

# **Informed Citizens Commission**

**“By the People, For the People”**

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## **Index**

	<u>Page</u>
1. Purpose and Goals	2
2. Summary	3
3. Voter Information Division	4
4. Employee Information Division	6
5. Issues & Guidelines Office	6
6. Advisory Board	8
7. Commissioners	8
8. Support Offices	9
9. Operations	9

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## **Purpose:**

**To create a Successful America.** A Successful America is one with a culture, and economic and political systems that result in business and political leaders who will achieve balanced solutions that are in the best interests of all citizens and the world.

## **Goals:**

**A Government that Represents Everyone.** To ensure accurate and meaningful candidate information for voters so they can elect qualified and trustworthy leaders that will lead to a fair and efficient government that represents everyone.

**An Economy that Benefits Everyone.** To ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information for employees so they can choose corporations that will lead to a fair and efficient economy that benefits everyone.

**A Society that Respects Everyone.** To ensure accurate and meaningful issues and guidelines information for elected officials and citizens so they can better appreciate the viewpoints of others leading to better legislation and a society that respects everyone.

# Informed Citizens Commission

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## Summary

**Organization.** The Informed Citizens Commission would be organized to achieve its goals:

- **A Voter Information Division** to ensure accurate and meaningful candidate information for voters so they can elect qualified and trustworthy leaders that will lead to a fair and efficient government that represents everyone.
- **An Employee Information Division** to ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information for employees so they can choose corporations that will lead to a fair and efficient economy that benefits everyone.
- **An Issues and Guidelines Office** to ensure accurate and meaningful issues and guidelines information for elected officials and citizens so they can better appreciate the viewpoints of others leading to better legislation and a society that respects everyone.

**Voter Information Division.** The Voter Information Division would be responsible for developing the candidate reporting requirements that would provide voters with the information they need to elect qualified and trustworthy leaders who will represent everyone that is within existing laws. The Voter Information Division would recommend candidate information reporting requirements regulations to the Commissioners and Advisory Board. The Voter Information Division would be responsible for implementing and enforcing the regulations approved by the Commissioners. This would result in candidates providing accurate and meaningful information about themselves and their supporters so voters could make more informed voting decisions. This information would also be used by the press, think tanks, research and educational institutions, governments, and other entities for analysis for better political, economic and social perspectives.

**Employee Information Division.** The Employee Information Division would be responsible for developing and recommending to the Commissioners and Advisory Board corporate reporting requirements for accurate and meaningful information for their employees, potential employees, and the public. It would be responsible for implementing and enforcing the regulations approved by the Commission. This would help employees make informed employment decisions, consumers make informed buying decisions, and communities make informed community support decisions. This information would also be used by the press, think tanks, research and educational institutions, governments, and other entities for analysis for better political, economic and social perspectives.

**The Issues and Guidelines Office.** The Issues & Guidelines Office would be responsible for researching and recommending to the Commissioners and Advisory Board, high level, accurate, and meaningful information, analysis, and reporting on the issues facing our government, economy, and society that would be of most benefit to elected representatives and the people they serve (e.g., voters, employees, business leaders, the press, think tanks, educational institutions, governments, and other entities); baseline, high level guidelines for solutions to those issues; methods for measuring those solutions and results of those measurements; and evaluations of proposed legislation against those issues and guidelines. The guidelines would include potential timeframes for realization, which could take many years, even decades.

# Informed Citizens Commission

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**Advisory Board.** The responsibility of the Advisory Board would be to review all Voter Information Division, Employee Information Division, and Issues & Guidelines Office, recommendations and to provide the Commissioners with a collective rating or ratings on various aspects of the recommendations, at a minimum on the accuracy and adequacy of those recommendations.

**Commissioners.** The responsibilities of the Commissioners would be to review regulations and reporting proposed by the Voter Information Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Issues & Guidelines Office, consider input from the Advisory Board on the proposals, and approve, disapprove, request revisions, or request further information on those regulations and reporting proposals. Sharing of information would be required to the extent and within a timeframe that achieves the best long-term economic, political, and social impact while moderating negative short-term impacts.

**Support Offices.** The Support Offices would be responsible for providing support for the Commissioners, Advisory Board members, and staff of the Voter Information Division, Employee Information Division, and Issues & Guidelines Office in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

**Independence.** The Informed Citizens Commission would be an independent, non-partisan agency with rotating citizen volunteer commissioners and advisory board members. Rotating citizen volunteers would ensure the Informed Citizens Commission’s independence. Independence is critical to develop the trust of citizens and overcome the lack of trust of current leaders and the establishment. Any attempt to inappropriately influence the selection process or decisions of a Commissioner, an Advisory Board member, or any employee of the Voter Information Division, Employee Information Division, Issues & Guidelines Office, or Support Office would be a crime punishable with a minimum of 1 year in prison and up to 15 years in prison.

