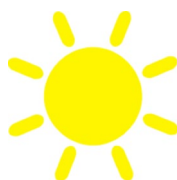


Informed Citizens



For a Successful America

A Successful America

A Government that Represents Everyone

An Economy that Benefits Everyone

A Society that Respects Everyone

Rick Schwenk

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To my Friends and Family.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	5
1 Economy and Business	8
Shareholder Capitalism	
Excessive Income Inequality	
Lower Economic Performance	
2 Government and Politics	13
Big Money in Politics	
Big Money in Free Press	
Lying and Misinformation	
3 Society and Citizens	16
Beliefs	
Polarization	
Social Unrest	
4 A Successful America	19
Strengths and Opportunities	
Honesty and Transparency	
Reform Initiatives	
5 Informed Citizens Commission	23
Independence	
Authority	
Next Steps	
Appendix A – Shareholder Capitalism Impact on Income Inequality	29
Appendix B - Informed Citizens Commission	31

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Introduction

The income gap between those at the top and everyone else has been growing over the past forty years and is continuing to grow now. With projections for increased productivity, the gap will grow even faster. This combined with a lack of trust in government caused by the use of misinformation and disinformation by the establishment, has led to social unrest, polarization, and the rise of authoritarianism and socialism.

When I retired, I had three thoughts: I wanted to give back in some way, I wanted to write a letter to my children and grandchildren with life lessons, as my grandfather had done for me, and I wanted to understand why America's political system didn't produce better leaders and solutions to issues. All three have come together in this booklet.

During my career as a Chief Financial Officer for various operating companies and a private equity firm, I found that success in any business requires an honest and thorough analysis of both its challenges and opportunities and the development of an honest and thorough plan to minimize those challenges and maximize those opportunities.

In performing an honest and thorough analysis of America's political challenges, I identified specific problems that were contributing to its lack of success. I began working with reform organizations with goals of addressing those problems but saw insurmountable resistance. I found that our political systems are so intertwined with our economic systems that substantive political reforms are impossible without changes to both of them and in order to accomplish the significant changes required to the systems a redefining of the fundamental purpose and goals of our economy and government would be required.

The incomes of 90% of Americans today are not keeping up with America's prosperity and are falling far behind the incomes of those in the top 10%. The same was true for their parents and grandparents. They are, as were their parents and grandparents before them, working as hard as those at the top. As a result, they don't believe they are being treated fairly. In addition, many Americans in the 90% are having trouble making ends meet while watching the income and wealth of those at the top increase to unnecessarily high levels. Almost all agree that our economic systems are only working well for those at the very top.

Most Americans no longer believe that politicians, the government, or the establishment are working for them. Political misuse of information (spin or "messaging") to win elections, rather than honestly evaluating the challenges Americans are facing and addressing them, has led to an increasing lack of trust.

Informed Citizens

One of the benefits of being a parent and grandparent is developing a greater appreciation of the differences among people. We all have different personalities, abilities, experiences, and environments. The result is different skills, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives on issues. Such fundamental differences mean that consensus on solutions for issues isn't possible and that our goal must be to achieve a balance that represents the fairest representation of all beliefs and interests.

The phenomenal and accelerating advancements in communications and technology, education and reasoning, and availability of information and perspectives provide the greatest opportunity in human history to reflect and benefit effectively from the full potential of embracing the informed will of all of the people to achieve a huge leap forward toward a true democratic government, a real free and fair market economy, and a just and respectful society.

Our elected officials ignore their responsibility to represent the best interests of all the people, instead they represent their self-interests and the interests of those who support and fund their political careers. Any reform initiatives that favor democracy over the interests of those who support the politicians have little chance of being enacted. Politicians use inaccurate information to persuade voters that they are working in their best interests when in fact they are not. As a result of the significant and persistent use of inaccurate information, voters are unable to discern the truth. Restoring democracy will require accurate and meaningful information for all citizens so they are able to discern the truth and elect good leaders who will represent the best interests of all the people, not just those at the top.

Balancing the interests of all people would allow us to reduce the risk of a catastrophic event. Honesty and transparency about our economic and political challenges and opportunities is essential to allow the will of the people to effect the changes required to balance those interests. Accurate and meaningful information is essential for honesty and transparency.

Only the government can ensure accurate and meaningful information. In order to do so, independence from political and financial influences is essential. With independence and authority, a government agency could establish the rules and regulations required for reporting accurate and meaningful information for the 90% (employees, consumers, voters, and citizens) to balance the influence of the top 10% (shareholders, management, and politicians).

Those at the top have had economic and political control over the rest of the people throughout the first 250 years of America's history, as has been the case throughout human history. The economic effect of that control has ebbed and flowed many times. We are currently at a point where the control of those at the top is having a significantly adverse influence on

Informed Citizens

the rest of the people. Each such point in both American and human history has led to a catastrophic event (usually a revolution or war) to improve the balance.

The current economic unfairness, lack of trust in the establishment, social unrest, and polarization trends are unsustainable. The only question is whether we will address them with rational intervention, or whether it will take a catastrophe or catastrophes as it did in the early 20th century (great depression and world wars), which was the last time the imbalance in the U.S. income was as high as it is today and the trends as negative as they are today, to reverse these trends and lead to the fair income sharing and high economic performance that America enjoyed throughout the middle decades of the 20th century.

1 Economy and Business

America's corporate and financial CEOs are incentivized by shareholders and investors to maximize shareholder and investor value. Doing so has resulted in lower wages for employees and higher prices for consumer goods and services. The result is an upward shift in share of income and wealth to the top 10%, a widening of the income gap, and an underperforming economy caused by an excess of capital and insufficient consumer demand.

Shareholder Capitalism

Capitalism is private ownership of capital for investments. Socialism is government ownership of capital for investments. Capitalism allows for the benefits of free and fair market determination of economic investments and therefore has the best potential to maximize economic activity. In addition to a free capital market, a free market economy also has a free employment market and a free consumer market. A successful free market economy requires balance of influence among all three. All three require accurate and meaningful information to achieve a balance of influence. A balance of influence results in a balance of income that maximizes performance of the overall economy to the benefit of all.

Shareholder Capitalism is where shareholders have more influence over corporations, and therefore more income, than employees and consumers. America has established sufficient checks and balances for free and fair capital markets and although America has established some checks and balances for employment and consumer markets, they have not been sufficient to balance the influence shareholders have on employment and consumer markets.

America's shareholder capitalism has established the goal of a corporation (and therefore the economy) as being to maximize profits for shareholders. In order to maximize profits for shareholders, corporations and their management teams must keep wages for employees and the quality of products and services as low as possible, while keeping the prices for products and services as high as possible. Management is incentivized to accomplish the goal of maximizing profits for shareholders by having the majority of their compensation tied to increases in share values. The top 10% of Americans own 90% of all shares and therefore benefit from the increases in share values. Most Americans do not benefit materially from increases in share values.

