

Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

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Overview

A successful democracy and a fair and efficient economy require informed citizens. Only a government can ensure accurate and meaningful information for voters, employees, and representatives. Only volunteer citizen control can ensure an effective and independent Informed Citizens Commission.

Purpose: To ensure accurate and meaningful information for voters, employees, and representatives.

Goals:

- Informed voters for qualified and trustworthy leaders who will represent everyone
- Informed employees for a fair and efficient economy that shares prosperity with everyone
- Informed representatives for effective government and a society that respects everyone

Accurate and meaningful information for voters, employees, and representatives on the purpose and performance relative to purpose of the economy, businesses, government, and politicians will shape opinions and expectations of citizens, and therefore behavior of both business and political leaders.

Organization. The Informed Citizens Commission would be an independent government agency. Rotating volunteer citizen commissioners would ensure the Commission’s independence. The agency would be comprised of Commissioners, Advisory Board members, a Voter Information Division with responsibility to propose and enforce candidate reporting requirements, an Employee Information Division with responsibility to propose and enforce corporate reporting requirements, a Representative Information Division with responsibility to propose and enforce Congressional Research Services reporting requirements, and Support Offices.

No Tampering. 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, Representative Information Division, or Support Office would be a crime punishable with a minimum of 1 year in prison and up to 15 years in prison.

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Commissioners

Responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Commissioners would be to review regulations proposed by the Voter Information Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Representative Information Division, and consider input from the Advisory Board on those proposed regulations, and approve, disapprove, request revisions, or request further information on those proposed regulations. The goal of the Commissioners would be to ensure a fair sharing of corporate information to achieve a greater balance of interests between employees and shareholders, and therefore a more balanced sharing of income, a fair sharing of candidate information so voters can elect representatives that will find balanced solutions for economic, political, and social issues for the benefit of all citizens, and a fair sharing of congressional information so citizens can measure the success of their representatives in achieving a government that represents everyone and an economy that works for everyone. 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.

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 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.

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Advisory Board

Responsibilities. The responsibility of the Advisory Board would be to review all Voter Information Division, Employee Information Division, and Representative Information Division, 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.

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.

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Voter Information Division

Responsibilities. The Voter Information Division would be an FTC-type entity for voters. It would develop, implement, and enforce “truth in advertising” type regulations for candidate information reporting. This would result in candidates providing sufficient, accurate and meaningful information about themselves and their supporters so voters can make 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.

Reporting. The 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 Congressional Research Services Issues and Guidelines
- **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.

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.

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Employee Information Division

Responsibilities. The Employee Information Division would be an SEC-type entity for employees. It would be responsible for developing, implementing, and enforcing corporate reporting requirements for accurate and meaningful information for their employees, potential employees, and the public. 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.

Reporting. The 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 Congressional Research Services Guidelines
 - 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.

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.

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Representative Information Division

Responsibilities. The Representative Information Division would be an independent, nonpartisan agency responsible for developing, implementing, and enforcing high level, accurate, and meaningful Congressional Research Service (CRS) reporting requirements for the benefit of Congressional Representatives and the people they serve (e.g., voters, employees, business leaders, the press, think tanks, educational institutions, governments, and other entities). It would be responsible for reporting requirements for information on key issues facing our government, economy, and society; baseline, high level guidelines for solutions to those issues; methods for measuring the above improvements and results of those measurements; and evaluations of proposed legislation against those issues and guidelines.

Reporting. The following are sample key issues and guidelines for CRS reporting:

- **Economic improvements** that result in the most efficient and effective economy that works best for everyone
- **Election improvements** that result in the most efficient and effective government that represents everyone
- **Legislative operations** that include procedures for actions balanced to maximize social and economic benefits in both the short-term and long-term for all.
- **Education and healthcare actions** that result in affordable quality education and healthcare for all, balanced with appropriate economic impact.
- **Racial, legal, and criminal justice actions** that address the realities of racism and other legal and criminal justice inequities without negative short-term impacts.
- **Environmental responsibility actions** that balance 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.

Information Access. The Representative Information Division would require the Congressional Research Service to 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 a Representative Information Division maintained website and a Congressional Research Service maintained website that would both be available to all citizens.

Organization. The Representative 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 Congressional Representatives and the people they serve have accurate and adequate information from the Congressional Research Service.

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Operations

Staff Research. The staff of each of the Voter Information Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Representative Information Division 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 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.

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Support Offices

Responsibilities. 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 Representative Information Division in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

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.

Organization. The Support Offices would include the offices of Regulations, Employee, Voter, and Representative 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 Representative Information Division, and each Support Office, would select leaders from the candidates presented and present them to the Commissioners for approval.

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.