

# Strategikon

**Cepiaglobal Associate Membership Program**

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## Strategos Procurator by Tim Krenz

The title Strategikon implies “strategy.” Strategy by its nature means a concerted effort toward a common goal. The title comes from a 6th Century A.D. military treatise attributed to the Byzantine emperor, Maurice. Strategikon offers something like it with a different bent: Proposing and examining ideas and methods for peace, prosperity, safety, and freedom for humanity. Whether fighting a war or waging peace, as we do, we believe a journal devoted to strategy can help.

All with the same goals—to establish peace, prosperity, safety and freedom for humankind, Strategikon issues use a voice to encourage as many people as possible to take a role in saving this world from any number of poor decisions and bad actions that could hurt people. If catastrophes of decisions and acts happen, they may due to an ignorance and apathy of a great many people who could have prevented them. By educating and motivating our subscribers and others, we aim to at least chip away at the solid rock walls of ignorance and apathy, in the hope of damming a flood of bad ideas and wrongful conduct.

Yet, looked at in another way, if more and more people took united, positive, pro-active deeds to help the good goals—peace, prosperity, safety and freedom—good things can happen, and good momentum takes upon it a great force of its own.

As the outreach journal for Cegiaglobal Associates and others, Strategikon aims to look honestly at issues and conflicts of opinion, and to show some other way on how to achieve better times in a better world, simple enough, practical enough, realistic enough, for anyone to do; locally first, and everywhere eventually.

And hence we arrive back to the mission of The Cepia Club LLC, “Connecting people. . .with community media,” combining that with the mission of this journal, “. . . sharing ideas for the peace, prosperity, safety and freedom of everyone.” Some have said “that the pen is mightier than the sword.” Even stronger than the pen, I believe in the unconquerable human optimism as the strongest force known, one that can batter the fortress walls of greed and fear. If we conquer those errors in our nature, the world stands a chance.

In this spirit, we move forward, not to do something later, or even tomorrow, but make it happen, TODAY! Join us. Read. Lead.



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# Essay

## More Democracy

By Tim Krenz

### Introduction

A crisis in democracy challenges the United States. The country faces a significant and crucial loss of its traditional system of mass, citizens' participation in democracy, the bedrock of the national charter, the federal Constitution of the United States, and the state constitutions, those very safeguards of all freedoms, rights, liberties, and privileges.

First, take in point an argument made by a writer who appeared in the last issue of this journal. In response to the arguments made by "The Ghost" in that anonymously published article "The Myth" (Strategikon, Summer 2017), I acknowledge that writer's argument that a political minority in the United States have "absolute power due to wealth and influence" in the country. I wholeheartedly accept his assertion to readers that "None of these people are you!" I take a different approach than the call of "The Ghost," where to fight the increasing absence of real democracy in the United States, he calls for "a complete boycott of elections and of our government's campaign system."

Second, my good friend "The Ghost" and I may diagnose the same disease in American politics, democracy fading into the hands of ever wealthier individuals and the rule by the few truly influential. Contrary to him, I strongly prescribe a different treatment altogether. If indeed a minority of wealthy and influential men and women realistically do get to make the major decisions for the rest of the citizens, they can only do so because the vast majority of citizens fail to either cast their ballots or cast them in fully informed ways.

Third, considering that the wealthy, and by default influential, people really do stranglehold the common interest of citizens to their whims or special interests, do other average and normal working Americans feel the way "The Ghost" feels? That people should no longer participate in a fraud of an election, or "campaign system," because their vote(s) have no meaning anyway? Hence, we arrive at the crisis of democracy in the 21st Century United States: Voters increasingly not wanting to waste their time and energy on elections when they have no impact on how the government runs itself or rules the governed. Have we come so far in history since 1776 to have learned so little?

Fourth, only ONE sound treatment for a democracy in crisis remains acceptable, that of applying, demanding, and using "More Democracy." More democracy, as the powerful antidote to the ills which afflict politics, can kill the poison from which the country suffers. The country willingly took that poison, as apathetic, common citizens have let the rich and influential run things for their own, narrow interest. Average people need and want a sound, transparent, frugal and consensual government. Practicing "more democracy" will achieve that very necessary goal.

In setting forth the thesis of more democracy, we can best explore its depth and scope by using the following



questions: 1) How do people benefit by participating in it? 2) What does building more democracy mean? 3) How do we structure it? 4) And, how do we create the incentives for all citizens to accept it?

### **The Benefits to Practicing Democracy**

Practicing more democracy in our institutions of elections and government strengthens the foundation and load-bearing structures of democracy. If citizens do not actively take an active interest in the process of elections and governing, the foundations of democracy weaken. Like an animal body that gets no exercise, not exercising the franchise of voting will create a lethargic, unhealthy, weak, and sickly body politic. Exercising the franchise strengthens the system of democracy, like an athlete who trains diligently for a competition.

Secondly, democracy in pure and simple form guarantees at the minimum some spread of choices for voters. Democratic government should always preserve and increase choices, hence securing a real (not imaginary) liberty for a person to decide things on their own. Without distinct choices, and even without the concurrent right to dissent peacefully and loyally, liberty in any political system becomes only the imaginary right to choose among meaningless and irrelevant things.

In the economic marketplace, choices function in the role of economizing and maximizing resources within the laws of supply and demand. It works efficiently enough in the various types of markets—free markets, mixed markets, or command markets. A range of choices over “material” options do not, however, preserve the freedom of choices in a “political” system.

