



## Introduction

No Kings Ever is a pro-democracy movement to reform our laws and Constitution for the purpose of making America more free, equitable and just.

If there is one lesson we can learn from the last ten years, it is that we cannot return to the normal we once knew. We are in the process of sliding back to conditions that existed before the 20th century: those that exploit labor, destroy the working and middle classes, and create an entrenched aristocracy. The goal of MAGA is to re-establish an 18<sup>th</sup> century, pre-revolutionary society; one where individual rights and opportunities are limited, Christianity is the organizing cultural force, and nations are defined by race and ethnicity rather than principles and ideas. To this malignant agenda they will add all of the worst aspects of 20th century fascism, from technological control and servitude, to militaristic persecution of undesirable groups. Donald Trump is the unlikely tip of this poison spear—one that is already deeply embedded in our culture and politics.

The mistake that we have made, and continue to make, is to think that removing Donald Trump, whether it is by the ballot box or justice system, will make a difference. It won't. Fundamentally, Trump is a distraction. His pathological attention-seeking will keep him in or near the spotlight regardless of his official or criminal status. And while we focus on the latest scandal, crime, outrageous act or idiotic episode, the MAGA agenda, articulated in Project 2025, moves forward; slowed at times, but never stopped.

The only way out of this perilous situation will involve a strategy with short- and long-term goals, the discipline to reach those goals, and time. This is our plan: we keep the best of our existing institutions and laws and then amend and augment those structures to create a new normal; one that is the opposite of the regressive MAGA agenda. This plan must do more than protect against a recurrence of fascism.

We need a new America, a country for the 21st century.

### A. MEDIA REFORM

#### 1. Take Back Control of the News

For too long, for-profit corporate media has skewed American's perception of reality and dominated public discourse. Most of us are effectively propagandized. This is not a part of a nefarious plot, but the predictable and obvious outcome of news organizations that operate as profit centers for their ownership and are accountable to their shareholders and advertisers—not the public they serve.

A functional democracy depends on an informed citizenry. A free press serves the public interest as an invaluable source of information and as an agent of constructive discourse. Print, broadcast and digital media companies have a unique responsibility to inform the public and contribute to the political health

of the country. No Kings Ever is demanding the following actions be taken to reestablish the news media as a societal watchdog:

- Break up media monopolies. No entity shall own or control more than 5% of all print, broadcast and/or digital content companies operating or holding an FCC license in the United States.
- Reestablish a fully-funded and robust public broadcasting service, governed by a non-partisan commission of directors. This new PBS will include television, radio, satellite and streaming channels that produce programming and information on matters of public interest.
- Reinstate the Fairness Doctrine for private news and opinion broadcasters. Broadcasters shall present topics of public interest based on a truth and accuracy formula.
  - Where the topic is scientific in nature, the broadcaster shall devote time to the topic in proportion to verifiable scientific data. For example, if 97% of the scientific establishment has concluded that a) climate change is real and b) is being caused by human activity, 97% of any broadcaster's content shall be consistent with the scientific consensus.
  - Similarly, where the topic is political in nature, the broadcaster will be required to report the positions of politicians and parties with real data rather than inaccurate characterizations. For example, if the Democratic Party proposes to raise taxes on the richest 1% of the population, a broadcaster will be required to say this, rather than, "the Democrats want to raise your taxes."
  - Further, opinion segments and programming will be required to display, for the duration of the segment or program, a chyron indicating the information is "opinion not fact."
- Pass fact-checking laws for social media platforms.
  - Require social media platforms to maintain fact-checking departments capable of eliminating misinformation and disinformation campaigns before they spread.
  - All social media accounts with more than 1,000 followers will be required to adhere to standards and practices for accuracy in posting.

## **B. ECONOMIC REFORM**

### **2. Increase the Federal minimum wage to \$20/hr.**

To address affordability, the first thing we have to do is raise wages. That's why No Kings Ever supports the 2025 Raise the Wage Act (RWA)<sup>i</sup>. The Federal minimum wage has not been increased since 2009. Analysis by the Economic Policy Institute indicates that raising the federal minimum wage to just \$17 by 2030 would impact 22,247,000 workers across the country, or 15% of the U.S. wage-earning workforce. The increases would provide an additional \$70 billion annually in wages for the country's lowest-paid workers, with the average affected worker who works year-round receiving an extra \$3,200 per year.<sup>ii</sup>

### **3. Progressive Tax Policy**

"We cannot afford to extend tax breaks for corporations or the wealthy that cripple our ability to invest in areas that expand economic growth, like infrastructure and education. Tax reform must be done in a

way that raises significant revenue, protects working families and the vulnerable, and requires corporations and the wealthy to pay a fair share.

