



# **COMMON SENSE FOR A SUCCESSFUL AMERICA**

**ACCURATE AND MEANINGFUL INFORMATION, BALANCED PERSPECTIVES,  
AND TRUTH AND TRANSPARENCY FOR A SUCCESSFUL AMERICA**

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March 2026

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### Author's Preface

When I retired almost 8 years ago, 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 result in better leaders and solutions to issues. All three have come together in this pamphlet.

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 its challenges and maximize its opportunities. I believe the same is true for a Successful America.

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 whose goals were to address 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 macro and fundamental changes to both our political and economic systems.

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, skills, experiences, and environments. The result is different 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 interests.

A running buddy of mine used to say as we approached a steep hill - "every challenge is an opportunity to excel!" When I face a challenge in life I like to think of this saying and look for opportunities to excel. I hope each of you experience the same joy and happiness in your lives that I have in mine and that your challenges become "opportunities to excel" for you as they have for me.

## Introduction

Common Sense by Thomas Paine was published in February 1776. Its purpose was to persuade the American people of the need for independence and the establishment of a democratic republic. It paved the way for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

The most fundamental principles of the Declaration of Independence were:

- All people are equal
- All people are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
- Governments derive their powers from their people
- The people have the right to alter their government to ensure their happiness

The most fundamental principle of the Constitution was:

- Governments are to ensure justice, tranquility, general welfare, and liberty for their people

Common Sense for a Successful America is being published 250 years later. Its purpose is to persuade the American people of the need and opportunity to modify America's culture and systems to achieve a fair economic and political balance between the upper class and working class and balanced solutions for social issues, all in accordance with our founders' fundamental principles.

The upper class has had control over the working class throughout the first 250 years of America's history, as has been the case throughout human history. The economic impact of that control on the working class has ebbed and flowed many times. We are currently at a point where that control is having a significantly negative impact on the working class. Each such point in both American and human history has led to a catastrophic event (usually a revolution or war) to improve the balance.

Effectively balancing the interests of all of the people in our government, economy, and society would allow us to avoid a catastrophic event and provide the most effective checks and balances against the interests of a few dominating the interests of all in the future. Honestly and effectively pursuing and embracing the will of all of the people will lead to achieving that balance of 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 effectively reflect and benefit from the full potential of embracing the will of "all" of the people and to achieve a huge leap forward toward a true democratic government, a real free and fair market economy, and a just and respectful society.

This pamphlet provides common sense information and perspectives on the challenges America faces today, the opportunities it has, and a foundation upon which it can build a Successful America.

## Business and the Economy

### Purpose of Business and the Economy

The purpose of an economy is to efficiently and effectively generate the maximum goods and services and allocate those goods and services in the fairest manner possible to support that system.

### Capitalism

Capitalism is the private ownership of capital for investments. Socialism is the 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 for maximizing economic benefits for all. However, without sufficient checks and balances, capitalism can result in imbalances of power and benefits and therefore not be an effective and efficient economic system.

America has established sufficient checks and balances for free and fair capital markets and for free and fair corporate competition. Although America has established some checks and balances for employment and consumer markets, they have not been sufficient to create free and fair markets. The result is an economy where shareholders have an unfair influence over corporations and corporations have an unfair influence over employees and consumers (shareholder capitalism).

### Shareholder Capitalism

America's shareholder capitalism has led to the goal of corporations (and therefore the economy) being to maximize profits for shareholders. In order to maximize profits for shareholders, corporations must keep wages for employees as low as possible and keep prices for products and services as high as possible, while keeping the quality of products and services as low as possible.

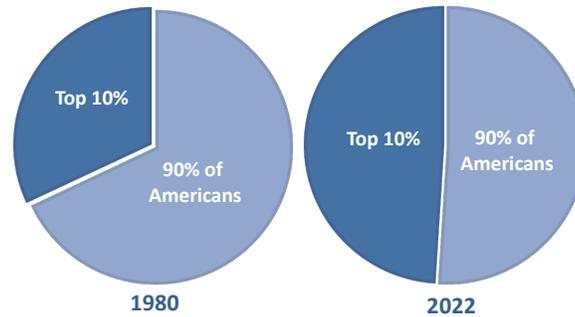
Management is incentivized to accomplish the goal of maximizing profits for shareholders by having the majority of their compensation tied to gains in the value of the shares of the corporation. The top 10% of the population (the upper class) owns 90% of all shares. The remaining 90% of the population are employees and consumers. The result has been an unfair and economically inefficient shift of income from the working class to the upper class over the past forty years.

