

“Government of the People Act” (GPA) defects:

The GPA allows unlimited contributions from parties

Although required to come from a separate party fund that only accepts small contributions, the major parties will be able to focus relatively huge amounts of money collected nationally to the candidates in the minor fraction of the general election congressional races that are truly contested, thereby unfairly and extremely diminishing third party and independent candidate opportunities. Historically, third party candidates have played critical roles in our democracy by introducing popular and groundbreaking issues that were eventually co-opted by major parties, only because these parties were a real threat to the major party.

Presumably, reducing the influence of money in elections to the degree the Act does will somewhat reduce our “democracy deficit,” but not sufficiently. Third party candidates, and other candidates with little mass media coverage, will remain greatly disadvantaged. A 2013 Gallup poll found that 60 percent of Americans believe that the Republican and Democratic parties “*do such a poor job that a major third party is needed.*” That’s the highest Gallup has measured in the 10-year history of this question. Our Founders were opposed to the government and political system being organized into parties of the kind we have in the major parties.

The GPA subsidy qualifying requirements to get a minimum of 1000 contributions totaling at least \$50,000 in a 180 day period disadvantages third parties

The Act proposes no system that will equitably give all candidates the opportunity to be evaluated by voters to determine those most worthy of this support. In the general election, an incumbent and the opposing major party candidate have the organizational resources and media access to relatively easily get this level of support, again disadvantaging third party and independent candidates. An excellent third party or independent candidate with superior policy proposals, generally cannot get mass media coverage, and is far less likely to get the organizational support that major parties can provide to gain the level of financial support needed to qualify for the subsidies.

The GPA multiplies the mass media exposure and the organizational size advantage of major party candidates

Even in the cases where third party candidates qualify for the subsidy, they would be disadvantaged because the subsidies are six or nine times (depending on other restrictions) the amount of contributions under \$150. Due to the far greater mass media exposure and the organizational size advantage, major party candidates will be able to get larger numbers and total amounts of contributions under \$150. Obviously, either the six or nine times subsidy will proportionately multiply a disparity in donation amount, so multiplies the disparity in financial power of the major party and other candidates. For example, if a major party candidate gets \$500,000 dollars in donations and an independent or minor party candidate gets \$50,000, after the subsidies, if each qualified for the nine times subsidy, the major party candidate would get \$4.5 million and

the other candidate \$450,000 in subsidy. That's over a \$4 million advantage for the major party candidate. If the initial donation amounts were doubled or tripled, the advantage would be over \$8 million or \$12 million.

The GPA Primary election subsidies unfairly advantage major Parties:

Primary elections are also subsidized under the Government of the People Act. This will unfairly advantage major Parties by giving the winner mass media exposure, both throughout the primary campaign and after winning, that a third party nominee will not have, because third parties generally do not have primaries.

The bill does not address ballot access

For reasons described in The New Enlightenment ballot access policy we need national ballot access standards that are fair and reasonable as part of any election system reform. Currently, ballot access requirements unfairly limit third party candidate's access.

New Enlightenment election system proposals have fair and reasonable national ballot access regulations, and an equitable system to evaluate candidates for generous allotments of airtime and postage subsidies. The generous allotment of airtime system does not require government funds.