In any civilization, one must understand the marriage of money and government as the distinct human phenomenon of a unified “political-economy.” Governments ultimately control and decide the ownership of wealth. Politics decides who gets what and how. Economics decides where they get it and when. Without a wide range of free choices offered by a true democracy, and despite the limits and restrictions on governments like laws, charters, and constitutions, a money-caste minority itself can become the power in control of government.

They can do it simply and over time by a culture of educating themselves well and financially by using money to buy influence. Over that rather short time, accumulated wealth and the rate of interest on the investment in gaining powers, like a stock investment, grows to where a senate becomes an exclusive club of millionaires, and few without millions of dollars can ever attain it.

The minority can become powerful in any type of market system, whether a free market, capitalist, mixed, or command economy. If a minority caste gets control of government, it controls the economy. If it controls the economy, it can control the government. That distinct phenomena of political-economy reinforces itself. Hence, all societies face the sliding danger of losing the reality of self-government via a democracy that could limit choices to the extremes, based on the choices possibly allowed by a small group of decision-makers. Such a government then moves ever more in the favor of that exclusive group that believe themselves more equal and powerful compared to all the rest.

Preventing such a condition or reversing it, whether it has happened or not anywhere in the world, depends on the functioning of a true democracy with the most choices for unrestricted self-government by a vast majority of all citizens. And a limited government need only intrude where the common interest of that majority intercede.

Third, exercising democracy, and the more it gets exercised, safeguards the public trust, where public monies and public policies must always remain transparent and accountable. Voters may get disgusted, or even absolutely disgruntled and disillusioned, with a legal yet unreasonable and inequitable collusion among policymakers and lawmakers creating government deficits and debts. These deficits and debts may come from: corporate welfare, and the gross inefficiency in government operations—including human resource management, infrastructure investment and leasing, international relations policies, and military acquisitions. Indeed, the history of the US Government shows the abuses and wastes of money, and at the costs of lives, from poor governing of the public trust by elected officials. These officials include both the Congress as a corporate body of directors and the Presidency as the chief magistrate. Many bright spots exist in the history of good examples of better government, but usually those come in dire states of emergency or immediately after them. Even then, the influence and graft of wealthy individuals and interest did its damage to the public interest and public purse.

More democracy in its actual practice can protect the public trust, better than leaving oversight in the hands of an inherently untrustworthy system. More democracy can enforce more government disclosure and transparency, and it can demand more supervision by, and accountability to, citizens. Great problems in society accrue when the concentration of closed and inaccessible power remain in the hands of a few, even those representatives elected to manage the public money and secure the common defense. Those castes who always possess power potentially grow more privileged and remote, and sometimes even wealthier, through the manipulation of public policy. Practicing more democracy in a representative system of laws, not just in the usual convenient legalities of periodic elections, preserves and sanctifies, even purifies, the system of a self-governing republic. Political power and the privileged grow less remote and more honest the more the power diffuses with casting informed choices on ballots.

Fourth, practicing more democracy still represents the best chance humanity knows to further the goals of peace and prosperity in a world among cooperating democratic systems. The best chance to create a better world rests in ballots—ballots consenting in the systems that voters can enfranchise as their own moral and physical property. The history of the world with its multiple nation-states and sub-national groups, have a poor record when it comes to conflict resolution over competing differences of opinion and viewpoint. The “Athenian curse” of states, the fear and greed of nations, and of their policymakers, and even the fear and greed of the individual subjects to the national power, show a poor way forward toward peaceful and fruitful relationships with others.

Can the world attain a pure peace? Probably, we cannot in the sense of purity of motives. Whether amidst national powers or simple neighbors, more democracy everywhere may increase the chance of a more peaceful, non-violent, more honest, and more equitable resolution to disagreements. One less conflict, through practicing more democracy everywhere, and one less dispute practicing it in the United States, may well deserve some otherwise unlikely peace and tolerance.



## What Building More Democracy Means for Most People

Building more democracy has deeper reasons beyond beyond the technical ones stated above. The deeper reasons give a moral authenticity to the process, ideas needed to rejuvenate and reinvigorate any democracy that grows old by custom and practice into a stale state. In a self-governing republic like the United States, it becomes necessary for the everyone to engage in the process of governing themselves much more closely.

“Everyone” specifically includes all those who fall between the extremes. They neither have great wealth nor great dependence. They neither hire the mass of labor in corporate use, nor do they fall into the category of people who cannot make decisions for themselves. Most citizens, whether middle class, working class, or working poor and lower ranks, fall between the extremes. They exist somewhere in between the very up and the very down.

In these economic terms and demographic distinctions, most Americans fall into the category of the great middle of the curve, between the political and financial extremes. This great middle, this Center of opinion and property and values, if it found its true common interest and its political voice, has the possibility of becoming the most powerful and decisive mass in a political system.

The entire thesis of more democracy means a commitment of the broad electorate to reestablish democracy on a sounder moral foundation, between extremes. Specifically, institutionalization of more democracy can create a broader range of moderation in the country's politics if the Center finds its will to assert itself. Within the Center, more democracy's ultimate aim seeks to create that without which no self-governing society can operate: The broad, voluntary consensus and the greatest possible mandate for laws and policy.

Allowing only a small segment, or segments, of a population to control the ultimate political decision-making, whether with their money in elections or as long-term officeholders, does nothing more than widen the gap between extremes. And within a system of extremes, especially in politics, the law and policy choices that benefit the majority disappear into a narrow list that usually leave more satisfaction to the extremes.