The primary goals of comprehensive tax reform should be to progressively raise sufficient revenue to (1) make investments that will grow the economy, and (2) set us on a path for long-term deficit reduction. Low- and moderate-income Americans are already contributing to deficit reduction through the Budget Control Act spending caps and are likely to be asked to sacrifice more. Progressive tax reform is the only way that wealthy Americans can share significantly in that sacrifice"<sup>iii</sup>.

- It is a bedrock principle of fairness that those with higher incomes should pay progressively higher tax rates. Any tax reform must ensure that each fifth of the income distribution (as well as the top 1% and top 0.1%) should have a higher average effective tax rate than the income group below.
- To maintain or strengthen progressivity, we should end one of the leading contributors to after-tax income inequality in this country, the special tax breaks for investment income. Workers who get their salaries from wages often pay a higher effective tax rate than wealthy individuals like Mitt Romney and Warren Buffett who make most of their income from selling stocks and bonds or from dividends. This undermines the basic tenant that average tax rates should rise with income. In fact, the richest 1% of taxpayers receives 71% of all capital gains, while the bottom 80% of taxpayers receives only 10% of capital gains. Higher capital gains rates should apply to accounts with a value of \$10 million or more. This would apply to the total value of multiple accounts held by individuals, couples filing jointly, and family trusts.
- As a share of GDP, corporate taxes have fallen from 4.7% in the 1950s to a scant 1.9% from 2000-2009. In 2007, the U.S. Treasury found that when evaluated on average corporate tax rates, the United States was second lowest among its competitors in the G8 and three percentage points below the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations' average. Just this year, CBO data show that the effective corporate tax rate dropped to 12.1%, the lowest recorded level during the past 40 years. As a share of our total revenues, corporate taxes averaged 27.6% in the 1950s and have dropped precipitously since to 10.4% from 2000-2009. This is not a fair distribution of our tax burden.
- In addition to closing tax loopholes for large corporation, our tax code should incentivize on-shoring profits in the form of domestic job creation. If corporations want tax breaks, they should be required to reinvest profits in the United States and quantify the benefits of those investments.
- Tax "unrealized gains" if they are used as loan collateral. If Elon Musk can use his Tesla stock to buy Twitter, then the value of that stock should be subject to taxation.

#### 4. Enforce Antitrust laws

Since the late 1970s, deregulation and a retreat from anti-trust enforcement has permitted growing monopolization—and declining choice—in not just retailing, but almost every sector of the economy, from airlines to hospitals, banks to communication companies. Meanwhile, industries which didn't exist thirty years ago, like broadband internet, feature much less choice than they would if they weren't dominated by a few monopolistic firms.<sup>iv</sup>

Monopolies disrupt the balance of a competitive market, which harms consumers and our country's economy in six ways:<sup>v</sup>

- Higher Prices. Without competition, monopolies can set prices as high as they want knowing their customers have no other options.
- Lower Quality and Reduced Efficiency. Competition pushes companies to improve products, offer quality customer service, and operate efficiently. Without it, there's little incentive to do anything better or differently.
- Fewer Choices. If one company controls an entire market, you're stuck with their product or service whether you like it or not.
- Barriers to Entry. When one company controls an entire market, it's nearly impossible for new businesses to compete and survive. This lack of competition slows innovation and economic growth. In a competitive market, companies strive to outdo each other, which often benefits customers and consumers.
- Unfair Power Dynamics Affecting Other Areas of the Economy. Monopolies can wield too much influence over suppliers, distributors, customers, and even governments. This power imbalance can lead to policies and practices that benefit the monopoly at the expense of others.
- Job Losses. When companies are merged or acquired to form a monopoly, the consolidation typically has direct local and regional economic impacts, including closing stores/factories and laying off workers.

Technically, the United States does enforce its anti-trust laws. There is an entire division in the Department of Justice devoted to this. Yet somehow:

- Tyson, JBS, Cargill, National Beef control 80% of the meat packing industry.
- The soft drinks aisle is even more monopolized. Pepsi and Coca-Cola control 69.5 percent of the soft-drink market between them. Their next largest rival, Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, controls another large portion, so that the three collectively account for 86 percent of the entire industry.
- Trying to decide which is the best paper towel, Bounty or Charmin? Proctor & Gamble owns them both. Best Shampoo? P&G owns Aussie, Head and Shoulders, Vidal Sassoon, and Herbal Essences. Best diaper? Whether you chose Pampers or Luvs, P&G wins. Best product to get your clothes clean? Tide, Gain, Downy, and Fairy all compete for your business, except they don't really because they are all owned by P&G. Other brands you might think of as independent—from Old Spice to Gillette, from Tampax to Crest are actually anything but, as P&G controls them all.
- In drug stores, the concentration is even greater. CVS, Walgreens, and Rite Aid collectively control 99 percent of the industry.

