



## **The Great Equalizers: Restoring our Democracy**

Our democracy is at its best when our elected officials are focused on their jobs and operate with the integrity, honesty, and transparency that ensures accountability. Leaders should be listening to the people they represent, not to special interests that influence our elections and legislation through campaign contributions and dark money. In Montana, Steve Bullock has successfully fought the influence of dark money and campaign spending, and he will do the same as President.

**Steve wants to make it so that our elected leaders spend at least half their time in office actually doing their job!** Right now, politicians get elected and immediately turn around and start running for re-election. Steve's proposal will reduce the power of incumbency, the influence of money, and the perpetual candidacies that have our representatives more attentive to donors than voters.

Steve believes that the *Citizens United* ruling -- which opened the door to unlimited corporate spending, Super PACs, and unchecked dark money in our elections -- has eroded the integrity of our elections and made it so that regular folks feel they have no meaningful voice in our system. Steve has taken on Dark Money groups in Montana, and increased transparency in our elections.

Steve believes that the federal government must protect the voting rights of all citizens regardless of race, language proficiency, or previous incarceration. That is how we make certain that our democratic form of government remains a great equalizer.

**All Americans are supposed to be equal at the ballot box.** But unfettered and unaccountable special interest money, constant fundraising, long lines at polling places, unsecure voting machines, gerrymandered districts, and outright voter suppression have eroded confidence in our nation's democracy. America must restore confidence at the ballot box in order for our 243-year experiment in representative democracy to best serve the people.

### **Making Members of Congress Accountable to Constituents - Not to Donors or Lobbyists**

- A MODEST PROPOSAL: **Require our elected leaders to spend at least half their time in office actually doing their job.** Before they are even sworn into office, our Senators and House members start raising money for their next campaign. And when they get to Washington, it's fundraising first, everything else second.<sup>1</sup>
- Rather than spending their time doing their job, listening to constituents, or working with each other, they spend time raising money or listening to the interests that can

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/01/14/the-most-depressing-graphic-for-members-of-congress/>

raise money for them. Incumbents assemble huge war chests and [piles of cash](#), making it almost impossible for challengers to compete.

- Steve has a modest proposal to reduce the influence of money in politics and get more work done in Washington: **Shorten campaigns and make Congress and the President spend half their terms actually doing the job to which they were elected, not raising money.**
  - **Officeholders could not start running for reelection – opening a campaign account or raising money – until at least half their term has been served.** Applies to US Senate (3 years), House (1 year) and the President (2 years).
  - Following a presidential, congressional or Senate election, every campaign account must be closed, and funds may NOT be used or transferred for the next campaign or to run for a different office like President. Leftover cash must be refunded, donated to charity, donated to the presidential matching funds program, or donated to the government for the purposes of deficit reduction.
  - This will require legislation.

#### Adding Transparency and Combating the Corrupting Influence of Money

Steve has spent his career fighting the influence of money in politics and will continue to do so as President. Steve will:

- Require **existing federal government contractors**, and those applying for federal contracts, to **disclose all of their political spending and contributions.**
  - Steve will do this through an executive order.
- Require **non-profit organizations and corporations to certify that no foreign money is used in any of their political spending.**
  - Steve will do this through an executive order.
- Encourage the Securities and Exchange Commission to **require publicly-traded companies to disclose their political spending.**
  - The President appoints the SEC commissioners.
- **Enact the Disclose Act** to bring additional transparency to political contributions and advertising, and adding further prohibitions on foreign money in US elections.
  - Steve will work with Congress on this bill.
- Ban **coordination and loopholes** allowing elected officials and candidates to influence the raising, spending and messaging of **super PACs.**
  - This would require legislation.
- Require any 501(c)4 or 501(c)6 organization that **spends or contributes to influence elections to disclose all spending over \$5,000.**
- Modernize campaign finance laws to require **spending disclosures for online and digital advertising for candidates and outside groups' spending on elections.** Steve will work with Congress to pass legislation.
- Propose a **28th amendment to the Constitution to reverse Citizens United** and set reasonable campaign limits. This will require both Congressional approval and

ratification, but Steve will use the power of the President's bully pulpit to advocate this change.