### Shift in US Income

Shareholder capitalism has led to lower wages, higher prices, and lower quality of products and services for the working class which have resulted in today's "affordability" crisis. Shareholder capitalism has also led to significant increases in prosperity for the upper class. Together these have created a sense of unfairness that is causing America's current, significant political and social unrest.

America's working class has seen its share of the total US income decline from 68% to 51% over the past 40 years. The cumulative impact is over \$40 trillion. The 2022 impact alone was \$2.5 trillion.

## Share of US Income



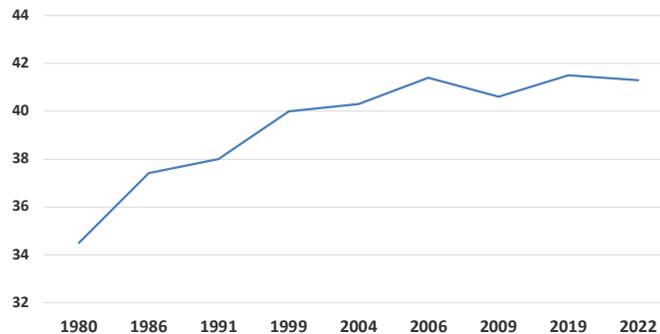
Without this unnecessary shift in income, every person in the working class (90% of Americans) would have 35% higher incomes today. See Attachment A for more information on the impact of shareholder capitalism on the distribution of US income by taxpayer group over the past 40 years.

### Impact on US Economy

The International Monetary Fund uses the GINI Coefficient to measure the level of income sharing between the upper class and working class of countries around the world. A GINI Coefficient level of 35 results in maximum economic growth and prosperity by achieving a sharing of income to the upper class that maximizes supply of capital and income to the working class that maximizes demand for goods and services.

The America's GINI Coefficient has been steadily increasing over the past forty years from 35 to 42, reflecting a steadily increasing imbalance of income between the upper class and the working class and therefore an increasingly inefficient and underperforming economy.

## US GINI Index Excess Income to the Upper Class



**1980** - Maximum Economic Activity and Higher GDP Growth

**2022** - Lower Economic Activity and Lower GDP Growth

The average GINI Coefficient of the remaining 14 of the world's 15 largest economies is 36, reflecting more efficient and higher performing economies in those countries.

The disproportionate share of US income going to the upper class has led to excessive capital supply. The result is excessive income available to the upper class which has led to significant, not economically supported, price increases of high end assets (stocks driven by increasing PE multiples, upper class real estate, crypto currencies, etc.).

The working class use a greater percentage of their income for consumer purchases than the upper class. Since consumer purchases drive economic activity, the significant shift in income from the working class has limited US economic growth and therefore the prosperity of the country.

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

In order to achieve maximum sustainable economic growth, America needs to achieve a balance of income between the upper class for capital requirements and working class for consumer demand.

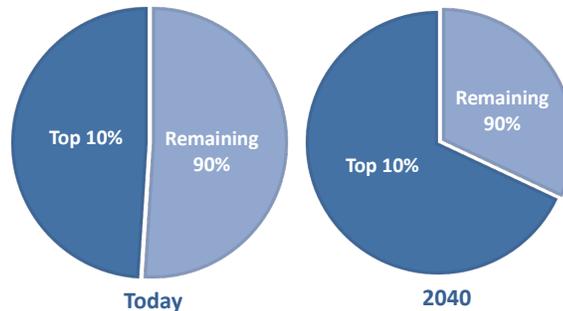
### **Impact on the Free Press**

Mainstream media and social media (the "free press") are 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 mainstream media and social media corporations 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. As a result, the increasing social and political unrest and divisiveness are made worse by mainstream media and social media goals of maximizing profits for the benefits of their shareholders.

### **Continuing Shift in US Income**

Over the past decade, the share of the increases in US income (i.e., America's prosperity) going to the working class has averaged 40%. This is resulting in the current share of US income going to the working class of 51% to continue to decline. Without significant changes to America's shareholder capitalism culture, the past forty year economic trends will not only continue but will accelerate with the benefits of increases in efficiencies generated by AI and robotics going to the upper class.