Shareholder capitalism originated in the 1970s in response to economic, political, and social challenges of the 1960s and 1970s. It spread rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s as management teams were given stock options to incentivize the increase in shareholder value.

Early in my career I joined a small, privately-owned technology company where the senior management team had been given stock options as part of their compensation plans. The company began offering its stock publicly in 1981, making several members of the senior management team wealthy. Several of them bought Porsches shortly after the public offering. Later in my career, I joined a privately-owned company as its CFO and was provided with stock options as part of my compensation plan. The company began offering its stock publicly in 1996 and I too became wealthy and bought a Porsche shortly thereafter.

In hindsight, it is easy for me to see how the use of shareholder equity (stock options, restricted stock, stock grants, etc.) leads to prioritizing profits for shareholders (and therefore management) over employee wages and customer value. At the time, I thought management teams, including me, were being fair with respect to employee wages and customer value because we were paying employees at or above what we believed to be fair market wages and were providing customers with value at or above what we believed to be determined by fair markets. What I didn't know at the time was how much the government was doing to create free and fair shareholder markets and how little they were doing to create free and fair employee and consumer markets leaving corporations and shareholders with excessive influence over those markets.

Excessive Income Inequality

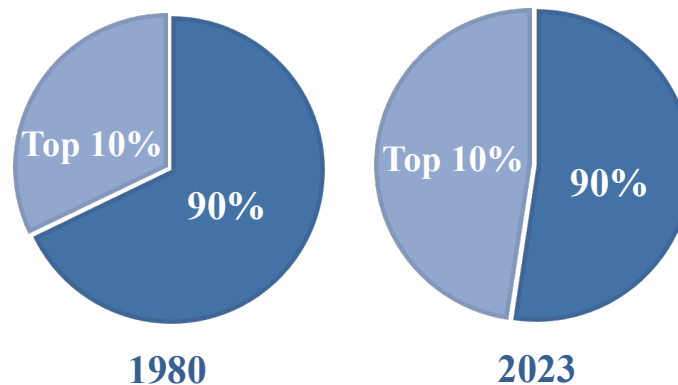
The term income inequality is appropriately used to describe the unfairness of income differences between people with similar skills and abilities, but of different gender or race. However, the term is not appropriate for describing the differences between people of different skills and abilities. Income inequality between people of different skills and abilities is essential to maximize personal performance and therefore maximize overall economic performance. However, excessive income inequality between people of different skills and abilities is unnecessary and unfair, and therefore negatively impacts America's economic, political, and social environments.

Shareholder capitalism has led to a significant and unnecessary increase in income for the top 10%, lower wages for employees, and higher prices for products and services for consumers. The result has been, and continues to be, excessive income inequality, a significant sense of unfairness, and an affordability challenge for 90% of Americans.

Informed Citizens

America's top 10% share of income has increased from 32% to 47% over the past 43 years. The cumulative effect has been over \$50 trillion. The 2023 effect alone was \$2.3 trillion, with most going to the top 1% (\$1.8 trillion). Without this unfair, and unproductive shift in income, 90% of Americans would have 29% higher incomes today (see Appendix A).

Share of US Income



Source: IRS Table 3 Adjusted Gross Income of US taxpayers

Lower Economic Performance

The shares of income going to the top 10% and the 90% determines America's economic growth and prosperity. Income to the top 10% provides funds for capital investment, as well as purchases of goods and services. Income to the 90% provides funds for purchases of goods and services.

The increased share of income going to the top 10% has exceeded both America's need for capital investment by the top 10%, as well as the top 10%'s need for goods and services. The excess income is spent by the top 10% on high end assets like stocks, government bonds, crypto currencies, real estate, etc., resulting in significantly inflated prices for those assets.

Since the 90% spend most of their income on goods and services and purchases of goods and services drive economic activity, the significant decline in share of income to the 90% has limited economic growth and prosperity for the country.

The economic growth that we have experienced over the past 20 years was primarily the result of deficit spending (which takes prosperity from future generations) and population growth (over 50% of which was from immigration). We will have no choice but to stop the

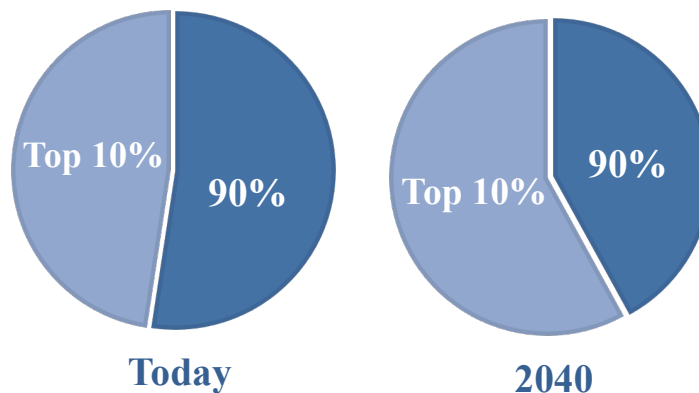
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deficit spending soon and our population growth has and will continue to slow. The result will be a near term and continuing decline in economic growth.

The Business Roundtable is made up of the CEOs of the 181 largest corporations in America. In 1997, they publicly supported shareholder capitalism with their statement that the primary focus of corporate management and boards of directors is to maximize financial returns and value for shareholders. In 2019, they changed their definition of the purpose of a corporation from “maximizing shareholder value” to “creating value for all stakeholders (customers, employees, suppliers, communities and shareholders)”. When I came across this in 2020, I thought the negative impact of shareholder capitalism had been recognized by corporate America and was being addressed. However, I shortly thereafter realized this was a marketing initiative, and those corporations were not changing their behavior. Most, if not all, of those corporations have retained shareholder equity as the primary incentive compensation for their CEOs, therefore those CEOs have and will continue to maximize shareholder value, regardless of what the Business Roundtable statement was changed to say. The fact that they felt the need to change the purpose of a corporation shows they are and have been aware of the negative impact shareholder capitalism is having on our economy, politics, and society. This was simply a marketing ploy to placate the public.

The share of America’s income going to the top 10% is continuing to increase.

Projected Share of US Income



Without significant changes to America’s shareholder capitalism culture (i.e., where the purpose of each corporation is to maximize shareholder value and therefore minimize employee and consumer value), the past forty-three year economic trends will not only

continue but will accelerate with the benefits of the efficiencies generated by AI, robotics, and other technological improvements going to the top 10%, leaving the 90% farther behind.

This trend is unsustainable. The only question is will we be able to implement a rational, balanced solution or will it take a catastrophic event similar to those that prior unsustainable economic trends have required.

2 Government and Politics

Politicians are funded by the top 10% and therefore the government serves the interest of the top 10% to the detriment of the 90%. Politicians are using misinformation (spin, messaging, exaggerations, partial information, inaccurate information, etc.) to get elected resulting in an increasing lack of trust in government, politicians, and the establishment.