When moderate policies become a norm in government, the effect gives rise to the inner logic of democracy in that the Center, that vast majority of citizens between extremes, becomes more satisfied with choices. With satisfaction of the majority, consensus to follow laws and to approve policies becomes more voluntary. Besides meaning less cause to use the resources of state to enforce compliance, voluntary prescription to governmental actions lessens the chance or the likelihood of conflict.

More democracy in practice can provide many of the optimum choices in policy, with a bare minimum that the good of the whole via choices made must, and should, serve everyone equally. If not, why make a law in a democracy? Why pursue a policy in government? These self-reinforcing mechanisms of more democracy not only create a broader consent in the present. More democracy as a culture of self-government must accept that the other guy also gets a vote.

It follows that if the practice of democracy extends the franchise to all qualified voters, then more democracy allows a loyal opposition to follow the laws and rules while working to change them, peacefully, and do so within the flexible system of democratic dissent. With consenting choices made and granting the existence of a opposition allowed, democracy in history has always strengthened itself. More democracy built into the current system, however, needs to always returns to a core concept: "That laws and policy must benefit the entire whole as well as the law-abiding individual, at one and the same time." Doing so makes it more unlikely that any one segment of the population or one individual would receive undeserved and exclusive benefit or cost of a government action.

In the practice of more democracy, leveling political influence returns society to the baseline, where the merit and achievements of the individual and the common goals of the entire society mutually reinforce one another. Everyone could therefore stand equal before the law, and receive the neutral recognition from the law. No one gets benefits or gets penalized adversely more than anyone else. If more democracy does this fairly, while protecting the individual and society from each other, then the meaning of "consent of the governed" can have a moral renewal. Like a simple and basic democracy working if allowed to work, more democracy works better if practiced.

With these results of more democracy now explained, the fact remains that extreme positions from extremist individuals will always exist, no matter how reasonable OR unreasonable the people present themselves. To sum up, more democracy in the system of government does two things: First, more democracy in practice can create a better range of more tolerable choices. Second, it can create a broad mandate, where an individual and the greater good of the whole get more equally served at the same time.

To make more democracy work, one of the choices must always remain a choice to not participate, to opt out, and therefore disenfranchise their vote from the system. If someone or a segment of the society cannot morally or ethically participate in the choices, whether for personal or even property reasons, the system of more democracy must provide for them to leave. Any democracy works better if people in it all agree to accept it. More democracy can only work if it allows people to exit the system. However, under this very general proposal for more democracy, the dissenter or the extremist who withdraws from participation should never receive the benefit of the system.

Once disengaged, the more democracy system can not extend them protection, in any way. People, by their choice, could expatriate themselves from the system with all dues paid and obligations met. Once they have left the system, they should also have the right to reengage in the system on their own choice, but again with all legal dues paid and obligations met. If any self-described democracy does not have this choice implicit in its compact, democracy does not really exist. Again, more democracy means above all voluntary choices.

### **How Do We Build More Democracy**

Democracy, at its most basic, means choosing alternatives in order to self-govern a political-economic system,



those usually bound by geography, culture, and demography. At its most pure, more democracy means voluntarily participating or not participating in that self-government. Democracy allows people to choose, but furthermore protects everyone's right to choose differently. Somehow, someday, as more democracy gets built into the present system, the benefits ultimately may correct the wrongs, with the benefits reinforcing success, not supporting failure. By building more democracy, and as democracy gets more solidity, it also earns more legitimacy with governed and governors as the consensus factor increases with each decision at each decision-making level of power.

With this understanding firmly established, building more democracy into the United States' system builds on the strengths of the existing constitutions without destroying them. Building on the strengths of government, and with its increasing legitimacy, a revolution takes place, but an organic and flowering one, not in a social and cultural culling and cutting of the system which historically and usually ends in strife, violence, and civil and transnational war.

This much needed revolution in modern times happens first, and above all, in the minds and actions of citizens. More democracy happens by encouraging more voters to adopt it and practice it. Without having explicitly said so thus far, making choices in politics depends on exercising that choice, simply by voting—voting more often and at every opportunity. People often underestimate the act of voting, that of casting the ballot for choices in a democracy. Worse, the aggregate in the United States actually lives under a quasi-fiction that calls voting a “right” and not its true nature, that of a privilege under the laws of the country. This can have the most serious consequences, in the present and the future, unless we understand the true character of casting votes in the current system.

Democratic styles of government and voting comes under the guarantee of the Federal Constitution, its amendments, and implementing laws, and continuously through the constitution and laws and ordinances of the several states. No natural right to vote by ballot exists as understood by the term “natural laws.” Balloting in the form of voting comes by rules and regulations, and the law and rules themselves can take a vote away from citizens, for example in the cases of felons, mentally impaired, or the repeal by a process of the provisions of the Federal Constitution or laws (ie. “Voting Rights Act”). In natural law, nothing can take away a natural right. Exceptional cases of crime, impairment, etc., can remove one from their freedoms, but this comes in the form of common law act of a trial by peers on an individual basis, not as a massive disenfranchisement of citizens all at once.

In man-made laws, all those written down, to which a majority or more agreed at one time, voting comes; and it can go by the same procedures. To consent or dissent from government, to choose to obey or not to obey, absolutely have the characteristics of a natural right under a natural law, also recognized as the doctrine of free-will. No such protection exists to protect a system of government via choosing by ballots. Such a form of governing system by voting and the guarantee of democratic government could somehow get legally and procedurally removed from the law.