## Projected Share of US Income



Achieving this projection is unlikely. The only question is will we avoid it with rational intervention, or will it take a catastrophe or catastrophe's as it did in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (great depression and world war), which was the last time the imbalance in the US income was as high as it is today and the trends as negative, to reverse those trends and lead to the fair and efficient income sharing America enjoyed throughout the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Summary

Shareholder capitalism's goal of maximizing shareholder interests has led to an unfair, inefficient, and unsustainable economy, political polarization, and social unrest.

Our economic system will not change on its own. Human nature is to do what's in our own self-interest. Our economic system must provide a balance of human nature so that it works for all, not just those at the top. A free and fair market system for working class markets (i.e., employment, consumer, and community) and upper class markets (i.e., shareholder and business) with sufficient, but not excessive, regulations that provide the goals, incentives, and guardrails for fair competition is the only way to balance the human nature trait of doing what's in our own self-interests.

## Politics and Government

### Purpose of Government

The purpose of government is to ensure the fair pursuit of happiness for all its citizens by providing rules and regulations that result in the fair balancing of liberal and conservative beliefs and a fair and efficient balancing of economic interests of all citizens, as well as providing for citizens' security.

### Misuse of Information

Politicians use misinformation (lack of information, partial information, spin, and lies) to get votes. Liberal and conservative politicians support and/or attack social issues that energize their voters. The result is elected leaders who must support their extreme positions, rather than compromise to find solutions that are balanced for the interests of all, and therefore a government in gridlock.

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

Today there is an imbalance of influence by the upper class on political leaders which is benefiting the upper class and negatively impacting the working class. The result is working class voters assume there is a "deep state" controlling the establishment and that elections are rigged against them. Working class voters have lost faith in political leaders and democracy. They know the political and economic systems aren't working for them. They have turned to authoritarianism in frustration.

There are currently two political paths being pursued to overcome the current authoritarianism:

- Return to existing political and economic systems
- Modify existing political and economic systems with progressive/socialist policies

Neither path will address the macro and fundamental challenges caused by shareholder capitalism.

### Impact of Shareholder Capitalism

Under shareholder capitalism the purpose of a corporation, and therefore the economy, is to maximize profits to maximize shareholder value. Corporate goals and management incentive compensation plans are tied to that purpose. As a result, corporation shareholders, board members, and managers use their influence to persuade politicians to enact laws and enforce regulations that are to the benefit of corporations to enable them to maximize profits and their shareholders' value. The impact is that the working class interests (employees and consumers) are negatively affected.

Shareholder capitalism has also negatively affected America's international relations. America's businesses and government put profits for shareholders over other countries' interests. We have established the purpose of both our economy and our government as being to make the wealthy wealthier, at the expense of the working class and interests of others around the world.

### **Summary**

The working class being left behind politically, economically, and socially has led to a loss of faith in democracy and support for authoritarianism. America's political and economic systems are so intertwined that substantive political reforms are not possible without macro and fundamental changes to both our political and economic systems. Embracing democracy, free and fair economy, and ensuring accurately and meaningfully informed voters and employees is the only way to evolve America from near authoritarianism to progressing toward a true representative democracy.

## Society and its Citizens

### **Purpose of Society**

The purpose of society is to organize the interactions of its members for the best interests of all. Those interactions require a government to establish and enforce rules and an economy to determine how goods and services are created and fairly distributed to all members of society.

### **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.

Beliefs will be influenced by our need to prioritize our short-term self-interests over those of others. Prioritization of short-term self-interests is a fundamental aspect of human nature (survival instinct). Our beliefs lead to feeling that others that don't share our beliefs as being less than us and the need to control what happens in accordance with our beliefs. We create perspectives on issues that fit our beliefs and achieve what is in our own self-interests.

### **Upper Class Beliefs Today**

The upper class believe that the US economy is doing very well based on the following:

- Their incomes are high and growing
- GDP growth is high
- Stocks, crypto currencies, and other high end asset prices are high and increasing
- Working class incomes are higher than most other countries

They believe America's economic success is the result of shareholder capitalism and the fiduciary duty of corporations, their boards, and CEOs to maximize profits for the benefit of shareholders. They believe that democracy and the rule of law are the foundation for America's success.

