

Government Reform

True political reform will lead to a stronger U.S and restore the public's trust in our political system.

Problem:

Following the most contentious election season in decades, a wave of self-identified outsiders was elected to office amid cries to “drain the swamp”—clear indicators that Americans desire broad political reform. Congress is simply not performing the job it was elected to do—passing budgets, responsibly managing the nation’s finances, making the decisions necessary to ensure that government functions at a basic level of efficiency.

- Political dysfunction has real, measurable costs: It is preventing the country from solving its very serious problems—an economic recovery that is anemic, a fiscal situation that remains precarious, an immigration system that is broken, and an array of global concerns that test and threaten national security.
- The constant drive to raise money for campaigns and reelections is a major problem, as the time spent legislating suffers when too much time is spent seeking campaign funds.
- Across-the-aisle member interaction has diminished greatly, inhibiting collaboration and an ability to find commonalities in shared interests.
- Communication between the legislative and executive branches continues to be woefully insufficient, further contributing to the heightened partisanship and deep divides.

Solution:

Reducing the debilitating partisanship in Congress and transforming it into a higher-performing institution will not happen overnight—but some steps can be taken to reform our broken political system.

- Coordinating legislative calendars between the House and Senate would make the operations of Congress more efficient.
- Providing additional opportunities—informal gatherings or jointly-held party caucus meetings—for members to interact, especially with their counterparts across the aisle, will help defuse the increasingly toxic discourse on Capitol Hill.
- The administration must also be willing to interact with Congress—institutionalizing regular monthly meetings.
- A strong committee process is necessary: committees should conduct legislative and oversight hearings, marking-up legislation after receiving input from both sides and issuing committee reports.
- Fair and robust floor debate in the House and Senate must be reinstated that allows for debate, amendments and open discourse, followed by formal conference committees to resolve chamber bill differences.

Learn More:

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