### **Fixing How Washington Works**

- **Encourage Senate leadership to end the filibuster.** Steve will do this by using the bully pulpit of the Presidency and advocating this with both parties.
- **Prevent Members of Congress from serving on the boards of directors of corporations, associations or nonprofits while serving in office.**

### **Increasing Enforcement:**

- **Get the FEC off the sidelines** by reducing the number of FEC commissioners from six to five so that the Commission cannot deadlock on critical enforcement questions.<sup>2</sup>
  - In the short-term, Steve would only appoint five members to ensure it cannot deadlock. Long term, he would work with Congress to reduce the Commission to five total members.
- **Increase fines for violations and refer more cases for prosecution.**
  - Steve would have the FEC revisit the violation amounts and increase them to match the severity of the violations. He will also increase DOJ's resources for prosecuting campaign finance offenses.

### **Making it Easier to Vote:**

Almost one thousand polling places have been closed nationwide in the last half-decade, according to a Pew report<sup>3</sup>. An April 2018 Bipartisan Policy Center report found that the longest wait times occur in "larger precincts; precincts unable to handle early morning lines; and precincts that are more urban, dense, and have higher minority populations."<sup>4</sup> Effectively, wait times of three or four hours are a form of voter suppression. To shorten wait times, we will:

- Encourage **early and mail-in balloting.**
  - Require states to have a **minimum period of no-excuse early voting, both in-person and absentee, and voters in every state shall be able to register up to, and including, Election Day.**
  - There are still 17 states which have no form of no-excuse early voting. This includes Michigan, with the second largest urban center of the Midwest. A uniform, national early-voting law would help alleviate many of the issues that polling places face on Election Day.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://beta.fec.gov/resources/about-fec/commissioners/ravel/statements/ravelreport\\_feb2017.pdf](https://beta.fec.gov/resources/about-fec/commissioners/ravel/statements/ravelreport_feb2017.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/09/04/polling-places-remain-a-target-ahead-of-november-elections>

<sup>4</sup>

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Improving-The-Voter-Experience-Reducing-Polling-Place-Wait-Times-by-Measuring-Lines-and-Managing-Polling-Place-Resources.pdf>

- **Allow same-day registration** – something only 17 states and DC -- currently offer. Same-day is correlated with higher turnout.<sup>5</sup>
  - This will require Congressional action.
- **Prohibit states from purging voter rolls** simply because registered voters did not vote in previous federal elections.
  - Steve would work with Congress to pass a bill preventing states from purging voter rolls for people who had voted in one of the last 3 federal elections without cause.
- Make **Election Day a national holiday**.
- **Incentivize automatic voter registration**. In the 15 states that have adopted AVR, the results have been overwhelmingly positive -- Oregon adopted AVR in 2016, and since then the number of registrations at the DMV quadrupled.<sup>6</sup>
  - The above two policies will require Congressional action.
- **Improve language access**: Voting is not a privilege solely for those who have already learned English. It is a right of all citizens. But states and localities must do better to ensure that elections officials understand the rights of people with low English proficiency.
  - Steve will have the FEC work with local and state authorities to ensure that citizens can vote regardless of their primary language.
- Ensure that a **tribal ID issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs is accepted by states as an eligible form of documentation** for registration or voting.
  - Steve will have the Department of Justice issue guidance allowing tribal IDs to be used.
- Restore the voting rights of the **6.2 million Americans who were previously convicted of a felony and have served their time**.
  - Steve will work with Congress to enact this national priority.
- Require states and local governments to have **enough polling places to serve their population, including in largely minority areas**.
  - Steve will encourage the DOJ to both investigate and annually publicize, and ensure individuals' voting rights are protected.
- Establish a federal commission to **explore internet-based voting and invest in 21st century voting technology**.
- **Expand voting rights to 17 year old Americans for primaries who will be 18 by the general election**.
  - This can be done through legislation. The 26th Amendment prohibits taking away the right to vote to anyone 18 or older, but does not dictate any rule about people younger than 18.