The upper class believe that politicians need to "craft" messaging to convince the working class to vote to maintain the status quo. The political messaging on working class affordability has been:

- Immigrants are taking your high paying jobs
- China is taking your high paying jobs
- Inflation is causing your inability to support your family

Upper class liberals believe liberal views (e.g., financial, legal, religious, social, etc.) and liberal initiatives (e.g. DEI, BLM, gay rights, abortion, gun safety, etc.) are good and justify win at all costs politics. They believe gerrymandering and closed primaries are justified to win against opponents. They use political beliefs messaging to get votes. They see white working class males as racist, sexist, and homophobic. They don't understand how the white working class could support Trump, an anti-democratic, self-serving liar.

Upper class conservatives believe conservative views (e.g., financial, legal, religious, social, etc.) and conservative initiatives (e.g., abortion, gun rights, immigration, etc.) are good. They believe gerrymandering and closed primaries are justified to win against opponents. They use political beliefs messaging to get votes. They support Trump as a counter to liberal upper class views and initiatives. They don't believe he will actually be able to overthrow democracy and install a strongman autocracy in America. They believe low unemployment and modest gains in income for the working class should be sufficient.

### **Working Class Beliefs Today**

The working class know there is something wrong but are unable to see the flaws in the systems. They are left to believe that there is a "deep state" or "cabal of pedophiles" controlling the economy and government for their own self-interests at the expense of the working class.

The working class believe the US economy is not doing well based on the following:

- Their incomes are low, not growing, and not sufficient to support their families
- GDP growth does not impact them
- Stock market, crypto, and other high end asset price increases do not impact them
- Their incomes relative to other countries' working class aren't important to them

The working class believe the upper class has been dishonest. They see political messaging as promises without delivering results. They see the upper class as getting ahead while leaving the working class behind. The working class believe the upper class is arrogant and condescending because of unfulfilled promises and the working class continuing economic struggles.

They believe there has been election fraud because the results of elections have benefited the upper class over the working class. They blame the democrats more than the republicans due to their large role in recent decades.

Working class women's participation in the workforce has increased. They have seen gains in their income relative to men, but they still only make 80% of what a man makes for the same job. Working class males have seen a decline in both employment participation and income relative to women. They have become more dependent on their spouses to provide support for their families. Black and white men both see the other race in the upper class getting ahead and therefore believe they are in the working class as well, which they are not.

The white working class believe liberal initiatives (e.g., DEI, BLM, Gay Rights, etc.) are part of why they are being left behind economically, politically, and socially by the upper class. They believe in legal, religious, social, but not financial, conservative views. They support Trump as a counter to liberal upper class views and actions.

Working class have given up on democracy and capitalism and have turned to authoritarianism as their best hope for a better economic future, creating serious political and economic risks. The working class believe democracy and rule of law have been used to leave them behind. They support Trump to clean house and create a government that takes care of the working class.

## Balance of Interests

Balancing all individual interests and perspectives is the only way to function successfully as a society. The complete and honest consideration of all aspects of issues prior to determining a solution that best meets the interests of all people is required to find balance.

Following groups' interests require balance:

- Upper class and working class
- Urban and rural
- Conservatives and liberals
- Old and young
- White and non-white
- Christians, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, etc.

Short-term and long-term perspectives also require balance. Our self-interests are more important in the short term (food, shelter, safety, family, etc.), but the common good is important in the long term for our long-term self-interest.

## Shared Values

Shared values are fundamental to society being able to balance its citizens' fair pursuit of happiness. Following are shared values and principles which are fundamental to a successful society:

- Human Rights
  - Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all
  - Equal social, civil, and legal justice for all
  - Freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition
- Beliefs
  - In honesty, transparency, integrity, and right over wrong
  - In treating others as we want them to treat us
  - Faith in the goodness of God
  - Faith in the goodness of people through our faith in the goodness of God
- Free Market Economy
  - Efficient and effective economic activity for meeting the needs of society
  - Sufficient income for the upper class to fund business investment
  - Sufficient income for the working class to fund economic activity
  - Sufficient income for social issues (healthcare, retirement, etc.)
  - Sufficient transparency of information to maximize efficient free and fair markets
- Democracy
  - Governance of the people, by the people and for the people
  - Separation of church and state, but retain a faith in the goodness of God
  - Separation of powers within the federal government
  - Separation of powers between the federal and state governments
  - Security and wellbeing (physical, digital, health, etc.)
  - Sufficient transparency of information to maximize effective elections

## Common Sense

No matter the skills, abilities, or experiences, all people have a heart, love for children, and belief in fair play and right versus wrong. Shared values, faith in God, and faith in the goodness of people can only surface if people believe their political and business leaders are treating them fairly.