## Voter Information Division

**Organization.** The Voter Information Division would have the staff, either directly or through the Support Offices, to research and determine what information and in what format that information should be to ensure voters have accurate and adequate information from candidates to elect the most qualified leaders, to determine what regulations would be required to ensure that the information is provided and that it is in the format required, and to enforce those regulations.

**Reporting.** Following are sample candidate information reporting requirements:

- **Background and qualifications**
  - Name, address, and candidate website
  - Education, experience, and skills for the office
  - Goals for the office and the country
- **Positions**
  - Position on balancing solutions for the benefit of all citizens
  - Positions on key issues and balanced solutions for addressing those issues
  - Position on the Issues & Guidelines Office recommendations

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

- **Sources of campaign funding**
  - By major donor and PAC
  - Each major donor and PAC's position on key issues and solutions
  - Explanation of differences with each major donor and PAC's positions

**Information Access.** The Voter Information Division would require candidates to provide, and update as necessary, all required candidate information reporting in a summarized enough format to be useful for all eligible voters and in a detailed enough format for maximum benefit for the most sophisticated eligible voters. Both reporting formats would be made available on a Voter Information Division maintained website that would be available to all eligible voters and that would include comparisons between candidates running for the same office (see Vote-USA.org and BallotReady.org). Candidate websites will be required to include a link to the Voter Information Division website.

**Recommendations for Changes in Laws and/or Constitutional Amendments.** The Voter Information Division would recommend to the Issues & Guidelines Office any suggestions for candidate reporting requirements that would provide voters with the information they need to elect qualified and trustworthy leaders that require changes to laws and regulations and/or constitutional amendments. Two examples would be 1) truth and transparency in political speech and campaign advertising and 2) changes to campaign finance, including limits to political contributions, public financing of political campaigns, and/or limited influence of political donors during and post elected officials' terms.

**Use of Candidate Information.** The Voter Information Division would also be responsible for developing and recommending to the Commissioners and Advisory Board individual and team candidate evaluation processes, procedures, and forms, as well as suggested evaluation criteria for voters to consider using in their evaluations of candidates for elected office.

**Evaluation Criteria.** Following are sample candidate evaluation criteria:

- **Integrity, honesty, and transparency**
  - Positive ads, based on record, not attacking opponent or opponent party
  - Actions consistent with messaging
  - Transparent with the information required for this rating
- **Skills and experience for the office**
  - Government and business experience
  - Education
  - Goals for the office
- **Enact balanced approaches to challenges and opportunities**
  - Short-term and long-term impacts
  - Middle class and upper class interests
  - The Informed Citizens Commission Goals

**Information Access.** The Voter Information Division would be responsible for creating the infrastructure required, including technology to support access to process, procedures, and forms, to implement the

# **Informed Citizens Commission**

**“By the People, For the People”**

approved individual and team candidate evaluation processes, procedures, and forms, as well as suggested evaluation criteria approved by the Commission.

## **Employee Information Division**

**Organization.** The Employee Information Division would have the staff, either directly or through the Support Offices, to research and determine what information and in what format that information should be to ensure employees have accurate and adequate information from corporations for free and fair employment markets, to determine what regulations would be required to ensure that the information is provided and that it is in the format required, and to enforce those regulations.

**Reporting.** Following are sample corporate information reporting requirements:

- **Corporate Goals and Board Representation**
  - Corporate goals and how they are balanced for the interests of all participants (employees, consumers, communities, and shareholders)
  - Board representation and how it is balanced for the interests of all participants (employees, consumers, communities, and shareholders)
- **Management Compensation Plans**
  - Management compensation plans and how they are designed to accomplish the corporate goals, particularly those that balance the interests of all participants
  - Shareholder equity value included in management compensation plans, if any, and how management is incentivized to balance the interests of the other participants
- **Management and Employee Compensation**
  - Compensation of the CEO, senior management, and each quartile of employees, along with the multiple of the CEO and senior management compensation to the average of each quartile of employees as compared to Issues & Guidelines Office recommendations
  - Roles, responsibilities, compensation levels and structures for each group

**Information Access.** The Employee Information Division would require corporations to provide, and update at least annually, all required reporting information in both a sufficiently summarized format to be useful for all employees and potential employees, as well as a sufficiently detailed format for maximum benefit for the most sophisticated employees and potential employees. Both reporting formats would be made available on the corporation’s public website presented in an Employee Information Division format. The corporation would be required to notify all employees and potential employees of the availability of that information and any updates thereto.