Even if not likely, the possibility of this danger remains within that creative fiction of man-made laws and even



so-called “constitutional rights.” If, as some assert, that voting has the quality of a natural right, then why do so many people in the present or in history (under Nazis, Bolsheviks, theocratics, or dictatorship)s not have the right to freedom of choice by casting ballots? These same peoples had the natural right to consent or dissent, as some of the brave inevitably did—like Bonhoeffer or Sakharov. They did not, however, have any right to vote, because like democracy, it did not really exist except in the makings of man-made law.

At one time in the United States, because of how (usually) men made the process, African-Americans, Native Americans, anyone under 21, those who did not own enough property, or who not pass a literacy test, or women, did not meet the then-standards of qualifying as electors with a ballot to cast in a vote. Somehow, history got the idea right—that any citizen not disqualified by a jury trial and by peers for a crime or mental-impairment, qualified as electors to cast ballots. Unfortunately, this correction of historical wrongs came as by-products, and struggles innumerable, including a civil war, and not prior to the inception of the Federal and state constitutions.

For that very shaking foundation upon which the United States has built its government system(s), the privilege of voting becomes inherently more important. Not exercising the vote could very wrongly end with no privilege to vote by otherwise qualified citizens. In this sense, exercising more democracy means saving all democracy, from its little matters to its most important. Democracy only happens when people vote their choices. And by practicing democracy, democracy and its benefits grow and expand.

Beyond the need for citizens to take every opportunity to vote, whenever as prescribed by Federal and state constitutions and laws, the old adage still stands: That only a fully informed electorate will most often make the best choices for itself and the body politic. If, ideally, everyone had degrees in civics, political science, and took several hours a day to read books and newspapers (and not watch only television or follow social media), that adage would not pose such a tremendous obstacle to making better choices. Having fully, even better informed and better educated voters, might seem rather Utopian. Yet, without some effort to qualify as better informed voters, no amount of more democracy work. More democracy, as a means and an end, depends on voters shutting out noise and distractions, and making the effort behind the effort the voters' responsibility. As Lincoln once said of the issue of slavery in America, “A house divided against itself cannot stand,” a country divided between the active and informed voter and an ignorant and partially voting half will not stand either. Either way, democracy either survives in its practical and pure form or it ends in the total and complete corruption of extremes. A free democracy will not survive the ignorance of its citizens.

Voter education, and even citizens' activism, cannot depend on a single source, either official or unofficial, and it also needs some encouragement and guidelines, both official and unofficial. Information output by sources, and its acceptance as information input, rests on the some of the traditional free market principles: quality, reliability, availability and price. Even then, multiple options exist for voters to gather the range of ideas and material facts, and even the quantified analysis and qualified opinions that they need to make better decisions. Some of these options for sources might include reading and listening (something hard to encourage any busy person to do). It definitely involves discussion with others of trusted viewpoints. A great part of it all, though, takes the experience and the memory of lessons. Finally, informed electorates participate

and involve themselves. Unfortunately, the majority of citizens reserves the task of “news reporting” and “opinion-making” to others. Furthermore, the sources for which those “others” work might not have the same interest as voters.

To filter the news one sees or the opinions one hears, voters must build and sharply narrow the filters through which they assess matters. A couple rough guidelines might help. First, hard facts require numbers, the basis for any scientific accuracy or supposition. Second, testimonials, images, stories, and any debatable opinion can give “life” or “color” to a political event or political choice. However, they do not meet the hard and scientific standard provided by the numbers. Third, in making a political choice or casting a ballot, use the story to define the problem, but focus on the numbers in the issue as the basis of the solution before making the choice. Fourth, no matter what anyone may believe, all government in any action it may take or not take comes down to one thing: It involves in some way the collection and spending of wealth (dollars and cents!). Using these rather rough and ready guidelines, follow the numbers and the dollars while searching for information. Then, apply your own philosophy on how you feel the science and finance add up for your own, very personal, and very important decisions when voting.

Partisanship, ideologues, and passions will always have an effect in politics. But the more the decision-making rests on the choices of numbers, the more the geometry of choices will connect in policy in the end. More democracy in concept allows the partisans, the demagogue, and the angry to fade away, and away from relevant matters, by casting them aside as extremists. It can do so, by right of reason, if the choices at election polls come down to numbers and dollars and not to any form of prejudice or discriminatory, or elitist version, of “us versus them.” In the end, choices by voters, invariably focusing on numbers and dollars, can do for democracy what democracy needs in order to survive: Making more fact-based legislation.

Again a reminder, that no matter what anyone believes, any government policy or law involves in some way the collection and spending of wealth. No matter who controls the government, which party, which chief executive, government collects money and redistributes it somehow. It does so in the exact way a commercial contract transpires, for one person gets something(s) and another gives something(s). Government, on the other hand, has a history of coercion for the transaction, and not a risk-reward model like a voluntary contract. The various factors involved in how current government works (partisanship, ideology, passions, etc.) combined with the coercive power, only make a recipe for one large pot of corruption stew. Therefore, we see the problem as it exists. Voters making choices based on numbers and dollars, which MAY enable government to make fact-based legislation and policies, can correct some of the serious deficiencies in the current system. If nothing else can, “more democracy” as a system with fully-informed voters might fix those deficiencies.

While including a progressive improvement of the public schooling system, a fundamental requirement for more democracy in America, the delineated levels of Federal, state and municipal government in the United States provide ample opportunities for fully-informed voters to make their choices more effective than in the past. The different levels of government also make it simpler and less time-consuming for voters to inform their political choices.