Faith in the goodness of God is important to most people. Religions help us to understand that faith. Each religion has developed from different cultures seeking to understand the greater good through God. The fact that they have developed with different approaches is understandable. Fundamental to each religion is the belief in treating others as you would have others treat you. Accomplishing that is done by seeking the common good through the pursuit of truth and balance in all things.

### **Summary**

There have been many advances in education, science, technology, communications, and Information availability over the past few decades that have had significant impacts on our social, political, and business environments. Further advances in those areas, along with the fundamentals of who we are as a collective people, provide us with the opportunity to realize America's potential.

America is the melting pot of the world. America's diversity of race, nationality, culture, and religion provides our challenges and opportunity. It is the foundation upon which to build a great country and become an example for the world. America has had a positive impact on world affairs for 80 years and has the potential to have an even greater, more positive impact in the future. A true representative democracy is a great political system with which to fulfill America's potential. A free and fair market economy is a great economic system with which to provide for America's prosperity.

Citizens can't individually, or in groups, solve the issues facing government, business, and society. Citizens can collectively establish shared values and demand that political and business leaders find solutions to issues based on those shared values and that are balanced for the best interests of all.

## A Successful America

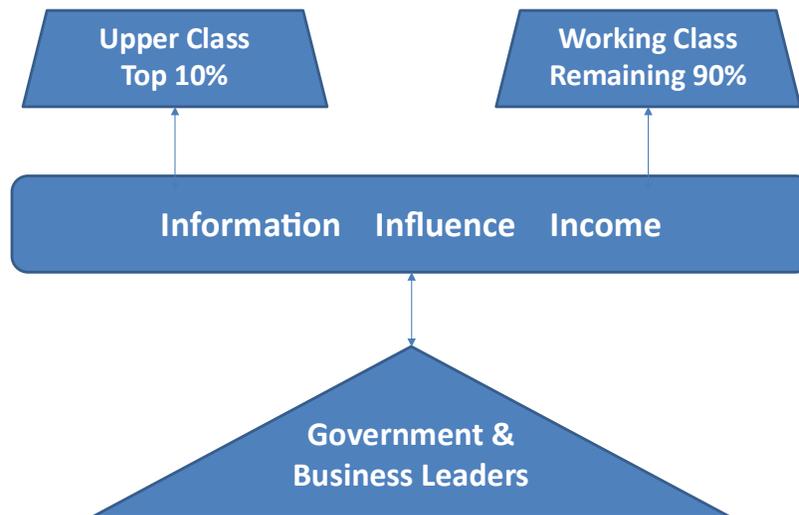
A Successful America is one where:

- Corporations balance the interests of the upper class (shareholders) and the working class (employees and consumers) to achieve maximum economic fairness and efficiency
- Voters elect candidates for public office with the best qualifications for the role and the goal of balancing the interests of all citizens
- Citizens respect the rights of others who are different, or hold different beliefs on issues, and accept the need to balance those differences for the common good

### Informed Citizens

America was formed on the belief that free and fair, but government regulated, economic and political markets would result in the best solutions for the challenges and opportunities of society. Government regulations are required to balance influence and income for free and fair markets. Information is the foundation of influence and income. Accurate and meaningful information sharing is required for free and fair markets.

## Equal Access to Information Balances Influence and Income



Only the government can ensure a fair sharing of accurate and meaningful information and only citizens can ensure independence of the government.

