images can come to mind when imagining a lobbyist: a person advocating for the position of their client to Congresspeople or a sinister person funding a Congressperson's reelection if they do them a favor. Lobbying should not be the twisted game it has become. A senator needs to earn around \$14,000 a day to get reelected, and a lobbyist can rake in thousands upon thousands of dollars in

one fundraiser. It is a mutually beneficial relationship, as lobbyists can get up to 76,000% return on their investment. Through lobbyists, corporations can have their way with Capitol Hill, going as far as to write the bills they want implemented. It is hard to know exactly how many lobbyists or billions of dollars are being pumped into Congress due to their lucrative nature (5 crazy facts about lobbyists, n.d.). This practice of lobbying cripples our democracy.

Money plays a bigger role in government and democratic health than a high school textbook would ever admit. Another aspect of the soil of democracy is a strong middle class. The American middle class is shrinking. According to Kochhar and Sechopoulos, 50% of Americans were middle class in 2021 whereas 61% of Americans in 1971. Having one breadwinner in the family is becoming increasingly more difficult. Eighty percent of people living in a multi-earner household earn a middle or upper income but only 47% of people in single-earner households do as well. More and more, people are falling into the low-income tier (Kochhar & Sechopoulos, 2022). These numbers do not bode well for the well-being of our democracy. When you are living from paycheck to paycheck, there is no room to think creatively beyond survival. A shrunken middle class destabilizes the system.

In a winner-takes-all society, CEOs are incentivized to exploit their workers for greater pay, and it greatly affects everyone living below them. Between 1978 and 2023, worker pay rose by 23%. The compensation of their CEO bosses shot up to 1,085% within that same time. That equates to the pay of 290 workers (Bivens, et al., 2024). This is egregious. Inflation has gone down yet the cost-of-living expenses are still 23% above what they were in February 2020 (Foster, 2025). Gold-hoarding dragons do not exist solely in fairytales— they are called “savvy” businessmen in the real world. Workers have to fight tooth and nail just to have a coin more of these dragons’ treasure. Unchecked capitalism has had disastrous effects on ordinary people.

Democracy is in good hands among educated people. Widespread education is critical for a democracy to invest in. Those who have been through or worked in the American education system can all agree that changes need to be made. Students and teachers alike struggled during the pandemic. Now, student test scores have fallen and created a greater divide among gender and racial groups (Carrillo, 2023). Students need support in every aspect of their lives to create a strong foundation for their education. When students are not given that, learning becomes an uphill battle. To make matters worse, teachers are paid 26.6% less than professionals with similar education (Allegretto, 2024). Underappreciated, underpaid employees are at risk of leaving their profession in search of something more. When a society does not value educators, it is bound to fall apart. While more people are getting higher education than in previous decades (United States Census Bureau, 2020), students will have anywhere from \$30K-40K in student loan debt when they graduate with a bachelor's degree (Hanson, 2024a). It becomes clearer why college enrollment has dropped 11.61% since 2010 (Hanson, 2024b). Through various factors, education has become less enriching and accessible for the general public.

Schooling was said to be the “great equalizer”, so why is that not proving to be the case? Several studies have found that high IQs do not increase educational progress. Cognitive skill is weakly linked to income. The purpose of school is not to educate and enrich the public but rather to create workers. “Once on the job, workers give up their freedom. What they can or cannot do, and how they can or cannot do it, is up to the employer.” The nature of the workplace is totalitarian, and the rigid structure of school prepares kids for it. Until our outlook on the economy and education changes, the school system will continue to promote an undemocratic way of life (Stivers, 2021).