This list is endless. It is time to update and engage in robust enforcement of our anti-trust laws.

## **5. Protect and Expand Social Security**

Remove or phase out the FICA cap. In 2026, income over \$185,000 is not taxed for Social Security contributions. Several bills, each differing in their details, have been proposed to remove this cap. No Kings Ever supports this effort to fully fund Social Security.

Reduce or phase out taxes on Social Security benefits. While Social Security was not intended to be a retiree's sole source of income, older people rely on Social Security more than ever to pay for their expenses in retirement. The "You Earned It, You keep It Act"<sup>vi</sup> would eliminate taxes in Social Security income and, according to the Social Security Administration, extend the solvency of the program until 2055.<sup>vii</sup>

## **C. HEALTHCARE REFORM**

### **6. Medicare for All**

Our for-profit healthcare system is extremely expensive, and the outcomes do not justify the expense. Americans have shorter life spans, higher maternal and infant mortality rates and are more likely to suffer from chronic disease than people in other wealthy countries.<sup>viii</sup> In 1981, just 8% of personal bankruptcies were caused by medical bills. By 2007, that percentage increased to 62%<sup>ix</sup> According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, about 100 million Americans owe over \$220 billion in medical debt<sup>x</sup>.

The success of the Affordable Care Act demonstrates that it is time for Medicare for all. A single-payer system is the best option we have for delivering high-quality healthcare at a reasonable cost. While the estimates for savings vary, every study indicates that a single-payer system will save, at a minimum, hundreds of billions of dollars annually<sup>xi</sup>. Cradle-to-grave coverage, regardless of employment status, will lead to a more productive workforce, decrease economic insecurity and improve overall quality of life. Pooling revenue from all employed Americans in both the public and private sectors and having the government negotiate costs on behalf of its citizens will provide the best care by maintaining market competition and maximizing the value of every dollar spent.

Beyond making economic sense, there is a clear ethical need for universal healthcare. It is unconscionable that any person should suffer needlessly or die prematurely in an advanced, wealthy nation such as ours. It is time to pass the Medicare for All Act of 2025<sup>xii</sup>.

## **D. EDUCATION REFORM**

### **7. College Affordability**

College graduates grow the economy, pay more in taxes, have better health outcomes, enjoy lower unemployment rates, have higher life expectancies, and are more civically engaged.<sup>xiii</sup> However, the cost of attendance at many colleges and universities is beyond the reach of most families. Americans have accumulated \$1.8 trillion in student loans, an amount that has more than tripled since 2006. The average borrower has \$39,000 dollars in debt.<sup>xiv</sup> This is unsustainable. Starting adult life with this kind of debt limits a young person's options with respect to everything from home ownership to starting a business—even starting a family.

Federal Student loan programs have not kept up with the rising cost of higher education.<sup>xv</sup> Research conducted by the Center for American Progress indicates that "continuing to build robust federal and state investments in four-year colleges can help to ensure that four-year degrees become more affordable and accessible to students from all backgrounds."<sup>xvi</sup>

The College for All Act of 2023<sup>xvii</sup>, provides a strong foundation for improving access to, and affordability of, a college education:

- The bill provides funding to enable states colleges and universities, through a federal-state partnership, to eliminate tuition and required fees for (1) all students at community colleges and two-year colleges and universities, and (2) working- and middle-class students at four-year public institutions of higher education and tribal colleges and universities.
- The bill permanently reauthorizes and otherwise revises the Federal Pell Grant program by providing funding to increase the maximum award for each eligible student, increasing the duration limit for the use of Pell Grants, allowing students to use their awards to cover living and nontuition expenses, and
- Further, the bill requires the Department of Education to award grants to eligible states and tribal colleges and universities for improving student outcomes.

Restructure existing college loan debt with decreased interest rates, forgive interest accrued before graduation, and forgive debt amounts after the principle plus prime rate interest have been repaid.