## An Informed Citizens Commission

### Purpose:

**Truth and transparency** to determine the best collective will of the people

**Balance** for a fair and efficient economy and an effective government:

- Balance of racial, religious, and other social group interests
- Balance of upper class and working class interests
- Balance of conservative and liberal beliefs

**Citizen oversight** for independence

### Goals:

**Ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information for employees** so they can choose corporations that create a fair and efficient economy that benefits everyone and provides:

- A fair sharing of America's prosperity with the working class
- Quality products for consumers and social responsibility
- Sufficient, but not excessive returns for shareholders

**Ensure accurate and meaningful candidate information for voters** so they can elect qualified and trustworthy leaders for a government that represents everyone and will:

- Enact balanced laws that work for all people
- Enact guidelines for a balanced economy
- Provide economic and physical security

**Ensure accurate and meaningful issues and guidelines information for citizens** so they can appreciate the viewpoints of others and create a society that respects everyone and elects:

- Trustworthy leaders who will do what's in the best interests of all citizens
- Trustworthy leaders who are honest, transparent, and respect others
- Trustworthy leaders that will result in honest and respectful citizens

### Organization:

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

**An Employee Information Division** to ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information for employees so they can choose corporations that will lead to a fair and efficient economy.

**An Issues and Guidelines Office** to ensure accurate and meaningful issues and guidelines information for elected officials and citizens so they can better appreciate the viewpoints of others leading to better legislation and a society that respects everyone.

See Attachment B for more information on an Informed Citizens Commission.

**Declaration:** To sign a Declaration in support of an Informed Citizens Commission and send an email to your elected representatives go to - [www.informedcitizens.com/sign-the-declaration](http://www.informedcitizens.com/sign-the-declaration)

## A Fair Sharing of US Prosperity

Average Taxpayer								
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Top 0.1%</u>	<u>Next 0.9%</u>	<u>Next 4%</u>	<u>Next 5%</u>	<u>Next 15%</u>	<u>Next 25%</u>	<u>Bottom 50%</u>
1980 Actual Income (CPI adjusted)	\$56,511	\$2,300,737	\$276,941	\$177,140	\$125,735	\$92,622	\$57,935	\$20,006
2022 Actual Income	\$95,915	\$10,909,121	\$1,178,830	\$380,074	\$212,519	\$131,268	\$71,529	\$21,989
Percent Change from 1980 Actual (CPI Adj.)	70%	374%	326%	115%	69%	42%	23%	10%
2022 Shared Prosperity (70% increase for all)	\$95,915	\$3,904,974	\$470,043	\$300,655	\$213,406	\$157,205	\$98,332	\$33,956
<b>Percent Change from 2022 Actual</b>		<b>-64%</b>	<b>-60%</b>	<b>-21%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>54%</b>

**Notes:**

1980 Actual allocation of income among taxpayers was fair and economically efficient as reflected in the 1980 GINI Coefficient of 35

2022 Actual allocation of income among taxpayers was unfair and economically inefficient as reflected in the 2022 GINI Coefficient of 42

2022 Shared Prosperity allocation of income among taxpayers reflects the impact had the US maintained a fair and economically efficient GINI Coefficient of 35

**Attachment B**

# **Informed Citizens Commission**

**“By the People, For the People”**

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

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# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

## **Purpose:**

Truth and transparency to determine the best collective will of the people

Balance for a fair and efficient economy and an effective government:

- Balance of racial, religious, and other social group interests
- Balance of upper class and working class interests
- Balance of conservative and liberal beliefs

Citizen oversight for independence

## **Goals:**

To ensure accurate and meaningful corporate information for employees so they can choose corporations that create a fair and efficient economy that benefits everyone and provides:

- A fair sharing of America's prosperity with the working class
- Quality products for consumers and social responsibility
- Sufficient, but not excessive returns for shareholders

To ensure accurate and meaningful candidate information for voters so they elect qualified and trustworthy leaders that create a government that represents everyone and that will:

- Enact balanced laws that work for all people
- Enact guidelines for a balanced economy
- Provide economic and physical security

To ensure accurate and meaningful issues and guidelines information for citizens so they can appreciate the viewpoints of others and create a society that respects everyone and elects:

- Trustworthy leaders who will do what's in the best interests of all citizens
- Trustworthy leaders who are honest, transparent, and respect others
- Trustworthy leaders that will result in honest and respectful citizens

Accomplishing the above goals requires an approach that will be effective in guiding change via market forces and minimizing potentially abrupt and damaging government intervention.

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

## Summary

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

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

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

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

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

# Informed Citizens Commission

“By the People, For the People”

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

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

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

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

## Voter Information Division

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Employee Information Division

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

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

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

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

## Issues & Guidelines Office

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Advisory Board

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

## Commissioners

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

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

## Support Offices

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

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

## Operations

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

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

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

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

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

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