

December 18, 2018

Dear Democratic Colleague:

The American people have made clear that they are deeply concerned about our broken political and campaign finance systems. The result is that they believe Washington is rigged against the interests of ordinary Americans. A *Wall Street Journal/NBC News* [poll](#) in September 2018 found that 77 percent of the people registered to vote said, “Reducing the influence of special interests and corruption in Washington” is either the most important or a very important issue facing the country.

In September of last year, the *We The People Democracy Reform Act of 2017* (S. 1880) was introduced, which was cosponsored by a number of Democratic Senators. The Act places a number of essential democracy reform proposals into one comprehensive reform package and provides an important roadmap for repairing our democracy. The Act incorporates reform proposals in three major democracy areas: money in politics, voting rights, and government ethics.

The reforms address the undue influence of big money in American politics, the gaping disclosure loopholes that allow “dark money” contributions to be spent secretly to influence federal elections, and the failure of the FEC to enforce the campaign finance laws. The reforms also challenge various barriers to voting and strengthen government ethics rules that address, among other things, abuses by President Trump and his administration.

On November 30, 2018, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi announced that the House would consider H.R. 1, a broad package of democracy reforms, as the first order of business in the new Congress. This package was developed by a House Democracy Reform Task Force appointed by Leader Pelosi and chaired by Representative John Sarbanes, the sponsor of H.R. 1. H.R. 1 includes a number of democracy reform and anti-corruption proposals contained in S. 1880 and adds additional provisions to broaden the democracy reform package.

For the next Congress, we are working with Senators Whitehouse, Cardin, Klobuchar, Baldwin, Durbin, and others on updating and introducing Senate Democrats’ *We The People Act* as a close companion of House Democratic leadership’s planned H.R. 1, and look forward to your input and co-sponsorship. Having strong, complementary democracy reform proposals in both the House and Senate, as a unified approach in Congress, will be an important step forward in repairing our broken political system and our destructive campaign finance system.

Together we need to make it easier, not harder, to vote. Improving access, promoting integrity, and ensuring the security of our elections needs to be a priority. We also must end the dominance of big money in our politics by guaranteeing disclosure of donors and increasing the power of small money donors. With all of these critical changes, comes the importance of strengthening oversight by repairing the Federal Election Commission, tightening rules on super PACs, and repealing policy riders that block sensible disclosure measures.

We look forward to your input and hope you will join as an original cosponsor when the legislation is introduced early next year. If staff have any questions or input, please don't hesitate to reach out to [Alyson\\_Sincavage@tomudall.senate.gov](mailto:Alyson_Sincavage@tomudall.senate.gov) or [Andrew\\_Wallace@tomudall.senate.gov](mailto:Andrew_Wallace@tomudall.senate.gov) and [Lauren\\_Oppenheimer@merkley.senate.gov](mailto:Lauren_Oppenheimer@merkley.senate.gov).

/s Senator Tom Udall

/s Senator Jeffery A. Merkley