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THE WAY FORWARD

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I am in awe of this reality we live in. It is amazing to think about the size of the universe; amazing to think how it works; amazing to think how it gives life to so much complexity. How can one not appreciate these wonders? How can we not see the life each of us has been given as a gift? It is a gift; a gift that comes with responsibility; a gift that obligates us to take care of the living fabric of our planet.

We humans are massively failing to meet our obligation. We are not taking care of the Earth. Consider climate change: we humans are responsible. We pump billions of tons of heat trapping pollutants into the atmosphere from our cars, our power plants, even from the food choices we make. The result: higher atmospheric temperatures, rising sea levels, and more extreme weather events, more often. We are cutting down our forests; stripping the life from our oceans, and exploiting our fresh water supplies unsustainably. The soils we depend on are being parched of critical nutrients. We are consuming all the resources nature has given us like there is no tomorrow. There are now 7.6 billion humans on Earth. By 2050, there could be 10

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or even 12 billion humans, all competing for a share of our planet's rapidly diminishing resources. How many humans are too many?

We are supposed to be intelligent beings. We are not behaving that way.

If we make the Earth uninhabitable, where do we go? Some say, 'no problem, we can go live on the Moon or on Mars'. What are those people thinking? At best, we are hundreds of years from that possibility. Even if this was not a fantasy; even if it could happen, have you seen pictures of the Moon and Mars? No air, no food, no water... Who would want to live that way? Isn't it so much easier and smarter just to take care of the planetary home we already have?

There are those who believe it's too late to make things right; too late to avoid civilization scale collapse. I hope that is wrong, but there is no denying, we are already being tested by potentially catastrophic forces like climate change; forces we ourselves have unleashed. It's already happening, and every passing year, it gets worse. How much worse it gets depends on the decisions we make as a global human culture right now. Every moment we delay equates to more suffering, not just for future human generations, but for people alive right now.

About three out of ten people totally get what I am saying. The rest are indifferent, undecided, or stubbornly resistant to science and reason. Those of us who share a progressive world view must engage. We must be the change we know we need. We must be assertive in encouraging those who are out of step to see the light.

Where Do We Start?

Our poor stewardship of the biosphere has consequences. Some of the bad cannot be stopped, but the worst may still be avoidable. Clean, sustainable technologies are emerging or are already here that can be transformative. There are behavioral changes and policy changes we can make that will allow us to reassert thoughtful control over the world we will leave to future generations.

As a first step, beyond the nationalities reflected in our passports, we must begin to see ourselves as citizens of the Earth. Insular thinking does not serve the best interests of society as a whole. Taking proper care of the biosphere must become everyone's cause.

There is reason for optimism. Tens of millions of people around the world are already asserting themselves as Earth citizens. They are engaged in progressive action on a whole range of human challenges. That is a very good thing, but an aggressive focus on a single narrow issue, no matter how worthwhile, is not enough. Women's rights activists, and LGBT activists, and

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animal rights activists, and those fighting for economic fairness must redirect a share of their activist energy to deal with the root cause of our dysfunction.

What is the root cause?

Governance, on a local, national, and global scale, is the way the common good is supposed to be facilitated. But what happens when a small number of bankers, billionaires, and corporate elites are able to use their money and power to pervert our political process? What happens when the common good is trampled by self-absorbed special interests? The answer to those questions is abundantly clear. We see the evidence revealed every day on one issue after another. Everywhere we turn, we find public policy that is shaped to serve private interests over the public good.

Why have we been unable to effectively respond to the unprecedented, planetary scale challenges before us? Here is the one-word answer: corruption.

Governance, politics, the media, finance, health care: all of these arenas have been egregiously corrupted and perverted to favor entrenched big money interests over the public good. He who has the money makes the rules, that is the unfortunate bottom line. As long as we the people accept control by people, whose only interest is self-interest; as long as so many of our fellow human beings remain unaware or indifferent to that fact, life on Earth will remain on a dangerous course.

Healing our world starts with restoring 'Of, By, and For the People' to our governing process. At this moment, our elected congress operates on its own brand of legalized bribery. Our courts, particularly the Supreme Court, are corrupted. Most agencies responsible for managing our government's regulatory functions are in the hands of deeply corrupted industry 'insider' appointees.

In the United States of America, Candidates for elective office at the local, state, and national level cannot get elected without lots and lots of money from corporations, special interest political action groups, and rich campaign donors, all of whom expect allegiance to their narrow agendas in return.

The Supreme Court's 'Citizen's United' decision opened the floodgates for anonymous and essentially limitless campaign contributions for candidates willing to pledge allegiance to their financial underwriters. How does that impact our elections? In way too many cases, it's the candidate with no principles, who takes the political sewer money, that gets elected. It amounts to an undisguised form of legalized bribery.

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How do 'We the People' fight that kind of deeply entrenched corruption? We know it doesn't work to focus only on fighting the symptoms of this political dishonesty. We must get at the root cause. The evidence suggests that the foundation for this particularly American style of corruption lies with two morally bankrupt legal constructs. One is the idea that money equates to free speech. If you have money, you are allowed to run roughshod over the political process; to spend as much as you like to control your own public policy agenda. Thus, we end up with elected officials, who are the finest sycophants money can buy. The Supreme Court gave us 'Money equals Speech' in its 1976 *Buckley vs. Valeo* decision. Congress has never made a law that says 'Money equals Speech' It was imposed by the court, siding with big money interests. In pretty much every other country in the world, money is considered a form of property, not speech.

The second corrosive legal construct has also never been codified in law. It is the idea that corporations are persons under the law. It is not the product of any legislation. Yet, it is accepted as legal precedent, thanks again to the Supreme Court in its 1886, *San Jose vs. Southern Pacific* decision. It was a bad idea then, and it's a bad idea now. Assigning personhood to corporations has led to all kinds of ethically repugnant behavior that elevates corporate self-interest high above the public interest.

Getting rid of 'money equals speech' and 'corporate personhood' would do much to make honorable but poorly funded political candidates more electable. It would also substantially reduce the problem of sewer money in our politics.

How do we citizens breach the formidable roadblocks that make legalized political bribery possible? It turns out, there is already a clear pathway. A non-profit political action group called, [Move to Amend](#) has emerged. Its mission is tightly focused on one very specific goal: to pass a 28th U.S. Constitutional Amendment that would end 'money as speech' and nullify 'Corporate personhood'.

Move to Amend is not the only group that claims to have a remedy for our constitutional malaise. There are other initiatives with different focuses. Most are about turning back the clock on 'Citizens United'. In fact, that is a lame half-measure. The problem is 'Citizens United' is not the primary cause of our broken democracy, it is an exacerbation that makes a bad situation worse. The legal foundation behind 'Citizens United' is the entire focus of *Move to Amend*. A constitutional amendment ending 'money as speech' and 'corporate personhood' would be a colossal game changer. It would be the closest possible thing to a cure for America's political ills.

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No matter the brand of government corruption, *Move to Amend* has the ultimate antidote: a 28th Constitutional Amendment ending 'money as speech' and 'corporate personhood' is the single most important thing that can be done to restore our democracy. Every citizen needs to become part of the grass roots effort to get this accomplished. Every citizen should demand that their elected representatives also stand firmly in favor of this constitutional remedy.

Go to the [Move to Amend](#) website.

Inform yourself and become part of the solution.

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