Big Money in Politics

Elected representatives spend an average of 40% of their time fund raising. Those who provide the funds expect the representatives to support legislative actions that they support. Those providing the funds are in the top 10% economically and therefore the legislative actions they support are primarily ones that benefit the top 10% to the detriment of the 90%.

Political leaders have modified election and legislative process rules and procedures to advance their own self-interests, primarily being re-elected, rather than balancing their self-interests with the public interest. The number of meaningful laws enacted by Congress has declined significantly, while the laws that are passed are becoming more and more partisan.

Shareholder capitalism incentivizes corporate executives and shareholders (the top 10%) to exercise as much political pressure (including campaign financing) as possible on candidates and elected representatives to accomplish legislation that benefits the top 10% to the detriment of the 90%.

This economic/political system results in the “will of the top 10%” being represented in government and the economy, rather than the “will of all the people”. Unless changed, it will continue to be of benefit the top 10% and to the detriment of the 90%, creating an even more lopsided economy and therefore greater social unrest, which will continue to erode our democracy and free market economy.

International relations have also been negatively affected by shareholder capitalism. America’s business and government leaders are rewarded under shareholder capitalism for putting profits for shareholders over other countries’ interests. We have established the purpose of both our economy and our government as making the wealthy wealthier, at the expense of 90% of Americans and the interests of others around the world.

Big Money in Free Press

The free press used to provide an important role in our democracy of holding political leaders accountable and reporting accurate information to the public. The free press has been fragmented into various mainstream media outlets and multiple social media platforms. Mainstream media and social media corporations are all shareholder capitalism corporations. They have the same goal of maximizing shareholder value and management incentives tied to maximizing shareholder value as all other corporations. Although some more than others, all use and misuse information and take advantage of political and social unrest and divisiveness to generate users and therefore revenue and profits for their shareholders. They are today adding to the disinformation and misinformation that is creating the extreme political polarization and social unrest.

Lying and Misinformation

Political lying causes huge risk and harm to our democracy, political systems, and government. Voters can't develop the best collective public opinion without accurate information. The harm that lying by politicians does to our political system is much larger than almost all of the other lying that is against the law today.

Politicians have convinced voters that they have the right to lie under the First Amendment right to free speech, but they do not. The First Amendment protects the right of politicians to speak freely about what they believe, but not the right to intentionally lie to the people they serve. There are many laws that prohibit lying today that have been determined by the Supreme Court not to be in violation of the First Amendment (e.g., for perjury, defamation, fraud, committing a crime, etc.). Elected representatives could pass a law that prohibits politicians from knowingly and willfully making a materially false statement with the intent to deceive for personal benefit (e.g., getting votes, financial support, etc.) that would not limit their freedom of speech as protected under the First Amendment but would ensure accurate information for voters.

In order to run in a general election for office a candidate must win a partisan primary with low voter turnout of the most ideologically extreme voters of that party. To win that primary the candidate must represent those ideologically extreme positions on issues. As a result, elected officials primarily represent the ideologically extreme voters within their party in their districts, which results in gridlock in government.

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One of the strengths of a democratic government and society with the freedom of speech, is a fully functional “marketplace of idea”. Freedom to discuss and consider ideas and elect leaders who will act on those ideas results in a creative government, business, science, and academic environment and successful society. The combination of lying and misinformation by politicians, mainstream media, and social media, along with extreme ideology resulting from partisan primaries, has led to a dysfunctional “marketplace of ideas” in America today.

3 Society and its Citizens

On average people in the top 10% have greater skills and abilities than those in the 90% and therefore without adequate regulatory controls and social norms their human nature instincts of putting their self-interests first have resulted in an excess of economic and political influence over the 90% and a widening economic gap, polarization, and social unrest.

Beliefs

Beliefs are necessary for humans to process and respond to the complexities of life. They are influenced by our personalities and experiences and fundamental to who we are. They may be refined with additional information and perspectives from others, but we each have a fundamental point of personal preference on the spectrum of things ranging from the far left to the far right.

Our beliefs are influenced by our need to prioritize our short-term self-interests over those of others. Prioritizing short-term self-interests is a fundamental aspect of human nature (survival instinct). We develop perspectives on issues that fit our beliefs and self-interests.

Accurate information is essential to achieving the best perspectives on issues possible among people with different beliefs. Transparency allows us to evaluate the accuracy of the information that supports perspectives of others.

Although there is a broad spectrum of beliefs in the top 10%, many believe that America's economy is doing very well based on their high and increasing incomes, high GDP growth rate, high and increasing stocks, crypto currencies, and other high-end asset prices, and the incomes of 90% of Americans being higher than those in most other countries.

Most people in the top 10% believe they are doing the right thing. The pursuit of profits for shareholders and lying by politicians is just how it is and therefore must be right. In addition, all people see the truth through their own lens of personality, experiences, environments, self-interests, etc.

Many of the 90% of Americans believe that the U.S. economy is not doing well based on their incomes being low, not increasing, and not sufficient to support their families, economic growth and stock market, crypto, and other high-end asset price increases do not affect them, and their incomes relative to other countries aren't important to them.

Polarization

Inaccurate information leads to extreme beliefs, which leads to extreme social and political positions, polarization, and gridlock. Politicians use misinformation (unintentionally inaccurate) and disinformation (intentionally inaccurate) to persuade voters to support them financially and to vote for them. They focus on the “us versus them” human nature instinct to pit groups of people against others (race, culture, religion, gender, beliefs, etc.). The politicians’ use of misinformation and disinformation has led to extreme polarization which is harmful to both our government and society.

The use by the mainstream media and social media of misinformation and disinformation that leans left or right to obtain and retain audiences in order to create profits have also contributed to the current extreme political and social polarization.

Trust in government requires a belief that it is being honest and transparent and that its solutions are fairly balanced for both top 10% and 90%, as well as left and right.

Social Unrest

Economic unfairness and political misinformation and disinformation have led to the current, significant social unrest and anti-establishment sentiments within the 90%. The result is support for authoritarianism on the right and socialism on the left. The top 10% are doing very well and fear that a solution to the problems of the 90% might have a significantly negative impact on them.

America’s increasing concentration of income and wealth, social and political polarization, gridlock in government, distrust of the establishment, and social unrest are all indications of a civilization in decline.

America’s citizens (i.e., the “will of the people”) have allowed this to happen as a result of the significant amount of misinformation and disinformation that has been used by the establishment (the top 10%) for their own self-interest. By not honestly discussing and addressing America’s very serious problems today we are increasing the difficulty and impact of doing so in the near future.

4 A Successful America

A Successful America has an economy that benefits everyone, a government that represents everyone, and a society that respects everyone. To create a Successful America, we need honesty and transparency from business and political leaders. Honesty and transparency will allow America to overcome its current economic, political, and social challenges, build upon its strengths, and take advantage of its opportunities.