A fundamental tenet of more democracy involves devolving the power and lowering important decision-making power to the levels where a voter can have the most impact. These devolving powers, sometimes called “local control” or “home rule” or other names, mean that more of the responsibility for deciding how government works goes to local governments (townships, cities, villages, parishes, counties, and even the federal state governments). The more democracy proposal, which cannot work without voter effort and citizen involvement, relies on the idea that voters have more impact on the governments nearest them, in the municipality, and very little influence at a state house or the governing institutions in the Federal District of Columbia. Therefore, returning as much decision-making power over purely local concerns with local solutions solves two of the glaring failures of the current governing system—1) Little direct voter participation or impact. 2) Unbalanced government accountability to voters).

Another fundamental aspect in building more democracy into the system requires some stark changes in how the United States addresses the separation of public from private property. This part of the program cuts deep into the pockets of the corruption that maintains itself in power. If understood properly, it transforms in the most significant way to a republic of laws run by self-governing citizens from the quasi-fiction currently running the system.

Wherever public and private property or wealth mix in ownership of a “thing,” by a true definition, becomes the spirit and meaning of the term “Fascist,” an inherently evil form of government defined as national socialism, that arose from the roots of the socialist philosophy (Mussolini and Hitler, for two glaring examples). Whenever public and private property or wealth mix in ownership, corruption and theft have always occurred, and thus always will, to the cost of the citizen and the majority of taxpayers. For more democracy to work, and for any democracy to survive, combined public and private ownership of anything cannot continue. It leaves too much either for corruption or it does not philosophically stand to the merit of free-thinking people and independent countries. In sum, keep private property to private ownership, and keep public property and monies to public accountability through ballots and government. Separate the two, and keep them separate. If done, more democracy enters the equation, in terms of individual choice, clearly defined, by voting; and by the accountability and transparency of government laws and policies.

This separation of true public property leaves private property relatively at the discretion of its owner. It also brings direct voter participation into the management, or merely into the ballot by voting decision, of the public property. If a local public property interest, local voters should have more control. If a state property interest, then state voters, whether by representatives, direct referendum, voter initiative, or plebiscite, can have more decision-making power. If a national issue, the same options can and should apply. (However, the United States Constitution would require amending in the case of providing for referendum, initiative or plebiscite). Whether a radio network, public housing, or road construction, working more democracy into decisions by ballot by the voter at the level of government to which it applies can only strengthen the consent for the decision. In a way, the mixed public and private ownership of property rather takes away the choices for voters to affect the use of what the law ought to consider public domain. Separating public property from private interests strengthens democracy by loosening private gain from public benefits.

Once the mixed ownership leaves the equation, governments at federal, state and local governments still have property to run in trust to the public benefit. Government still can own and lease what it defines as its assets. The Federal union can still function to regulate the relations between the individual states. It also still must operate as the national guarantor of the general welfare and of the common defense. Whenever and however a certain level of government has jurisdiction, it imposes itself to do its duty whenever and however lines of authority mix. In more democracy, wherever and however an upper level of government has no public interest, it leaves the management of public interest to the interested lower-level government.

Separating publicly-paid and -owned efforts from mixing with private property or private investment, while somewhat of a hard sales point, has one particular and immense benefit. If “mixed” property, so defined, remains part of the system, never could voters ethically or even consistent with any philosophy, intervene in its governance or management. To have voters (or government legislators) intervene with such appointed commissioners and investors who manage or direct such mixed property still comes down to telling private investor-part of the enterprise what to do with their own money and property. People invest in things to benefit themselves or an appointed interest, as they may so direct. In no way, to remain consistent under the more democracy thesis, can any voters by their own fiat tell private owners what they can and cannot do with their own property, if and absolutely if private citizens or businesses made the investments legally at the time they subscribed. Separating over the short-term and long-term the mixing and joint ownership of public-and-private cooperatives solves this serious undermining of any stage of democracy. Separating the property will only strengthen democracy. As Pi Kielty once said, “Pay Caesar his coin in taxes; and buy his bonds, too; but do not let his legions into the temple.” (Pi Kielty, *Lost Works, More of the \*hit*, Osceola, WI: The Cepia Club LLC, 2018. P. XX).

The U.S. Constitution created a federated system of power, shared by levels and institutions, and separated the powers to check power and balance the interest. This philosophy of government gives all the more reason for incorporating more democracy into it, for all the reasons stated and many more. If we need a government, let it function well, let it function as democracy in its truest sense.

Voting at every opportunity; improving the voters' motivation and access to self-education, and their own responsibility for it; focusing information on numbers and dollars; localizing the control of choices as much as possible; and the complete separation of private from public properties, domains and enterprises; all of these help build more democracy into the American system of government. Above all, these may contribute to avoiding the extremes in politics which result having the extremes in elections. A broader base of democracy's participants, voters, means the broadest possible consent by majorities. Democracy works best as the consent of the governed, voting at every opportunity. If done enough, democracy as a form of popular self-government allows even more choices, and more opportunities to vote for those choices. It even can allow for the dissent to loyally oppose a law or policy, peacefully and without retribution, or to withdraw voluntarily from the system altogether. Thus we arrive at the meaning of true choice in politics and government.



## How To Return the Investment in Democracy: Incentives for More Voting

Since democracy should not use coercion to force participation in it, how can the system of more democracy encourage the greatest number of citizens to vote for their choices, with those choices directly linked to their individual and collective interests? Again, sticking with the concept of voluntary democracy, not a coercing body politic, the incentives to vote must meet certain standards. These standards, notwithstanding any errors that they can fix, must always remain to all extents ethically pure, morally in line, and philosophically consistent with voluntary democracy.