Strong civil societies are the glue that cement the foundation of democracy. When independent, voluntary and non-governmental groups come together to express their interests and opinions in a tolerant way, a civil society is formed. These groups do not form to gain political power but to ensure that those who have it do not abuse it. Nonprofits and advocacy groups are great examples of this. In a closing remark Larry Diamond made in a presentation to NGO leaders about strong civil societies in 2005, he said, "...by making the state at all levels more accountable, responsive, inclusive, effective—and hence more legitimate—a vigorous civil society strengthens citizens' respect for the state and promotes their positive engagement with it." This makes sense and shows why strong civil societies are crucial for the health of democracies (Diamond, 2004) According to a poll done by the Pew Research Center, 22% of Americans trusted the American government to do the right thing "just about always" (2%) or "most of the time" (2%) (Pew Research Center, 2024) in June 2024. In other words, trust in the government is extremely low. This fact leads me to believe that our civil society is not strong enough. Organizations working for the benefit of the people have too small a voice in this world.

Capitalism affects interpersonal relationships due to its isolating side effects. When everything is twisted by a profit motive, jobs are less fulfilling. Exploitation requires a level of removal from the benefactor and exploited. When you are not at work, there is little you can do to live your life without spending the money you worked so hard to get. Tending to your employer's every whim is demoralizing, and a lack of control over your life in and outside of work does no one any favors. Capitalism's profit motive prevents us from working meaningful jobs and hurts the world and people around us (Koulouris, 2022).

Reaching social consensus in the United States feels like pushing Sisyphus' stone, especially when the media frames it this way. As a melting pot of cultures, we are bound to be in

a constant state of debate. A strong democracy can handle this workload; however, the American government has two major parties, and bipartisanship continues to be a struggle. Less than half of polled Americans said that there was common ground between Democrats and Republicans in June 2024. This is significantly less than in 2023 with topics dropping by an average of 12 percentage points (Daniller, 2024). Several things can be factored into this upheaval. The only thing most people seem to agree on is that the system as it stands is not working. Everyone has their own idea of how to fix it. Forgetting how to debate and compromise has led to a lack of social consensus in the United States.

A big factor in political polarization in the states is the media and the people who profit from it. A study involving Meta platform users (i.e. Facebook, Instagram) deactivating their accounts for a time reported, “We find that while deactivation makes people less informed, it also makes them less polarized by at least some measures, consistent with the concern that social media have played some role in the recent rise of polarization in the United States.” The study cites social media being the main vessel for misinformation (Allcott et al., 2020). When more than 8 out of 10 Americans get news from social media platforms, misinformation spreads 10 times faster than real reporting. These platforms are not designed to show viewers the truth but to keep you engaged and target you with personalized ads (Cross & Michic, 2023). The ones who profit from this are the CEOs. Mark Zuckerberg owns 13.6% of Meta, and considering its profit in 2023, he made \$14.82 billion, equating to \$469.94 per second. Note that his salary at Meta is \$1 and these numbers are derived solely from his shares in the company (Curcic, 2024). Social media platforms are not incentivized to change their algorithm to protect their users. Political polarization stemming from these platforms’ damages social consensus, a key part of democracy.

The immutable nature of the American government exacerbates its democracy's ailment. Hamilton argues that roadblocks keep Congresspeople from making hasty decisions. I agree that there should be thoughtful deliberation before legislation is implemented (Hamilton, 2006); however, the people making those decisions do not change often and slow possible changes. In 2024, 95% of incumbents were reelected. This is not much different from previous election years with 2022 having a 94% retention rate and 93% in 2020 (Ballotpedia, 2024). Neither senators nor representatives have term limits. With only two major parties, voters' prospect of choosing a new representative they feel confident in is hindered. Americans are told that we can vote for someone else if a representative does not live up to expectations. Choosing the lesser evil is not a choice—it is an illusion to divert one's agency. With a lack of meaningful choice, we have been bound to the status quo.