## **8. Vocational and Technical Education**

Our higher education system should also recognize the fact that many people don't need a 4-year liberal arts degree for the careers they will have after graduation. A more direct—and less expensive-- path to employment would be a course of study in a technical or vocational college to acquire the knowledge and skills required for a productive career. No Kings Ever supports the creation of a robust network of trade colleges to get people started in productive and essential careers without incurring debt.

## **E. HOUSING REFORM**

### **9. Increase Rates of Home Ownership**

Home ownership has long been an essential part of the American dream. But today, the cost of owning a home is increasing out of reach for young adults. A family's home is often their most valuable asset, and a way to build wealth. A developing hurdle to homeownership is rent. Skyrocketing rents, prompted in part by the large-scale acquisition of housing by corporate investors, are draining too much of renters' income, making it even more difficult to save the money required for a down payment.

No Kings Ever supports The Homes Act.<sup>xviii</sup> This bill would offer an alternative to a market dominated by corporations and investors with deep pockets, leveling the playing field for those that just want a decent and affordable place they can be proud to call home. It would establish a housing development authority within the Department of Housing and Urban Development to function as a public bank and developer that will build millions of permanently affordable homes, stabilize rents and provide more homeownership opportunities. The authority will focus on renters and homebuyers, giving Americans the freedom and opportunity to build the life they want. This bill provides flexible options to fit the needs of communities across the country.

Specifically, the Homes Act would:

- Require the housing development authority to maintain portfolio-wide affordability by setting aside 40% of units for extremely-low income households and 30% of units for low-income households.
- Cap rents for units financed under the Act at 25% of a household's adjusted gross income with reasonable limits on subsequent rent increases.

- Support homeownership by allowing residents to purchase homes under shared equity models and providing relief to mortgage borrowers at risk of foreclosure due to market instability or economic distress.
- Provide strong labor protections for the jobs created in building and maintaining units.
- Provide tenants with opportunities to come together to purchase their buildings prior to large, for-profit developers buying them.
- Encourage climate resilient and zero-emissions buildings, and provide housing for those seeking relocation from climate and extreme weather events.
- Provide funding to rehabilitate and address the backlog of necessary improvements for public housing and repeal the Faircloth Amendment to allow new public housing.
- Authorize \$30 billion in annual appropriations, combined with a revolving loan fund to recoup and reinvest funds back into housing.

## F. POLITICAL REFORM

### 10. Overturn Citizens United and Limit Private Spending on Elections

We live with a system of legalized bribery. The corrupting influence of private money is the main reason our government does not work for working people and so many of our most important problems are intractable. Seventy-seven percent of Americans want limits on campaign contributions and believe wealthy donors have too much influence.

Overturning Citizens United means changing the composition of the Court. Congress would have to amend the 1869 Judiciary Act to add four liberal justices to the SCOTUS. A case would have to be brought to challenge Citizens United. The Court, with a new liberal majority, would overturn the decision. The Supreme Court needs to be expanded—Citizen’s United isn’t the only disastrous decision issued by the Roberts Court. But unless the Court itself is reformed, a 7-6 liberal majority could quickly be reversed (see Item 14 for our proposal to permanently reform the Supreme Court).

The Federal Election Commission currently offers public funding for Presidential campaigns. However, the candidate has to pledge not to accept private funds, and in the wake of the Citizens United decision, the amounts offered by the FEC are unrealistically low. The last year a major party presidential candidate received public funding was 2008—the final election cycle before the 5-4 Citizens United decision was handed down.

A Democratic Congress and President could create a fully-funded public option for all federal elections. This system would be constructed to eliminate the possibility of fraud. For example, a candidate would have to collect increasing numbers of signatures from registered voters in his or her party to be eligible for different levels of funding. The government would pay the campaign’s vendors directly, and only for expenses covered by the law. Like the current FEC system, all campaigns would be subject to audit. Funding amounts would have to be competitive with privately-funded campaigns, and those expenses could be adjusted geographically based on recent election spending. In 2024, approximately \$15 billion was spent on all federal campaigns. Creating a publicly-funded option through legislation would demonstrate just how much better our politics can be. By the time there is enough public support for an amendment, we will have had the opportunity to refine the system and demonstrate its value.

Support for a Constitutional amendment to ban private spending in Federal elections is growing. The American Promise organization, which is promoting its own amendment on this subject, reports that 23 State legislatures are already calling for Congress to propose their amendment.<sup>xx</sup> See Item 13 for our proposal to amend the Constitution.

## **11. Expand the House of Representatives**

Americans are underserved by their Representatives, and the House cannot adequately address the many critical issues facing the country. Article I, section 2 of the Constitution states, “The number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand.”

