

Rebuild The Dream thanks our partners for creating this series of fact sheets. We offer them as conversation starters for discussion. They do not necessarily reflect policy positions of Rebuild The Dream, our partner groups, or individual signers to the Contract for the American Dream.

Rebuilding the American Dream by Deepening Our Democracy

10. Strengthen Democracy. We need clean, fair elections—where no one's right to vote can be taken away, and where money doesn't buy you your own member of Congress. We must ban anonymous political influence, slam shut the lobbyists' revolving door in D.C. and publicly finance elections. Immigrants who want to join in our democracy deserve a clear path to citizenship. We must stop giving corporations the rights of people when it comes to our elections. And we must ensure our judiciary's respect for the Constitution. Together, we will reclaim our democracy to get our country back on track.

Getting Big Money Out:

We need elections of, by, and for the people—not bought and paid for by special interests. Only one-quarter of one percent of Americans made political [donations of \\$200 or more](#) in 2010. When candidates for office depend on large contributions from Wall Street, Big Oil, and insurance companies, it's no wonder those special interests call the shots. Public financing legislation like the [Fair Elections Now Act](#) would replace big money and millionaire candidates with donors and candidates who look like America. With Fair Elections, candidates would raise small-dollar donations from everyday Americans and receive a public match. [Center for Responsive Politics]

When it comes to politics, corporations are not people. In its *Citizens United* decision, the Supreme Court threw open the doors for corporations to spend unlimited money to defeat or elect their preferred candidates. Corporations can't vote and shouldn't be able to drown out the voices of people. It's time for a constitutional amendment that ends corporate personhood when it comes to elections.

Wealthy individuals and corporate special interests should not be able to buy our elections—especially in the dark of night. In the 2010 election, outside groups spent at least [\\$454 million](#) to elect their preferred candidates—with much of it from anonymous, secret donors. We can require disclosure of all political donations by outside groups so we know exactly who's trying to buy our elections. [Sunlight Foundation]

Letting the People In:

Elected officials should be making it easier to vote, not harder. In more than [half of the states this year](#), right-wing politicians have pushed bills making it harder for *eligible voters* to vote. These attacks typically target working-class voters, youth and communities of color, but distort our democracy in ways that affect every community and are an embarrassment to our nation. We should modernize our voting laws, not turn back the clocks. We can enact automatic "opt-out" permanent voter registration, restore voting rights for ex-prisoners, and crack down on the dirty tricks political groups use to lower turnout. [Dēmos, Public Campaign]

We need comprehensive immigration reform to strengthen our economy, national security, and renew the American Dream. America is a proud nation of immigrants, but [today our system is broken](#). Employers undercut their competitors by cheating vulnerable immigrant workers; taxpayers spend billions to break up families, and communities are torn by fear and distrust. For immigrants who don't have legal status, [real reform](#) would require them to come out of the shadows and register, pay taxes, and start working toward becoming Americans, while keeping their families together. For the children of immigrants who make it through school, the [DREAM Act](#) will give them a shot at the American Dream. [Center for Community Change, Reform Immigration for America, America's Voice]

Our judicial system should protect the rights of everyone, not only the powerful. We need fully-functioning courts to protect and enforce the rights we have worked so hard for, with judges who won't [twist the law in order to privilege the already-powerful](#). We must fight extreme partisan efforts to keep good judges off the bench and to stack the courts with ideologues who put the rights of corporations ahead of our core constitutional values. [PFAW]