Strengths and Opportunities

Even though it has provided some of America's greatest challenges, America's population diversity of race, nationality, culture, and religion is one of its greatest strengths. America's successes and promise of opportunity have attracted many of the world's best and brightest. Diversity of ideas and opinions creates an opportunity for the best solutions and advancements. Because of its diversity, a Successful America would be an even greater example for the world of "a city on a hill" providing hope and an example for all of humanity.

Recent and continuing advances in education, reasoning, technology, communications, and information availability provide an opportunity for the first time in history for a true representative democracy and a real free and fair market economy. Both business and government leaders have the capability of honestly pursuing perspectives from those they lead and providing honest information and perspectives to those they lead on why they are doing what they are doing. We have learned much from history which allows us to better define what a Successful America is and what it will take to get there. We are also better able to take advantage of market, political, and peer pressure to accomplish what is needed to get there.

Many of America's best and brightest are working in the financial services industry today making money with money, not maximizing their value to society. In a Successful America these individuals would be utilizing their talents as business leaders, scientists, educators, and government leaders resulting in a significant increase in their value to society.

One of America's greatest strengths is its shared values. Americans value the basic human rights of freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all; and equal social, civil, and legal justice for all. Americans also believe in honesty, transparency, integrity, and right over wrong; in treating others as we want them to treat us; and in economic and political free markets.

A free and fair market economy and a representative democracy provide the best form of economy and government with which to build a Successful America, providing that the influence, interests, beliefs, and income of all citizens are balanced to achieve fairness, respect for all, and the common good.

Honesty and Transparency

The 90% of Americans want and need leadership from the top 10%. They also want and need honesty and transparency from their leaders. When leaders in any organization aren't honest and transparent with those they lead, they lose their trust and respect.

The true “will of the people” and real “marketplace of ideas” are both essential in both a successful democracy and a successful free market economy. Many business and political leaders use misinformation and disinformation to create a “will of the people” and “marketplace of ideas” that work for them in the short-term. When the people realize their leaders are dishonest and non-transparent, they lose trust and respect and seek alternatives.

A real free and fair market economy would have sufficient honesty, transparency, and regulatory controls and oversight to achieve a balance in influence between the top 10% and the 90% that results in free and fair economic markets with sufficient income for the top 10% to provide maximum capital for investment, sufficient income for the 90% to provide maximum economic consumption, as well as sufficient income for requirements of society.

Accurate and meaningful information on how a corporation's goals, board representation, and management compensation plans balance the interests of employees, consumers, and shareholders would allow employees to better decide which corporations to work for and consumers to better decide which corporations to buy goods and services from.

Corporations that fairly balance the interests of employees, consumers, and shareholders will attract the best employees and most loyal consumers and therefore be the most successful. Corporations whose CEO compensation is primarily tied to stock options whose value is increased by maximizing shareholder value to the detriment of employees and consumers will therefore be less able to attract the best employees and loyal consumers and be less successful.

Some business leaders are balancing the interests of their shareholders, employees, and customers. However, most are focused on maximizing shareholder value because they believe that is essential to capitalism and because their incentive compensation is based on it. If given accurate and meaningful information about the impact of shareholder capitalism on America, goals that balance the interests of employees, consumers, and shareholders, and non-stock

compensation tied to meeting those goals, most business leaders would balance the interests of shareholders, employees, and consumers as well.

A true representative democracy would have sufficient honesty, transparency, and regulatory controls and oversight to result in effective elections, represent the balanced beliefs and interests of all citizens and achieve the security and well-being (economic, physical, digital, and health) of all citizens.

Accurate and meaningful information on a candidate's background and qualifications, positions on issues, certification of honesty, campaign finance sources, and goals of the campaign finance sources, will provide voters with the opportunity to elect representatives with integrity, honesty, and transparency, with the skills and experience for the office, and who will enact legislation with balanced solutions to issues.

Candidates who support balancing the economic interests of all citizens and balanced solutions for all issues would get more votes. Candidates who are opposed to balancing the economic interests of all citizens and balanced solutions for all issues would get fewer votes.

Accurate and meaningful information on the key issues facing our government, economy, and society and guidelines for them would result in citizens being able to develop perspectives on those issues that would lead elected representative to pass legislation with balanced solutions for them. An example of a key issue and guideline is the purposes of the economy, government, and society and goals and objectives for achieving those purposes.

Honesty and transparency would result in accurate and meaningful information being available to all citizens and reduce the impact that misinformation is having today.

Reform Initiatives

There are many people today waiting to see if the pendulum will swing back to near the center and therefore go back to where things were prior to the current populist, authoritarianism and socialism movements. This ignores the fact that the underlying causes of the populist movements (widening income gap and increasing misuse of information) have gotten worse and, unless addressed, will continue getting worse, leading further toward authoritarianism on the right and socialism on the left.

There are also many liberal and progressive economic policy reforms being proposed today (e.g., taxing the wealthy, raising the minimum wage, expanding labor unions, strengthening labor laws, investing in infrastructure projects, providing universal healthcare, improving education, and enforcing anti-trust laws). Many of these policies existed during prior progressive eras (late 19th century, early 20th century, and mid-20th century) so are

viewed as possible ways to overcome the current economic, political, and social challenges we face. The social environments of the periods when these reforms were enacted were substantially different from today. The severity of the economic and working conditions of the majority of the people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were far worse than they are today and the shared well-being culture of the mid-20th century was the result of WWII, which only a significant catastrophe will be able to recreate. The social unrest today isn't caused by extremely severe economic and working conditions, but rather by the unfair economic treatment of the 90% by the top 10% and a greater awareness of the use of misinformation by the political and business leaders.

Even if these reforms were possible, their impact on America's excessive income inequality would be relatively minor and they would not overcome the negative trend caused by the purpose of corporations, and therefore our entire economy, being to maximize the income and wealth of the top 10% to the detriment of the 90% of Americans.

There are also reforms to America's political systems being proposed today (e.g., campaign finance reform, open primaries, anti-gerrymandering, and term limits). When I first retired, I began supporting and participating in open primary and anti-gerrymandering reform initiatives in my home state of Pennsylvania. In meetings with state and local representatives it quickly became clear that for most of them what they and/or the people believed or wanted wasn't important, only what their political party believed they could get away with to obtain or maintain power and serve those who were providing the funding for their party.

Even if these reforms were possible, their impact on America's political systems would be relatively minor and they would not be sufficient to overcome the influence of the top 10% on our political systems and government as long as the purpose of corporations, and therefore our entire economy, remains to maximize the income and wealth of the top 10% to the detriment of the 90%. The top 10% would continue to have a greater influence on politicians and government than the 90% accelerating the increasing economic and social imbalance.

All of the policy and system reforms being proposed today are viewed as partisan in an increasingly polarized political environment and they require the support of voters who are receiving misinformation making it difficult for them to discern the truth. Although all of these reform initiatives are worthy of consideration, and many would have positive impacts if enacted, the probability of doing so in today's economic and political environments is low.