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs\\_assets/2009/uwisconsin1pdf.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2009/uwisconsin1pdf.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/blog/automatic-voter-registration-oregon-huge-success>

### **Improving Election Security:**

The Brennan Center estimates that in 2018, **one-third of all local election jurisdictions were using voting machines that were at least 10 years old as their primary polling place equipment** (or as their primary tabulation equipment in all vote-by-mail jurisdictions), and as many as 16 million voters will vote on paperless equipment.<sup>7</sup> That's more than enough to tip the scales of an election. Steve will:

- **Provide grants to states to invest in new equipment, poll worker training, and shared elections resources** to help states minimize direct costs, and to ensure accessibility of ballots and polling places for Americans with disabilities (but not to allow polling sites to be closed if they are not accessible).
  - Although some of these opportunities were authorized under the 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA), HAVA funds – about \$380 million -- largely have been spent already.<sup>8</sup> Steve will work with Congress to pass additional HAVA funding.
- Allow states to use Homeland Security grant money if they choose to **protect their election systems from both physical threats and from cyber threats**. Steve believes it is important that states decide for themselves how best to allocate State Homeland Security grant money, but election security will be made an eligible expense. The Department of Homeland Security will ensure that funds earmarked for election security are used to secure our elections, not for Secretaries of State to backfill funding cuts in other areas.
  - Steve will direct DHS to update guidance on allowable uses of State Homeland Security funding.
- **Update Governors and Secretaries of States (or chief election officials) on emerging threats and best practices for response**.
  - Since 2016, twenty states have invested in enhanced cyber training for election officials – but more needs to be done.<sup>9</sup>
  - Steve will direct the Department of Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence to conduct regular briefings and trainings.
- Require voting technology vendors to **disclose cyber incidents to state and federal authorities within twenty-four hours of an incident**.
  - In the short-term, Steve will have the FEC and DHS work with cyber companies to have disclosures of all incidents. Steve will also push for legislation requiring this disclosure.
- Support technology companies' efforts to create standards for **removing misleading campaign information**.
  - Steve will convene industry leaders and experts to ensure elections are safe and secure.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/voting-machine-security-where-we-stand-six-months-new-hampshire-primary>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.csis.org/analysis/csis-election-cybersecurity-scorecard-outlook-2018-2020-and-beyond>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.csis.org/analysis/csis-election-cybersecurity-scorecard-outlook-2018-2020-and-beyond>

- Create standards for **combatting foreign influence and misleading campaign information**.
- Direct the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Communications Commission and the Justice Department to **work with technology companies**, and will move forward by rule or by legislation.

### **Standing Up for Voting and Representation**

- **Update the Voting Rights Act.** Ensure that all voters have access to the ballot box – thus overturning the Supreme Court’s misguided ruling in Shelby County, where the Court held that the VRA unconstitutionally determined jurisdictions needing the federal government’s pre-approval to change their voting procedures.
  - To comply with the Court ruling, we will apply the VRA to states and localities with examples of discrimination in the last 25 years.
  - Updating the Voting Rights Act requires Congressional action.
- **End gerrymandering by requiring that states establish independent redistricting commissions**, since state legislatures have proven incapable or unwilling to establish fair, competitive congressional and legislative districts. Failure to make the redistricting process non-partisan will result in the state having to preclear its redistricting proposal with the Justice Department.
  - This requires Congressional action.

### **A Clear Record Fighting Dark Money and Corruption:**

As Attorney General and Governor of Montana, Steve has been a national leader on campaign finance reform and has been called, “the biggest threat to Citizens United.” Among the candidates, Steve Bullock has the most proven track record in the field of standing up for our democracy:

- Steve led the states’ efforts **opposing unlimited corporate spending in the Citizens United case**.
- Brought the **first case to the Supreme Court challenging Citizens United** (American Traditions Partnership v Bullock)
- Passed the **Montana DISCLOSE Act**, one of the strongest campaign finance disclosure laws in the country, requiring any group that spends money or resources to influence an election within 90 days of an election must disclose how they are spending that money and the source of the money.
- Signed an Executive Order **requiring state government contractors, and applicants for government contracting, to disclose their political spending and contributions**.
- Signed a law making it **illegal for foreign nations and individuals** to spend in Montana’s elections.
- **Successfully sued the Trump Administration, overturning its IRS ruling** that 501(c) organizations no longer need to disclose their contributors to the IRS.