## **Issues & Guidelines Office**

**Organization.** The Issues & Guidelines Office would assume the responsibilities and staff of the Congressional Research Services\* agency. It would continue to support congressional representatives, but with transparency. Being part of the Informed Citizens Commission would provide political independence. Political independence is essential as its job is to balance knowledge and experience of

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

those on the left and right and those in the upper class and working class to achieve the most balanced solutions to issues Americans face and opportunities Americans are presented with.

**Reporting.** Following are samples of issues that the Issues & Guidelines Office should consider researching and reporting on information and guidelines:

- **Economy:** Accurate and meaningful information and guidelines for the following categories would facilitate achieving the goal of a fair economy that shares prosperity with all citizens.
  - Fair Top 10% Share of Income
  - Fair 90% Share of Income
  - Fair US GINI Coefficient
  - Fair tax rates, effectively flat considering all taxes, once fair income disparity is achieved
  - Reasonable, Risk Weighted Equity Returns
  - Reasonable Long-term Interest Rates
  - Reasonable Inflation Rate
  - Reasonable GDP Growth Rate, considering population changes, deficit spending, etc.
  - Sustainable Federal Debt to GDP Ratio
  - Sustainable Deficit to Change in GDP
- **Elections:** Accurate and meaningful information and guidelines for the following categories would facilitate achieving the goal of a government that represents all citizens.
  - Effective Primary Elections
  - Effective General Elections
  - Fair Voting Districts
  - Effective Campaign Finance
  - Effective Campaign Advertising
  - Ease of Voting
  - High Voter Participation
  - Popular Vote for President
  - Voter representation in Senate
  - Political Truth and Transparency
  - Candidate Reporting Information
- **Legislative operations:** Legislative procedures that maximize social and economic benefits in both the short-term and long-term for all.
- **Education and healthcare:** Actions that would result in affordable quality education and healthcare for all, balanced with appropriate economic impact.
- **Racial, legal, and criminal justice:** Legislative actions that address the realities of racism and other legal and criminal justice inequities without negative short-term impacts.
- **Environmental responsibility:** Legislative actions balanced for science and economic impact.
- **Physical and cyber security:** Cost effective actions in the public's best interest.
- **Globalization and international affairs:** Actions that recognize the U.S. as the standard for democracy, free enterprise, and social justice, while maintaining relationships that result in worldwide economic development and security.

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

**Information Access.** The Issues & Guidelines Office would provide, and update as necessary, all required reporting in a summarized enough format to be useful for all citizens and in a detailed enough format for maximum benefit for the most sophisticated citizens. Both reporting formats would be made available on an Issues & Guidelines Office maintained website that would both be available to all citizens.

\* The Congressional Research Service is a public policy research institute of the United States Congress. Operating within the Library of Congress, it works primarily and directly for members of Congress and their committees and staff on a confidential, nonpartisan basis. It is referred to as America's think tank. The Informed Citizens Commission Act would expand the Congressional Research Service responsibilities to include responding to Informed Citizens Commission public requirements as outlined above.

## Advisory Board

**Volunteer and Selection Process.** Each year all eligible voters meeting minimum criteria (e.g., college education and/or leadership or professional experience) would have the opportunity to volunteer to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Informed Citizens Commission. Eligible voters could volunteer via the ICC website and provide an email address or by checking a box on their tax return and providing an email address. All volunteers would be emailed a questionnaire to be completed online requesting basic information, including with regard to education and professional experience, and confirmation of a belief in and commitment to the Commissioners and Advisory Board responsibilities. Questionnaires submitted would be screened electronically, with audits performed by an independent consulting firm selected by the interim CEO. A portion of those passing the initial screen would be selected randomly and contacted for video interviews and evaluations. The goal of the screening process and video evaluations would be to approve as close to all eligible voter volunteers with the minimum education or professional experience and a belief in and commitment to the Commissioner and Advisory Board responsibilities as possible. Of those passing the video evaluations, 300 would be randomly selected to serve as members of the Advisory Board in the first year. Advisory Board members would serve three-year terms, except that one-third of the initial group would serve for a one-year term and one-third of the initial group would serve for a two-year term. Each following year 100 new Advisory Board members would be selected using the same review process as the initial one. The Advisory Board members could vote to remove any member they determine not to have the minimum education or professional experience or to not be committed to the Advisory Board responsibilities. Advisory Board members would be expected to be available for two to ten days per month. Advisory Board member employers would be required to provide those days off as unpaid service days. Advisor Board members would be paid for their time worked at their current employer compensation rate by the Informed Citizens Commission.