This comes as no surprise, as we have had the same foundation for our government for nearly 240 years with only 27 amendments— 10 of which were introduced two years after implementing the Constitution. Lazare argues that the Constitution has become “woefully obsolete due to generations of neglect.” The Constitution is dogmatic, and its ideals are planted into the heart of every American (Lazare, 2001). We are instilled with the belief that the Constitution is too holy to change, and the document solidifies this by making amendments painstakingly difficult to ratify. Benjamin Franklin said, “...a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles ...is absolutely necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty and keep a government free” (Galles, 2003). Liberty is quickly slipping through our fingers because we have not seriously considered how to break free and restructure ourselves outside of the status quo.

Critically looking at capitalism and how the American government interacts to affect our daily lives reveals more than a high school government textbook ever could. American

democracy is frail from years of abuse. Capitalists keep things running under the guise of democracy. This is the structure we live under— where the dollar has more power than the people. Capitalism cannot be ignored when evaluating our government. Left unchecked and without reform, the structure will break the American people.

Part of the Problem and Solution

Consider another misguided question perpetuated by the binary nature of American politics: Democrat or Republican? This question takes on a new meaning as 42% of voters are registered as independent as of the 2024 election (Cerrone, 2024). In politically polarized America, party affiliation seems to come down to ideological beliefs rather than the people representing them. For the 5.4 million third-party affiliated voters and 33.8 million independents, this question is not without meaning (Ballotpedia, 2025). The subtext is what has been fueling American politics as we know it today: Are you a part of the problem or solution?

President Donald Trump has passed 100 days in his second term in office, and his approval ratings stand at 40%, on par with his previous term (Pew Research Center, 2025). The past months have not been without public outcry and disorientation. Within his first 100 days, Trump has signed 141 executive orders (The Guardian, 2025). The results are devastating. Some of the executive orders have removed DEI programs, targeted transgender people and made federal employees' job security precarious (Quinn, 2025). This goes without mentioning the ever-changing double, even triple, digit tariffs imposed on countries worldwide— friend and foe (Swanson, 2025). Things have taken a turn for the worse as Trump continues to mass-produce insecurity and confusion.

The majority of Republicans remain faithful to their candidate while Democrats have almost no faith in President Trump's capabilities. In terms of economics, the numbers show that

Republicans have almost the same positive outlook on the Trump administration today as Democrats had for the Biden administration in 2021 (Pew Research Center, 2025). In a democracy, you would expect the majority to be pleased with the outcomes of elections. This is becoming the case less and less.

The future is not black, white, red or blue. Now is the time to test the divide between the two major parties. Democrats and Republicans may not be as different as they are made out to be. While the authoritarian capitalist structure remains, it is wrong to say that nothing changes from candidate to candidate. More and more, there is a call to break from the status quo, so paths to reach a system that fits the needs of the modern American people must be explored. There are other ways to organize while enjoying the freedoms America stands for.

The two major political parties have been fickle in their two centuries of existence. Today, the Democratic party is known for its advocacy for civil rights. That has not always been the case. Democrats during the Civil War were for or tolerated slavery while the Republican party fought to abolish it (Britannica, 2025). Now, the roles seem to have reversed as DEI programs are dismantled, and minority voices are suppressed by new voting laws.

Consider the SAVE Act, a law that changes U.S. citizenship verification for voter registration. This change also makes it especially challenging for married women whose name no longer matches their birth certificates—about 69 million women. Fewer than half of Americans have a passport, a major document that could help with voting registration. The SAVE Act was created to cut down voting fraud, an issue that has been proven to be far rarer than lawmakers frame it to be. "The disenfranchisement — we won't know about it until after the fact," Keesha Middlemass told NPR (Kim, 2025). One might find a sickening parallelism between the SAVE Act and conservative outrage at an ad campaign reminding married women that they, as Julia

Roberts so simply put it, “can vote any way you want, and no one will ever know”. Jesse Waters, a Fox News host, compared his wife lying about who she voted for to have an affair. This is highly ironic as he confessed to having an affair in 2018 (Yang, 2025). Whether there is a true connection between the two, it goes to show how the Republican party is actively seeking to alter the voting landscape.

