



Dear debate moderators,

As former elected officials, we write today to urge you to insist that the presidential candidates discuss specific solutions they would support to solve to the governing crisis spawned by the dominance of money in American politics. We the undersigned are members of the ReFormers Caucus, a bipartisan group of more than 100 former members of Congress and governors who are committed to restoring trust in our democratic institutions by reducing the power of money in politics. By virtue of our experiences in office, we have a unique perspective on the price we all pay under the current political system, and the escalating crisis in governance we now face.

A mere 158 families have provided nearly half of all the money raised so far by presidential candidates. Between 1986 and 2012, the cost of a Senate seat has increased 62 percent, while the cost of a House seat has increased 344 percent. Expenditures by groups that do not disclose their donors has skyrocketed 5,050 percent since 2004. And some experts predict the 2016 elections will cost more than \$10 *billion*.

Americans from across the political spectrum are [extremely concerned with the growing dominance of money in politics](#), which has ballooned into a crisis that threatens the ability of government to function at any level. This fact is borne out in scores of public opinion polls:

- 84 percent of Americans think money has too much power in our system (New York Times/CBS News);
- A third of the country consider the wealthy's influence over electoral outcomes a top concern (Wall Street Journal/NBC News);
- Two-thirds think our politics is dysfunctional (Washington Post/ABC News);
- 72 percent of Americans believe politicians cannot be trusted (Washington Post/ABC News);
- A recent Chapman University study found that more Americans fear corruption of government officials than anything else, including bioterrorism and economic collapse and
- 85 percent support fundamentally changing or completely rebuilding our current campaign finance system (New York Times/CBS News)

Main Street Americans understand the problem, but they also need to hear solutions from their leaders. We are in the process of contacting every presidential campaign, asking them to release a plan that lays out exactly how they will solve our governing crisis.

The presidential debates are some of the best tools voters have to learn about the candidates' positions. We urge you to require all the candidates to articulate their vision for reform: ask questions regarding this country's broken campaign finance system, and hold them accountable for providing not merely token platitudes but substantive policy proposals they will pursue from the Oval Office.

Thank you.

[The ReFormers Caucus](#)