Pursuing these reform initiatives while concurrently pursuing a legal and cultural environment of honesty and transparency would significantly increase the probability of enacting those reform initiatives that would have most the positive impacts on the fairness

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and productivity of our economy and balanced representation of the people by our government.

The only way to achieve a legal and cultural environment of honesty and transparency is with an independent government agency that ensures accurate and meaningful economic, political, and social information for all citizens.

5 Informed Citizens Commission

Today the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) ensures that the top 10% are provided with accurate and meaningful economic information. Political access via lobbyists, lawyers, networking, etc., ensures that the top 10% are provided with accurate and meaningful political and issues information. The imbalance in the current top 10% and 90% of Americans in our economy and government is the result of the top 10% controlling the economic and political information that the 90% receives.

The 90% need an independent government agency like the SEC to ensure they are provided with accurate and meaningful economic, political, and issues information to balance the influence and income that the current lack of accurate information has resulted in. An Informed Citizens Commission would provide that function.

The Informed Citizens Commission would ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information reporting that would provide employees and consumers with corporate goals, board representation, and management incentive compensation plans reflecting how well the corporation balances the interests of employees, consumers, and shareholders. This would allow employees to choose corporations to work for and consumers to choose corporations to purchase products from which honestly and effectively balance the interests of the employees and consumers with those of the shareholders.

The Informed Citizens Commission would also ensure accurate and meaningful candidate information reporting that would provide voters with candidate qualifications, positions on balanced solutions for key issues, honesty certifications, and candidates campaign financing, allowing voters to choose leaders who will represent the interests of all citizens and enact solutions to issues that are balanced for all citizens.

The Informed Citizens Commission would also ensure accurate and meaningful information on key issues and guidelines for solutions to those issues for all citizens and their representatives.

The Informed Citizens Commission would have the authority to require honesty and transparency from business and political leaders. It would also have the authority to provide honest perspectives on economic and political objectives that are in the best interests of all citizens, not just those at the top, and recommend approaches to accomplish those objectives.

Current government checks and balances (e.g., three branches of the federal government, separation of state and federal powers, and government agencies independent of partisan

Informed Citizens

politics) are designed to provide a balance of interests within the top 10% (e.g., liberals, conservatives, self-interests, etc.) but don't sufficiently address the interests of the 90%.

In order to be truly independent of both partisan ideology and top 10% economic influence an Informed Citizens Commission would have citizen oversight, public transparency, and independent authority.

An Informed Citizens Commission would also provide two-way communications with all citizens by using all technology options, including the rapidly developing use of AI to evaluate large amounts of information and perspectives.

In addition to a federal Informed Citizens Commission, each state would enact their own Informed Citizens Commissions with similar goals, objectives, and organization as the federal Informed Citizens Commission, as modified to address the state employee, consumers, voters, and issues and guidelines reporting requirements.

Independence

The Informed Citizens Commission would be an independent, non-partisan agency with rotating citizen volunteer commissioners. Rotating citizen volunteers would ensure the Informed Citizens Commission's independence.

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 Informed Citizens Commission 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 goals and objectives of the Informed Citizens Commission and the commissioners' responsibilities.

Random selections would be made from the questionnaires submitted for screening. The screening would be done by rotating federal judges as they do for their juries. Citizens would be excused by the judge if they showed clear bias or could not fulfil the responsibilities of the commissioners.

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 one-third of the commissioners would be replaced with new citizen volunteers who would be selected using the same review process as the initial commissioners.

The Informed Citizens Commission would assume the responsibilities and staff of the Congressional Research Services agency (CRS). The CRS is research organization within the

Informed Citizens

U.S. Congress that provides confidential research on issues for members of Congress. The Informed Citizens Commission would continue to provide those research services for members of Congress but also provide research services for the professional staff of the Informed Citizens Commission. All research performed for Congress and the Informed Citizens Commission would be transparent and made available to the public.

The budget for the Informed Citizens Commission would be reviewed and approved directly by Congress to provide independence from the Administrative branch of government.

Independence is critical to overcoming the lack of trust of current leaders and the establishment. Any attempt to inappropriately influence the selection process or decisions of a Commissioner or any of the professional staff, would be a crime punishable by a minimum of 1 year to up to 15 years in prison.

Authority

The Informed Citizens Commission legislation would include regulations providing the Informed Citizens Commission with SEC-type authority over corporations to ensure accurate and meaningful corporate reporting to employees and consumers, including how its goals, board representation, and management compensation plan balance the interests of its employees and consumers with those of its shareholders.

The Informed Citizens Commission would assume the responsibilities and staff of the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The FEC is a regulatory agency with responsibility for public disclosure of, and enforcing restrictions on, campaign financing for federal elections. Being part of the Informed Citizens Commission would provide greater political and financial independence, which is essential to be able to do its job of balancing the interests of those on the left and right and those in the upper class and working class.

The Informed Citizens Commission legislation would include regulations expanding the current FEC authority to include requiring politicians to file certifications of honesty and transparency with the Informed Citizens Commission certifying that they have been truthful in all campaign and other communications with voters. If politicians are found to have made false statements in their certifications of honesty and transparency, they would be subject to civil and/or criminal punishment.

The Informed Citizens Commission would be able to enforce its regulations itself through civil lawsuits that could result in fines, injunctions, barring business leaders from serving as corporate officers or directors and political leaders from running for public office and could

refer willful or severe fraudulent misconduct to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution.

See Appendix B for information on the organization and operations of the Informed Citizens Commission.

Next Steps

Citizens cannot individually or in groups fix the problems America is facing today. We can, however, define what a Successful America looks like and put pressure on our government and business leaders to find the best path forward to accomplish that Successful America. Enacting an Informed Citizens Commission would be the best first step in creating the public, political, market, and peer pressure for a legal and cultural environment of honesty and transparency which would lead to a Successful America.

We can't limit ourselves to only those initiatives and solutions that we believe are possible within the system when it is the system that is broken. We need a concurrent effort to fix the system while we continue to pursue those initiatives and solutions.

Achieving our goal will require maximum public pressure from all citizens regardless of beliefs, class, race, religion, etc. Each of us must stand up for what we want America to be, our shared values, and a fair balance of interests and income. If we all agree, our leaders will have no choice but to accept the will of the people.

If you agree with the need for an Informed Citizens Commission, you can go to the Next Steps tab at www.informedcitizen.com, sign the petition, contact your representatives, and review candidates for office giving consideration to their support or potential support for an Informed Citizens Commission. You can also let your friends and family and contacts on social media platforms know that you support an Informed Citizens Commission for a Successful America.