Due to the SAVE Act, Americans living in rural areas will have to make long trips to register to vote, a 4.5-hour round-trip on average. A trip of this length would cost voters \$75 in gas (Bryant & Bedekovics, 2025). In the 2024 election, Trump won 93% of rural counties. Rural counties have historically voted Republican (Benzow, 2025). It is counterintuitive to restrict a voting population that supports you. This act was based on voter fraud myths that continue to be proven false. The SAVE Act is a common challenge that voters from both sides of the aisle must face to have their voices heard.

No matter how one votes, they are subject to the same rules of law. The only exception to this seems to be the rich elite whose profits continue to soar with the approval of the government and at the expense of the majority. If you take away the buzzwords that have people clutching their pearls or pumping their fists into the air, you are left with people who agree on more things than is acknowledged. A survey found that when Democrats and Republicans were asked what gave them meaning in life, “family and children” and “friends, community and other relationships” were in both parties’ top three responses (Silver & Van Kessel, 2025). As Americans go through their days holding onto their beliefs, both sound and unsound, it is easy to forget the humanity in the opposition. The parting words of George Washington ring with a new quality:

However [political parties] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the

course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion. (George Washington's Mount Vernon, n.d.)

Political parties are an important tool for organizing ideals and policies, but it comes at a cost. America has been beaten into a partisan frenzy. The pursuit of positive change has been compromised by the willingness to avoid, comply with or fawn over powerful political and economic figures.

The greater shame is the belief that the American people are confined to the two major parties and candidates who are elected to represent their constituents yet advocate for corporations. Politicians are investments for companies as time and time again they receive write-offs and slaps on the wrist when they cause serious harm. Former President Obama was BP's top recipient, receiving \$77,051 during his time in the Senate and in his presidential campaign (Lovley, 2012). The six-year legal battle that ensued after BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 ended up costing the company \$20.6 billion (NOAA, 2017). While the company's net worth has declined since the early 2010s, it is still worth \$78 billion today (Macrotrends, n.d). Whether a president or corporate America owes fealty to the other is becoming increasingly murky.

It makes sense that such a small percentage of the voting population is registered under a third-party— alternative candidates do not have an established platform that they can effectively campaign on. Third parties do not have the same funding pools as Democrats and Republicans. To make matters worse, not all third-party candidates make it onto every state's ballot, perpetuating the duopoly. Capable leaders are kept out of public view simply because they are

“the outsiders”. When John Aldrich was interviewed and asked about spreading third party messages, he said, “...you need people who are effective campaigners who do not mind losing and never holding office” (Palanza, 2020). Yes, perseverance is necessary for third parties to win but can more be done to change the narrative?

If our American future cannot be any other color than blue or red, culture and society is the only reason to crown a winner. Neither party will change the status quo because they are the pillars upholding it. The political compass is a tool used to show economic and social values. Broken up into four quadrants by economic and social axes, each area represents a different umbrella a country can organize itself under. Taking a closer look at the Democratic and Republican candidates for the 2024 election, it can be noted that both parties occupy the same quadrant: the authoritarian right. This is yet another factor that brings these so-called adversaries closer. Both parties believe in the same economic-political system and all that divides them is social standings (Political Compass, 2024).

The short end of the stick is passed like a baton between downtrodden minorities when a new candidate arrives or the political winds change. Examining how elected officials treat other groups shows how they earn their spot on the social axis and influence the single variable in the equation that makes the United States. Before being brought into office, Vice President JD Vance famously said “...efforts to shift blame and our own inadequacies onto a victim [are] a moral failing, projected violently upon someone else”. By exercising scapegoating, the Republican ticket was able to garner more attention at the expense of the Haitian immigrant population in Springfield, Ohio (Ward, 2024). Democrats have not evaded this flaw either. As the party began to reconcile Harris’ loss, trans issues were put in the hot seat (Bauer, 2024).