As for those standards, the following must meet the supreme tests, one worthy of citizens in a democracy. First, it should reward citizens to fulfill a civic obligation to vote—to participate in their own governance, for their own interests. Second, the incentives need to apply equally to everyone, quantitatively and qualitatively, based on one citizen, one voter, one vote per item, and remain affordable incentives. Third, the incentives should have a structure that rewards the greatest range of reasonable choices on ballots, choices with fewer extremes. And fourth, the incentives need to keep the choices on the ballots neutral, or rather a ballot where a selection or selections not receive more weight based on the incentives themselves. Whether candidate ballots, issue resolutions, referenda, initiatives or binding or advisory votes, the incentive should reward only the act of voting and not the rewarding results of a voting poll (such as in a “push poll,” a predetermined result awaiting approval, or any act of government needing approval after the fact).

For more democracy to work and for the incentives to have any meaning, it needs to encourage enfranchisement of voters. More democracy should never aim to disenfranchise legal-age voters otherwise able to qualify as an elector. Of course, voluntary disenfranchisement remains a possibility, as described above. Perhaps at some point even an amendment to the Federal constitution could forever enshrine voting as direct and undisputed right, not the current status as a mere privilege, as described earlier. For practical purposes here, however, more democracy takes current voting requirements and election laws in the states and builds on them, not seeking to overthrow or substitute them. As a rule, though, a broader voting base and more citizens voting, all of them encouraged to educate their choices and cast ballots, builds better results than one now serving as the choices between partisan extremes.

Rewarding citizens to vote—for them to fulfill a vital and underappreciated chore of self-government, a thing that takes effort to do—seems absolutely essential to promoting participation. History gives a clear warning: Without that mass participation, democracy ends and either an oligarchy (which already has sprung up in the United States) or a disguised dictatorship, or combination of them, take over the government. To prevent either of those scenarios, and to encourage voting, rewards become mandatory.

By indirect influence, democracy needs well-informed citizens casting thoughtful ballots, so perhaps the responsibility to self-educate will become habitual among those who heretofore do not normally even vote on a regular basis. The reward cannot stop the ignorant from thoughtless voting, from voting partisan-line tickets, or throwing their vote to a candidate bidding to buy it. But, what if thoughtful voting, and hence real choices, become more habitual among even a few of those who currently vote party-line without examination.

All the effort at self-government needs the incentive to do it. How can a reward equally benefit every citizen qualified to vote who shows up to cast ballots on election days? Keep bureaucratic management to a minimum? And keep the cost of the reward low? To meet these requirements, one incentive stands out. A small, manageable tax credit, on a Federal individual income tax form or a state Voter Tax Rebate. (It could run either as a Federal or state incentive, one or the other, as determined by the final system adopted—but most likely, a state rebate on either income taxes, sales tax, or municipal property tax, since states under the current law organize all elections. Either a Federal credit or state rebate would work just fine, as mandated by a Federal implementing law and under oversight by the Federal Elections Commission or something similar).

Doing a tax credit or rebate would work like the following. Issue every voter completing their balloting at the polling station on election day a notarized and official voucher for having voted, similar to a W-2 form. It says, “Voted” on a certain date for a certain election, with verifiable information to prevent fraud. If a voter has dependents of legal voting age who voted, or jointly files as a couple with both spouses voting, the voucher works the same as reporting income taxes (or adjusting for a state tax rebate if a state does not have income taxes). For example, if a state has a duly appointed law which has a spring primary and a general election, and a fall primary and a general election (four [4] elections), each voting citizen would qualify for four [4] vouchers which they would include in a nincome tax form (rebate form, etc.). If they vote in all four elections, they would thus qualify for the full amount of the credit or rebate. If they made it only two election days to vote, they would prorate two vouchers for half the credit. And so on, with provisions for all the verified dependents or joint filers.

If a person did not vote, they get no vouchers, and thus they do not qualify for any of the tax credit or rebate. If states or municipalities organized some sort of recall or special elections, outside of those mandated by their current law, the state would have to pay a bonus to voters in that district if they supplied the extra voucher. Also, a municipality would have to reimburse the state for extraordinary elections not on the statute. This prevents or just even deters the use of frivolous election days for special or recall or other elections by state and local governments. It would cost the treasuries extra money!


To make the incentive work, it would take the state and Federal governments to arrive at a formula on the exact amount of the tax credit or rebate, and the timing of elections, in both even and odd number years. Voting citizens who file for the credit all should get the same amounts, not a percentage credit. The credit must remain reasonable yet attractive. For example, a \$200 to start the process as of this writing (2018) would seem like both a reasonable amount and one very attractive to encourage voting for all four elections, as in the above scenario (\$50 per voting day). Who would not want \$300 credit to reduce their own overall tax liability, or receive it if they file for the rebate?

Why not just apply a tax penalty for those who do not submit a voting voucher, instead of offering a tax credit or rebate to those who do submit them? For a simple reason, more democracy encourages voluntary consent, not allowing a coercive punishment. And those who do not vote, or who lose their vouchers, or do not take it seriously, do not receive the tax credit or rebate. The incentive of the tax credit or rebate, in terms of voluntary



responsibility, remains philosophically consistent, and correct, with exercising and implementing more democracy.