## Commissioners

**Volunteer, Screening, and Selection Process.** Each year all eligible voters would have the opportunity to volunteer to be a Commissioner of the Informed Citizens Commission. Eligible voters could volunteer via the ICC website by providing an email address or, if a taxpayer, by checking a box on their tax return and

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

providing an email address. All volunteers would be emailed a high-level questionnaire to be completed online requesting basic information and confirmation of a belief in and commitment to the Commissioners' responsibilities. Questionnaires submitted would be screened electronically, with audits performed by an independent consulting firm selected by the interim CEO. A portion of those passing the initial screen would be selected randomly and contacted for video interviews and evaluations. The goal of the screening process and video evaluations would be to approve as close to all eligible voter volunteers with a belief in and commitment to the Commissioner responsibilities as possible, even those with the most basic understanding of the responsibilities. Of those passing the video evaluations, 300 would be randomly selected to serve as Commissioners in the first year. Commissioners would serve three-year terms, except that one-third of the initial group would serve for a one-year term and one-third of the initial group would serve for a two-year term. Each following year 100 new Commissioners will be selected using the same review process as the initial one. The Commissioners could vote to remove any Commissioner they determine to be not committed to the Commissioner responsibilities. Commissioners would be expected to be available for one to five days per month. Commissioner employers would be required to provide those days off as unpaid service days. Commissioners would be paid for their time worked at their current employer compensation rate by the Informed Citizens Commission.

## Support Offices

**Organization.** The Support Offices would include the offices of Regulations, Employee, Voter, and Citizen Education, Enforcement, Examination, General Counsel, Financial Management, Recruiting, Human Resources, and Information Technology. The Commissioners could approve additional offices, as necessary. The Commissioners would select an independent recruiting firm to identify Support Office CEO candidates, and the Commissioners would select a CEO from the candidates presented. The CEO would select a recruiting firm or firms to identify leader candidates for the Voter Information Division, the Employee Information Division, the Issues & Guidelines Office, and each Support Office, would select leaders from the candidates presented and present them to the Commissioners for approval.

**Remote Operations.** The Commissioners and Advisory Board members would work remotely with support, coordination, and controls provided by the Support Offices employees. Each Commissioner and Advisory Board member would be provided with a personal computer and secure access.

## Operations

**Staff Research.** The staff of each of the Voter Information Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Issues & Guidelines Office would research all applicable sources of information and engage advisors to develop accurate and adequate information on each corporate and candidate reporting requirement to be recommended to the Commissioners, considering an appropriate balance of the cost and benefit of each. The staff would utilize the Support Offices as necessary. The staff would also survey economists, sociologists, political scientists, business leaders, community leaders, etc., as necessary. The surveys would be inclusive of most, if not all, leading participants in the field being surveyed. The staff would also survey the citizens who volunteered and passed the initial screening to be a Commissioner or a member of the Advisory Board but were not selected. The results of all surveys would be publicly

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

available on the ICC website. The staff would then prepare draft reporting requirements and make them available for public comments. Comments would be considered when preparing the reporting requirements recommendations.

**Advisory Board Ratings.** The reporting requirements recommendations would be presented to the Advisory Board members in two formats: sufficiently summarized to be useful for all Advisory Board members, as well as sufficiently detailed for maximum benefit for the most sophisticated members. The Advisory Board members would review the reporting requirement recommendations and provide their opinion via a rating system.

**Commission Approval Process.** The reporting requirement recommendations and Advisory Board ratings would be presented to the Commissioners in two formats: sufficiently summarized to be useful for all Commissioners, as well as sufficiently detailed for maximum benefit for the most sophisticated Commissioners. The Commissioners would have the opportunity to approve, decline, request more information, or suggest changes. The process would continue until a majority of the Commissioners approve or decline the recommendation. The division staff and support offices would then implement the approved recommendations.

**Annual Surveys.** Annually the Commissioners, Advisory Board members, Division and Support Office staff, special interest groups, think tanks, and the public in general would be surveyed on current regulations, suggestions for new regulations, the ICC operating process, the participants, etc. The results of the surveys would be made public and would be considered by all ICC personnel for changes that might be required.

**Annual Report.** The Support Offices personnel would prepare an Annual Report to the Commissioners and Advisory Board that would be available to the public. The Annual Report would include accomplishments for the prior year; political, economic, and social trends; and goals and operating plan for the upcoming year.