The impact on undocumented immigrants since the second Trump administration has been expansive. New regulations have made it nearly impossible for immigrants to enter the country. This has impacted the number of workers and international students coming into the U.S., impacting the tech, agricultural, construction and education sectors. The threat of mass deportation has instilled fear in immigrant populations and their families. Undocumented immigrants are likely to stop sending children to school, reporting criminal activity or seeking medical help when needed. Legal immigrants fear to travel or speak out. Interestingly, the number of deportations happening is hard to estimate due to the Department of Homeland Security's outlandish numbers and overall lack of transparency. From what evidence can be found, it appears that detention rates are high while the number of deportations remains fairly steady. Backlogged courts facing over 3 million cases are losing judges rather than gaining them due to the Trump administration's budget cuts (Watson & Zars, 2025). This is outrageous. Not only will this have disastrous effects on the U.S. economy but the people who have worked thanklessly to bolster it. Immigrants, documented and undocumented, are a vital part of American society. When we should be helping and accepting these people, the Trump administration is kicking them out and damaging American communities. The government is having a palpable impact on the American people while not changing the overall status quo.

Liberals and conservatives share the same concept for the future of America: an authoritarian capitalist society. How to maintain that structure is constantly debated between the two major parties. Third parties are excluded from the conversation, but it does not have to be that way. Power needs to return to the people. Corporations and corrupt politicians cannot rule us indefinitely. It will take years of constant struggle and hard work. Breaking free from the status quo will take a myriad of small changes from the inside to start the process. Should the We the

People Amendment pass, corporations will lose personhood and a portion of their power that comes with that. Their money will not hold the same power during election seasons as they once did. Money is not free speech, and it never should have been considered so (Move to Amend, 2025). Introducing rank-choice voting at a federal level will encourage more people to vote and give a wider selection of candidates that represent the populace's ideals and issues. Currently, it is in use in Maine and Alaska as well as some counties across the nation. By implementing new voting practices that open America to more ideas rather than closing it, the people can shape the country to better address their needs (FairVote, n.d.).

For now, America remains at odds with itself. Until we learn to debate productively it will stay that way. Things will get much worse before they get better. We see the lies on politicians' lips as they are spoken and act obliviously when their promises go unfulfilled. One day, Americans will find leaders who appreciate their issues and seek to shape their country in a way that serves the people best. The United States can stand to lose its parasitic relationship with capitalism. Humanity has always operated to better its future, and that is what it will continue to do. The structure is unstable; the courageous will send it crashing down.

Conclusion

Staring at our television screens will do us no good. The elite's profit from the people's complacency. We do not operate under a healthy democracy. Binary matters are best left to computers, not political parties. The American government was precarious long before a demagogue marched in with a baseball bat, ready to take a swing. The picture school textbooks paint is not imitated by life. Voters continue to be ripped off, leaving them skeptical, downhearted and desperate for change.

In acknowledging the problem, a solution may be found. Realizing the faults and flaws of American politics cannot be the reason we start digging the grave. The American people have more in common than not, and when enough rally together change will happen. If American democracy must be put to rest, so be it. It will be a decision made democratically in the fashion that the empowered masses make. The flowers that bloom over its grave will sweeten the air of a new age. Hopefully, it will be an age of collectivism and collaboration, perhaps something in the pluralist line of thought. Humankind has always been a social species. We cannot expect to survive the climate crisis, both political and environmentally, if people do not band together. One of the great things that has come out of Western culture is the development of the individual. A group of individuals who know themselves and know what they fight for will be stronger than any others before.

This obituary may be early—uncalled for. Only tomorrow's historians will be able to tell for certain. We, the people, must take the initiative to win back the country of freedom. Mourning over the country we thought we were should not be done in isolation. We must push forward and make up for all the distance we have put between us and the country we want to become. The United States doesn't have to be great again; it can just be a country worth the trouble of loving.

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