By promoting democracy, and incentives for it, the lessening of extremes gets built into the system, back to the way Federalism and the checks and balances system originated. As a precaution against extremes, the tax credit or rebate or any changes in the amount should have to wait one or two years to take effect, so no demagogue can “buy” his or her elections by essentially bribing voters. As another example of lessening extremes, with voters focusing on the issues of numbers and dollars, the more so will serious policy issues get addressed and come to the forefront. Since normal voting and plurality consent by a program of democracy now freely given has no value (FREE HAS NO VALUE, really), voters would most likely invest their votes more clearly and more dearly, and they might do so for clearer policy, better government, local control of local issues, and to get the partisan extremism and opinions to where they belong, marginalized and irrelevant.

As a system, more democracy must remain absolutely consistent, ethically and morally. The process must become as important to voters as the results of elections now exist as important only for partisan reasons. Fixing the process of the current elections systems of a “partisan-narrow sampling of opinions” on issues, gives back to the country the opportunity for Federalism, self-government, and consenting democracy, by voting for its pure and peaceful intents. More democracy in the system expands the safety of the country and keeps it solvent by the route of enfranchisement, elections, voting, AND governing. 

# Review

## Far Out

By Glynn Shifflet

Ahhhh, yes, grasshopper. You say you'd like to find the least offensive, yet marginally socially acceptable birthday gift possible for that cute someone in your unmanageable, befuddled life? Let me offer up a small suggestion, one that will not be thought of by the omnipresent competition. It is unique, small, powerful, cheap, somewhat easy to use, versatile, available, and a wonder in its own right. It is the Arduino Uno R3.

What, you say? Yes, the mighty Arduino.


This is, what used to be called a Turing Machine. In today's world, it's referred to as a computer. For you techies out there in cyberspace, it has 32 KB of flash memory, 1 KB of programing memory that is electrically erasable and reprogrammable, 6 analog inputs that measure to 10-bit accuracy, 6 PDM outputs for proportioning analog outputs, 16 MHz clock speed (yes! 16 million machine cycle operations every second!), measures about 2" x 3", connects right up to anybody's laptop where it gets power and can be readily programmed (C++), and costs \$10 from Amazon. There's probably more computing power in this tiny instrument than there was on Apollo 13.

But the specs aren't what's so important. It's that, for most people, this is a way into a new world – a modern, hi-tech, learn-as-you-play, good time. The Arduino can be used at any level you want, from the preloaded program that just flashes a little LED light on the board to complex control systems. Let me explain:

When I moved up here to God's country 27 years ago (and never looked back), I discovered that many of my male neighbors did a little welding at home, just for the fun of it. They all could have had whatever welding they needed done by a local shop, or by running next door, but welding allowed them to do fun projects, exercise their imaginations, and get practical

stuff done. One guy built trailers, and so on. Since I was a city person, I had no experience welding but noticed that what they were doing was the same kind of thing I'd done in electronics, just for fun.

So here, for ten bucks, is something far out, for men, women, and kids, that will (bet on it!) become a new craze. There is an Arduino society out there where you can get on-line and talk with others about how to do stuff, on-line tutorials, reference material, etc. (see [www.arduino.cc](http://www.arduino.cc)) People use these to flash the lights on their Christmas trees, irrigate their little organic vegetable plots with nutrients, provide temperature control to various things etc. Personally, I have two of them on my motorcycle – one to tell me what gear I'm in and the other to control the turn flashers.

I'd love to tell you that it takes someone bright and wonderful to use the Arduino Uno R3. It would salve my injured ego .... you understand. Alas, it's not so. Anybody can do this stuff, and it's fun. It's like most stuff – once a person learns a few tricks, they can amaze your friends. No big deal. 



**Arduino Uno R3**




**Claritas****Critique of Politics in America  
Part I: The Many Interest of One****By Tim Krenz**

Partisan elections, those involving the name and money of organized, formal political parties, always bring out the worse and the sullied instincts of citizens. Democracy only works with the ideal of “free and fair elections” as the mechanism to decide the small question of: “Which faction represents the majority interests?” How a democracy such as the United States secures the interests of all rests on a shrewd, hard arithmetic of one person answering this basic political question: “How do I benefit?”

From that simple proposition, the “many” individuals who comprise the “one” electorate (*e pluribus unum*) starts explaining the reason for organized parties. Regardless of the changes in society and technologies that progress the complexity of life, all politics start with a “party of one.” One person answering “How do I benefit?” on behalf of all the obligations and responsibilities under her or him, hastens the crowd instinct to find others of similar, collective interests.

Democracy, throughout history, looms as the graceful angel of more stable and regulated relationships between people in a world of persistent chaos and turmoil, its history always in flux between peace and war, conflict or forbearance. Democracy allows a periodic choice for a government of a majority to build legacies. It also provides opportunity for a loyal, legal minority to exercise voice and dissent, with a chance to form future majorities.

Democracy's mechanism, with all of its errors, flaws and mistakes, gives people who have it, preserve it, and exercise it, the confidence to abide differing policies better than other systems of government, whether monarchy, tyranny, or oligarchy.

As for the BIG question of politics, democracy balances in a prudent manner the primary function of all politics: “Who gets what, when, where, and how much of it?” In politics, kings or congresses will create reasons as to “why” someones get “it.” Therefore, when citizens ask, “How do I benefit?”, to define the terms, politics in the most natural form becomes the art of managing “political-economy,” or alternatively “rights to property.” Democracy moderates, peacefully, the struggle over gains or losses of property in human relationships. Parties organize strength for that struggle, and not always to the common benefit of any party of one. 