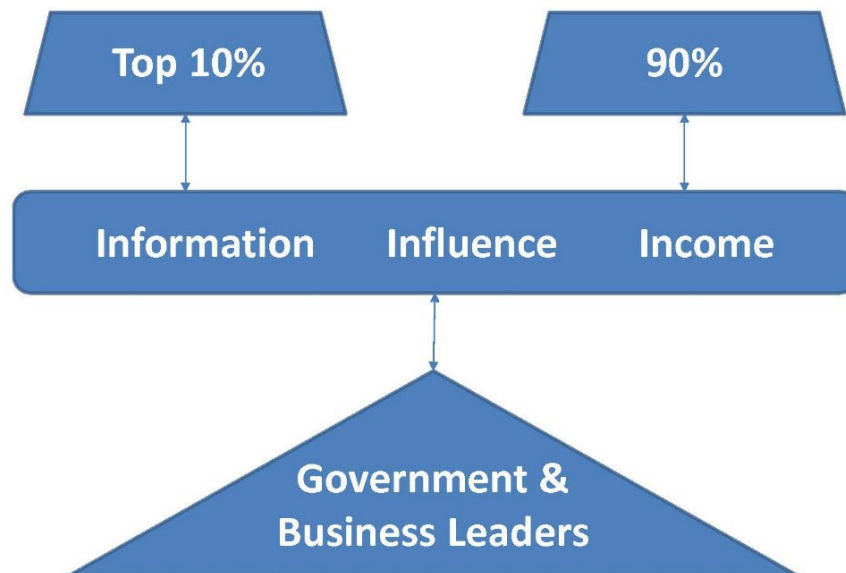
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author is a retired businessman, husband, father, and grandfather in pursuit of truth, transparency, reason, goodwill, and maximization of the opportunity for happiness for all.

Informed Citizens Commission

**Only an independent government agency can
ensure accurate information for everyone**

**Access to Accurate Information
Balances Influence and Income**



Shareholder Capitalism Impact on Income Inequality

		Average Income per Tax Return	
	Multiple of Top 10% to 90%	Top 10%	90%
1980 Actual, adjusted for inflation	4.3x	\$204,283	\$47,913
2023 Actual with Shareholder Capitalism	8.2x	\$472,568	\$57,799
2023 Without Shareholder Capitalism	4.3x	\$319,124	\$74,849
Average Increase in Income for 90% of Taxpayers *			<u>29%</u>

Economic Performance and Fairness

Argument by the top 10%: \$57,799 average annual income should be sufficient for the 90%

Argument by the 90%: \$319,124 average annual income should be sufficient for the top 10%

Determining Factor: Better economic performance and fairness support the argument by the 90%

* The 29% increase is in adjusted gross income, the average after-tax income increase would be 26%.

Note: For additional details, comments, and notes on the above information and data sources and calculations used to determine the information, see attached Appendix A - Detail

Shareholder Capitalism Impact on Income Inequality

	Average Income per Tax Return							
	Total	Top 10%				90%		
		Top 0.1%	Next 0.9%	Next 4%	Next 5%	Next 15%	Next 25%	Bottom 50%
1980 Actual, adjusted for inflation	\$63,550	\$2,343,575	\$338,519	\$199,205	\$141,396	\$104,159	\$65,152	\$22,498
2023 Actual	\$99,276	\$9,984,250	\$1,165,924	\$391,962	\$222,015	\$138,466	\$76,056	\$24,472
2023 without Shareholder Capitalism	\$99,276	\$3,661,078	\$528,824	\$311,193	\$220,885	\$162,715	\$101,778	\$35,146
Average Increase for 90% of Taxpayers						<u>18%</u>	<u>34%</u>	<u>44%</u>

Comments:

1980 Actual Income distribution reflects the fair income sharing and economically high performing results of an actual GINI Index of 35

2023 Actual Income distribution reflects the unfair income sharing and economically low performing results of an actual GINI Index of 42

2023 Income without Shareholder Capitalism reflects the fair income sharing as if a GINI Index of 35 had been maintained, but does reflect the benefit of a higher performing economy that would have resulted if a GINI Index of 35 had actually been maintained. If it had been, everyone would have higher incomes.

Notes:

1. The 1980 and 2023 Actual income and number of tax returns information was obtained from the IRS Data Tables found at the Tax Foundation website:

www.taxfoundation.org/publications/latest-federal-income-tax-data/

2. The 1980 CPI adjustment was calculated at the Bureau of Labor Statistics website:

www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

3. The 2023 Income without Shareholder Capitalism was calculated by using the actual total income for 2023 and allocating it to each taxpayer group by the actual income allocation ratio of each group in 1980 and dividing the reallocated income by group by the actual 2023 number of tax returns in those groups

4. An Excel file with worksheets reflecting all data sources and calculations for the income and after-tax income information presented in the Common Sense booklet, Appendix A, and above is available at the Informed Citizens website:

www.informedcitizens.com/data

INFORMED CITIZENS COMMISSION

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FOR A SUCCESSFUL AMERICA

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
1. Introduction	2
2. Goals and Objectives	3
3. Organization	4
4. Commissioners	6
5. Citizens Research Services Division	7
6. Employee Information Division	9
7. Voter Information Division	11
8. Support Offices	14
9. Operations	15

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Introduction

The income gap between those in the top 10% and everyone else has been growing over the past 40 years and is continuing to grow now. With the benefits from the projected increases in productivity resulting from AI, robotics, and other technological advancements going to the top 10%, the gap will grow even faster. This combined with a lack of trust in the establishment caused by political lying and misinformation, has led to polarization, social unrest, and the rise of authoritarianism and socialism.

On average, people in the top 10% have greater skills and abilities than those in the 90% and therefore with the reduction in regulatory controls and social norms that occurred over the past 40 years, their human nature instincts of putting their self-interests first have resulted in an excess of economic and political influence over the 90%. This imbalance of influence has led to the incomes of the 90% not keeping up with America's prosperity and falling far behind the incomes of those in the top 10%. As a result, they don't believe they are being treated fairly. In addition, many Americans in the 90% are having trouble making ends meet while watching the income and wealth of those at the top increase to unnecessarily high levels. Almost all agree that our economic systems are only working well for those at the very top.

Most Americans no longer believe that politicians, the government, or the establishment are working for them. Political lying and misuse of information (“spin” or “messaging”) to win elections, rather than honestly evaluating the challenges Americans are facing and addressing them, has led to an increasing lack of trust.

The current economic unfairness, lack of trust in the establishment, polarization, and social unrest trends are unsustainable. The only question is whether we will address them with rational intervention, or whether it will take a catastrophe or catastrophes as it did in the early 20th century (great depression and world wars), which was the last time the imbalance in the U.S. income was as high as it is today and the trends as negative as they are today, to reverse these trends and lead to the fair income sharing and high economic performance that America enjoyed throughout the middle decades of the 20th century.

Balancing the interests of all people will allow us to reduce the risk of a catastrophic event. Honesty and transparency about our economic and political challenges and opportunities is essential to allow the will of the people to effect the changes required to balance those interests. Accurate and meaningful information is essential for honesty and transparency.

