

## **Political Polarization Solutions**

Following is a non-exhaustive list of ideas that have been proposed by scholars and other thought leaders. Please send us your ideas for additions or elaborations.

### **Reform the Election Process**

Abolish primary elections and let state and local party organizations choose nominees.

Get rid of closed primaries.

Adopt a top-two or top-four unified primary election – open to all registered voters -- in which the top vote-getters regardless of party advance to the general election. (ex.: California; Washington)

Adopt instant run-off elections.

End the official neutrality of party organizations in primary elections and instead encourage (when useful) party organizations to endorse candidates in primary elections, thereby allowing certain candidates to use the party “brand.”

Elect members of Congress only in presidential election years.

Adopt non-partisan ballots such as those commonly used at the municipal level.

### **Assure Proportionality**

Reserve some seats for allocation to the party receiving the most votes if the party receiving the most votes does not also win the most seats.

Adopt proportional representation.

### **Make the Redistricting Process Less Partisan**

Authorize impartial commissions to draw election district boundaries in order to stop gerrymandering.

### **Increase Turnout**

Make voting mandatory.

Adopt a lottery or other incentives to increase voter turnout.

Stop voter suppression.

Specify a single date when all states would hold their non-presidential primary elections.

Construct GOTV efforts that target moderate voters who frequently do not vote.

**Reform the Campaign Finance System. (The intention of some of these reform ideas is to strengthen candidate campaign committees and/or parties relative to outside groups.)**

Adopt public financing of political campaigns.

Adopt public financing of campaigns with the funds channeled through political party organizations.

Allow voters to allocate public funds to candidates or multi-candidate PACs through vouchers.

Place stricter limits on contributions where limits are high or non-existent.

Raise limits for contributions to official candidate campaign committees.

Raise limits for contributions to political parties.

Restore the “soft money” loophole for party organizations.

Limit campaign spending by independent groups.

Limit contributions to independent groups.

**Reform the Legislative Process**

Abolish the filibuster.

Adopt supermajority selection of the Speaker of the House.

Reinstitute earmarks.

Adopt a parliamentary system.

Reduce transparency, allowing more latitude for negotiation and compromise.

For federal judicial appointments, remove the supermajority requirement and instead adopt a storable vote system that allows senators to cast multiple votes (from their aggregate judicial vote budget) for nominees they strongly support or oppose.

Eliminate the debt ceiling.

Make obstruction more costly by reinstating single-tracking in the Senate so that the Senate cannot have two or more pieces of legislation pending on the floor at the same time.

Instead of filibuster and cloture, require 41 Senators to vote to stop a vote on a bill.

Require filibusters to be “talking” filibusters.

Promote and encourage repeated interparty interactions and facilitate interparty relationships among legislators.

### **Improve Voter Knowledge and Encourage Voter Respect for Differing Perspectives**

Use data science to extract and summarize information from campaign finances records and other large data sets in order to provide better informational cues to voters.

Work with news organizations and social media websites to develop tools and strategies that facilitate more thoughtful, balanced and respectful consideration (by their audiences) of differing viewpoints.

Strengthen fact-checking initiatives.

Expand civic education and civic news exposure among young people. Increase interest by utilizing age-relevant content.

### **Other**

Create a (most likely small or regional) Centrist Party which might change the dynamics in Congress.

Incentivize incumbents to seek re-election and stay in office longer.

Encourage public acceptance of the need for log-rolling (i.e. side payments) when such side payments are legitimate and in the public interest.

*Note: Many of the above ideas are addressed in depth in the essays compiled in Solutions to Political Polarization in America, Cambridge University Press, 2015, edited by Nathaniel Persily. This book is an excellent starting point for anyone wishing to learn more about polarization and proposed solutions.*