# Letters & Comments

Dear Editor,

With the recent articles being written about the unrest between the United States and Russia I can't help but wonder what is really going on. I wonder where the threat of nuclear warfare will be aimed. If Russia or North Korea were to decide to bomb America, where would their targets be? Are they planning on attacking the actual government location in Washington D.C.? Are they considering an attack on the people of America by "randomly" attacking the major metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles or Las Vegas in an effort to just be evil and exterminate American citizens? Do the countries that have disdain for the United States do so because of our government, our citizens, or both?

As an American born citizen who used to live in a rural community who now lives in a mid-major metropolitan area, do I need to be in fear? Was I safer in a small town in Wisconsin than I am living in the suburbs of the Twin Cities working in north Minneapolis? Do I have no real reason to be concerned?

Is the United States actually susceptible to being invaded by another country or would it just be an airstrike from far away? Would Russia, North Korea, China or some other country all together actually send troops to this country to fight? I do not believe that to be the case. The only way to wage war against the United States would be to hunker down in a bunker and press the FIRE button to send the warheads flying. Are the days of "world domination," aka the board game RISK, still going on today as they once did in the days of Genghis Khan, or is there a different agenda they are after? There are no new places of the world to discover as it may seem. Sure, there are the jungles and deserts and other so called inhabitable lands available but as far as discovering and conquering the world, hasn't everything been found?

So then, what is the motive for this next war?

Does Russia or North Korea just plain old hate the United States, like ISIS seems to, for the way we live here or is it something else? Do they want to take over our land, which would be an incredible feat, or do they want to just destroy the land and all the people who inhabit it?

I am confused by the whole concept of war really. I do not see the point of this whole world domination or extinction that may or may not take place in the next few years. Ego being what I see as the cause of all of this, I would think it makes much more sense to work in harmony with one another than that of competition. But I try to keep my ego aside.

What then is the purpose behind this possible war? Why would China join forces with Russia? What does Russia want that they threaten to send weapons our way? What is North Korea after? Is China just interested in recouping the trillions of dollars we owe them?

I do not get where this is all coming from other than wanting to impose their will over whoever they can impose their will over. Thus, making one place "more powerful" than another place. What do those bragging rights bring? Who lives a better existence on this planet as a result of a situation like this?

We may be in great trouble. Or it may all just be a TV show we all are watching, instilling fear in all of us...

More will be revealed.

Sincerely, your friend,

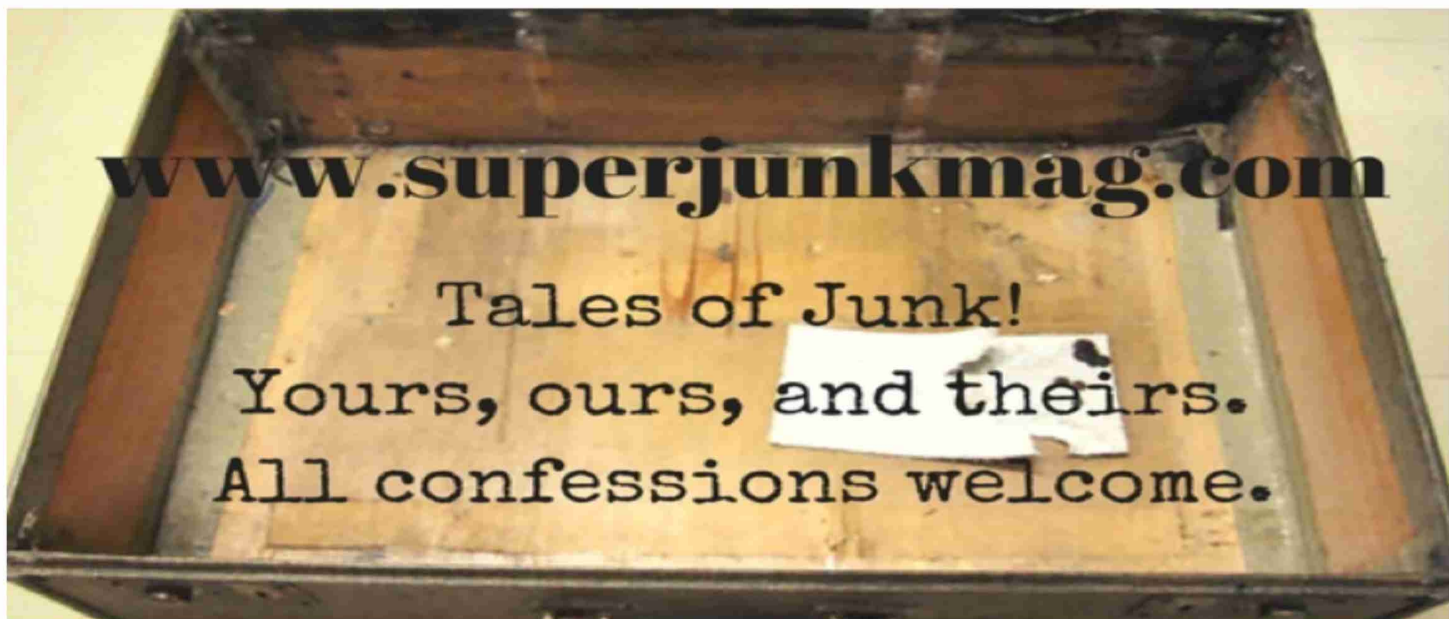
"The Ghost"

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