The Informed Citizens Commission will ensure accurate and meaningful economic, political, and social information for all citizens in order to generate the public, political, market, and peer pressure required to create a Successful America with a government that represents everyone, an economy that benefits everyone, and a society that respects everyone.

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Goals

A Successful America with:

- A Government that Represents Everyone
- An Economy that Benefits Everyone
- A Society that Respects Everyone

Objectives

Ensure accurate and meaningful business, political, and social issues and guidelines information for elected representatives and citizens so they are better able to appreciate the interests and beliefs of others and create a society that respects everyone.

Ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information for employees so that they can choose corporations that balance the interests of the top 10% of Americans (shareholders) and the 90% (employees and consumers) to achieve maximum economic fairness and efficiency with:

- Corporate goals that balance the interests of the shareholders, employees, and consumers
- Corporate board representation that balances the interests of the shareholders, employees, and consumers
- Management compensation that is tied to achieving goals that balance the interests of shareholders, employees, and consumers (*eliminate management shareholder equity compensation because it prioritizes shareholder interests over the interests of employees and consumers*)

Ensure accurate and meaningful candidate information for voters so that they elect qualified and trustworthy leaders who will balance their own self-interests with citizens’ interests and will enact balanced legislation that minimizes challenges and maximizes opportunities for all citizens and that:

- Balance the economic interests of the top 10% of Americans with those of the 90%
- Prioritize honesty and transparency on the part of politicians and business leaders
- Ensure campaign financing results in balanced solutions for all citizens (*eliminate large, special interest campaign funding because it prioritizes the interests of those providing the funding over the interests of all citizens*)

Note: The candidate and corporate information reporting objectives may change based upon the information and perspectives developed by the Citizens Research Services Division (see the Citizens Research Services Division below).

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Organization

The Informed Citizens Commission would be organized to achieve its Goals and Objectives, as follows:

- **Commissioners** are citizen volunteers who support the Goals and Objectives above to review regulations and reporting proposed by the Citizens Research Services Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Voter Information Division, and approve, disapprove, request revisions, or request further information on those regulations and reporting proposals
- **Citizens Research Services Division** to ensure accurate and meaningful issues and guidelines information for elected representatives and citizens so that they can better appreciate the interests and beliefs of others and achieve a society that respects everyone
- **An Employee Information Division** to ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information for employees so that they can choose corporations that will achieve a fair and efficient economy that benefits everyone
- **A Voter Information Division** to ensure accurate and meaningful candidate information for voters so that they can elect qualified and trustworthy leaders who will enact balanced legislation and achieve a fair and efficient government that represents everyone
- **Support Offices** to support Commissioners and the staff of the Citizens Research Services Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Voter Information Division

Independence. The Informed Citizens Commission would be an independent, non-partisan agency with rotating citizen volunteer Commissioners. Rotating citizen volunteers would ensure the Informed Citizens Commission’s independence. Independence is critical to develop citizens’ trust and overcoming the lack of trust of current leaders and the establishment. Any attempt to influence inappropriately the selection process or decisions of a Commissioner or any employee of the Citizens Research Services Division, the Employee Information Division, the Voter Information Division, or Support Office, would be a crime punishable by a minimum of 1 year to up to 15 years in prison. The budget for the Informed Citizens Commission would be reviewed and approved directly by Congress to provide independence from the Administrative branch of government. The Informed Citizens Commission would be able to enforce its regulations itself through civil lawsuits that could result in fines, injunctions, barring business leaders from serving as corporate officers or directors and political leaders from running for public office and could refer willful or severe fraudulent misconduct to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution.

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State Informed Citizens Commissions. States would enact their own Informed Citizens Commissions with similar Goals, Objectives, and Organization to the federal one, as modified to address the state issues and guidelines and voter and employee reporting requirements.

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Commissioners

The responsibilities of the Commissioners would be to review issues and guidelines and reporting requirements proposed by the Citizens Research Services Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Voter Information Division, consider whether they will accomplish the Goals and Objectives of the Informed Citizens Commission, and approve, disapprove, request revisions, or request further information on those proposals. Consideration would be given by the professional staff within each division and the Commissioners for each proposal of the extent and timeframe that achieves the best long-term economic, political, and social outcomes while alleviating adverse short-term effects.

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 Informed Citizens Commission 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 Goals and Objectives of the Informed Citizens Commission and the Commissioners’ responsibilities.

Random selections would be made from the questionnaires submitted for screening. The screening would be done by federal judges as they do for their juries. Citizens would be excused by the judge if they showed clear bias or could not fulfil the responsibilities of the Commissioners. Rotating judges would provide this service, each judge screening for approximately 50 Commissioners each year. In total, 900 Commissioners would be selected by approximately 18 judges 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 300 new Commissioners will be selected using the same review process as the initial one. The Commissioners could vote to remove any Commissioner whom they determine is not committed to the Commissioner’s responsibilities. Commissioners would be expected to be available for one to five days per month. Commissioners’ employers would be required to provide those days off as unpaid service days. They would be paid by the Informed Citizens Commission at their current employer compensation rate for their time worked.

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Citizens Research Services Division

The Citizens Research Services Division would be responsible for researching and recommending to the Commissioners the following:

- 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)
- High-level guidelines for macro and fundamental solutions to those issues that would include potential timeframes to realize outcomes, which could be years or even decades
- Methods to measure those solutions and the results of those measurements
- Suggestions for legislation and/or constitutional amendments to implement those solutions; where possible, legislation that addresses an issue in part together with amendment suggestions
- Evaluations of proposed legislation and/or constitutional amendments for those suggestions

Organization. The Citizens Research Services Division would assume the responsibilities and staff of the Congressional Research Services agency. 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 Citizens Research Services Division would continue to provide research services for members of Congress, but no longer on a confidential basis. All research performed for Congress and the Informed Citizens Commission would be available for public review on a Citizens Research Services Division website. Being part of the Informed Citizens Commission provides political independence, which is essential to its job of balancing the knowledge and experience of those on the left and right and those in the top 10% and the 90% to achieve the most balanced solutions to issues that Americans face and opportunities with which they are presented.

Reporting. The following are examples of issues that the Citizens Research Services Division would consider researching and reporting on information and guidelines:

- **Economy:** The purpose of an economy and therefore, each business within the economy and its financial markets, and goals for accomplishing that purpose. Objectives and targets that would achieve those goals for the following:
 - Corporation, board, and management goals and incentive compensation plans
 - Top 10% Share of U.S. Income
 - 90% Share of U.S. Income
 - U.S. GINI Index
 - Tax rates

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- Risk Weighted Equity Returns
 - Long-term Interest Rates
 - Inflation Rate
 - GDP Growth Rate
 - Federal Debt to GDP Ratio
 - Deficit to Change in GDP Ratio
- **Government:** The purpose of the government and therefore, elected representatives within government, and goals for accomplishing that purpose. Objectives and targets that would achieve those goals for the following:
 - Campaign Finance
 - Primary Elections
 - General Elections
 - Voting Districts
 - Political Honesty and Transparency
 - Candidate Reporting Information
 - Campaign Advertising
 - Voting
 - Voter Participation
 - Vote for President
 - Voter representation in Senate
 - Legislative Operations
- **Education and healthcare**
- **Racial, legal, and criminal justice**
- **Environmental responsibility**
- **Physical and cyber security**
- **Globalization and international affairs**

Information Access. The Citizens Research Services Division would provide, and update as necessary, all reporting required in a sufficiently summarized format to be useful for all citizens and in a sufficiently detailed format to be useful for those who require a more detailed format. Both reporting formats would be made available on a Citizens Research Services Division website that would be available to all citizens.

Citizen Information and Perspectives Input. The Citizens Research Services Division would seek input, via surveys and website input portal, from all citizens on their perspectives on issues and potential guidelines to consider those and prepare reporting that is most responsive and helpful for all citizens. The staff would use AI, with appropriate review and controls, to summarize and evaluate the feedback received from the public.

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Employee Information Division

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

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 that employees have accurate and meaningful 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. 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, and shareholders)
 - Board representation and how it is balanced for the interests of all participants (employees, consumers, 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
 - Explanation of why there are shareholder equity compensation plans, if any, and when those plans will be replaced with plans that balance the interests of all participants
- **Management and Employee Compensation**
 - CEO and senior management compensation compared with average compensation for groups of employees, along with ratios of the CEO and senior management compensation to each group of employees’ average compensation
 - 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 reporting information required in both a sufficiently summarized format to be useful for all employees and potential employees, as well as a sufficiently detailed format to

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be useful for those employees and potential employees who require a more detailed format. 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.

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Voter Information Division

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

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 that voters have accurate and meaningful information from candidates to elect the most qualified and trustworthy 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. In addition, the Voter Information Division would assume the responsibilities and staff of the Federal Election Commission. The Federal Election Commission is an independent regulatory agency with responsibility for public disclosure of, and enforcing restrictions on, campaign financing for federal elections, overseeing and administering the public funding of presidential campaigns, and providing public information on campaign finance regulations. Being part of the Informed Citizens Commission provides greater political independence, which is essential to be able to do its job of balancing the interests of those on the left and right and those in the upper class and working class.

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 and certification of honesty and transparency**
 - Positions on key issues and balanced solutions to address those issues, including those recommended by the Citizens Research Services Division
 - Position on establishing a law that prohibits politicians from lying about elections
 - Regular certifications that all public statements made since the last filing were materially true, the whole truth, and nothing by the truth (provable, intentional violations would lead to either suggestions for clarification, requirements for clarifications, small fines, large fines, exclusion from public office, or prison time)

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

Information Access. The Voter Information Division would require candidates to provide, and update as necessary, all required candidate information reporting in a sufficiently summarized format to be useful for all eligible voters and in a sufficiently detailed format to be useful for those eligible voters who require a more detailed format. Both reporting formats would be made available on the candidate's website and 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 for examples). 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 provide the Citizens Research Services Division with any recommendations 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) honesty 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 after elected officials' terms.

Use of Candidate Information. The Voter Information Division would also be responsible for developing and recommending to the Commissioners 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. The following are sample candidate evaluation criteria:

- **Integrity, honesty, and transparency**
 - Positive ads, based on record, which do not attack opponent or opponent's 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

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- **Enact balanced approaches to challenges and opportunities**
 - Short-term and long-term effects
 - Top 10% and 90% of Americans interests
 - Citizens Research Services Division guideline recommendations

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 approved individual and team candidate evaluation processes, procedures, and forms, as well as suggested evaluation criteria approved by the Commission (see informedcitizens.com/candidate-reviews for an example).

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Support Offices

The support offices would be responsible for providing support for the Commissioners and the staff of the Citizens Research Services Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Voter Information Division in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

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. An independent recruiting firm would identify and recommend Support Office CEO candidates, and the Commissioners would select a CEO from the candidates presented. The CEO would then select a recruiting firm or firms to identify candidates for leadership positions in the Employee Information Division, the Voter Information Division, Citizens Research Services Division, and each Support Office, and would recommend and present leaders from the candidates presented to the Commissioners for approval.

Remote Operations. The Commissioners would work remotely with support, coordination, and controls provided by the support offices employees. Each Commissioner would be provided with a computer and secure access.

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Operations

Staff Research. The staff of the Citizens Research Services Division, the Employee Information Division, and the Voter Information Division would research all sources of information and engage advisors to identify accurate and meaningful information on each key issue and guideline and each candidate and corporate reporting requirement to be recommended to the Commissioners, considering an appropriate balance of the cost and benefit of each. The staff would use the support offices as necessary. The staff would also survey economists, sociologists, political scientists, business leaders, community leaders, etc., as necessary. The surveys would include most, if not all, leading participants in the field being surveyed. The results of all surveys would be publicly available on the Informed Citizens Commission website. The staff would prepare draft reporting requirements and make them available for public comments. Comments would be considered when preparing the reporting recommendations.

Public Review, Comments, and Ratings. The issues and guidelines and corporation and candidate reporting requirements recommendations would be presented to the public in two formats: sufficiently summarized as to be useful for all citizens, as well as sufficiently detailed for maximum benefit for the most sophisticated citizens. The public would have sufficient opportunity to review the reporting requirement recommendations and provide their opinions via a rating system and comments on whether they achieve the Informed Citizens Commission Goals and Objectives. The staff would make use of AI, with appropriate review and controls, to summarize and evaluate the feedback received from the public and use this information to either revise its recommendations or prepare responsive information and perspectives to communicate the reasons for and benefits of the recommendations once approved.

Commission Approval Process. The key issue and guideline and reporting requirement recommendations and public ratings and summarized comments would be presented to the Commissioners in two formats: sufficiently summarized as 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 recommendations approved.

Annual Surveys. The Commissioners, Division and Support Office staff, special interest groups, think tanks, and the public in general, would be surveyed annually on current regulations, suggestions for new regulations, the Informed Citizens Commission operating process, and the participants, etc. The results of the surveys would be evaluated and summarized by AI, with appropriate reviews and controls, and would be made public and would be considered by Informed Citizens Commission personnel for changes required.

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Annual Report. The support offices staff would prepare an Annual Report to the Commissioners and public that would be available to the public. The Annual Report would include accomplishments that support the Goals and Objectives of the Informed Citizens Commission for the prior year; political, economic, and social trends; and goals and operating plan for the upcoming year.

Use of Technology. The Staff would make maximum use of technology to ensure accomplishment of the Goals and Objectives of the Informed Citizens Commission: 1) collection of citizens information and perspectives via surveys, portal access points, and use of AI, with appropriate reviews and controls, to analyze large quantities of citizen information and perspectives, and 2) distribution of citizen information and perspectives collected and analyzed, together with Informed Citizens Commission information, perspectives, and recommendations.