The current number of Representatives was fixed by the Permanent Apportion Act of 1929<sup>xx</sup>, but 435 Representatives had been in the House since 1913. This came at the end of a period of expansion when the America reached 48 States. When the PAA was passed, the population of the United States was about 123 million. This factored out to one Congressperson for every 283,000 Americans. Today, there is one Representative for every 750,000 Americans. The House of Representatives was designed to foster a close connection between constituents and their elected officials, with relatively low barriers to entry for those seeking office. However, these foundational principles of closer and deeper representation have eroded over time.<sup>xxi</sup>

There may be no objective right answer to how big an assembly should be, but political science has identified a pattern<sup>xxii</sup>, suggesting a size that is the most efficient for a national legislature to effectively manage its legislative and governance work. That pattern finds that a country’s lower house—such as the House of Representatives—should have a number of members close to the cube root of the country’s represented population. In other words, if the number of members is multiplied by itself twice, it should be at least equal to the total population, so that a country with a population of 1,000 should have a 10-member lower house, while a population of 1,000,000 should have 100 members, and so on. This ratio should balance the effectiveness of communication between constituents and members and between members themselves. Under the 2020 census, that would mean the House should have about 692 Representatives.

An expanded House of Representatives would improve constituent services, make Representatives more accountable to their voters, allow for stronger oversight of the Executive and Judicial branches, and improve the law-making capacity of the lower chamber.

## **12. Democratize the Senate**

As originally conceived, the United States Senate was significantly less democratic than its Congressional counterpart, the House of Representatives. Since 1790, we have changed how Senators are elected, moving that function from the state legislatures to popular vote. Several well-considered and meaningful proposals have been made to reform how the Senate operates. All aim to eliminate, or at least mitigate, minoritarian domination of the Senate, allowing legislation that enjoys broad popular support to be brought to vote. No Kings Ever supports these proposals, but believes more fundamental change is required.

Article 1, section 3 of the Constitution affords each state 2 Senators, regardless of population. The concept of equal representation was established during the Constitutional Convention as a concession to smaller states who were concerned about being dominated by the larger states and the Federal government. This was known as the Great Compromise, and it helped facilitate the ratification of the Constitution.

Since that time, the number of states, and the population disparities between them, have grown dramatically:

- In 1790, when the first census was taken, the largest state, Virginia, had a non-slave population of 455,294. The smallest was Delaware, and its non-slave population was 50,230. Virginia was 9 times larger than Delaware. Today, the largest state is California, which has a population of 39,840,000. The smallest state is Wyoming, with a population of just 587,618. California's population is nearly 70 times larger than that of Wyoming.
- In 1790, there were 15 states, and only 5 (33% of the total number) had populations that were 20% or less than that of Virginia's. In 2020 there are 50 states and, 37 (74% of the total number) have populations that are 20% or less than that of California's.
- In 1790, Virginia, which constituted 6.66% of the total number of states, accounted for 16.44% of the total population. In 2020, that same percentage of the population lives in California and half of Texas, or 3% of the total number of states. In 1790, the 5 smallest states accounted for 11.48% of the total population. In 2020, the 5 smallest states account for just 1.09% of the total population.
- However you analyze the numbers, the distribution of the population of the United States has evolved over the last 235 years to create disparities in representation that were not contemplated by the framers of the Constitution. Instead of a Senate that provides a reasonable level of protection for the interests of small states, we have a Senate dominated by 37 small states whose contributions to the culture and economy of America are dwarfed by a few superstates.
- And demographers estimate that by 2040, half of the population of the United States will live in just 8 states. That means that soon, half of the population will be represented by 16 Senators, while the other half will control 84 members of the upper chamber. Clearly, the original intent of the Great Compromise has been lost.

How can we restore balance to the Senate? There are several solutions to consider:

- Reimagine state boundaries. Break up large states into smaller ones and combine small states to make larger ones. California and Texas would each have to become 5 or six smaller entities. New York City would have to rename itself when it adopts statehood. Merge the Dakotas with Nebraska. Create states with less disparity in population. This approach would not require revising the Constitution.
- Guarantee each state at least one Senator, then apportion additional Senators in tiers based on population. The largest states would be in the top tier with 4 Senators. Other states would have 3 Senators, 2 Senators or 1 Senator based on population. This would not be perfectly proportional, but it would establish a reasonable balance. This solution would require revising the Constitution.
- Apportion Senators' votes based on the population they represent. Maintain the overall number of Senators, and 2 from each state, but rank their voting power based on the size of the population they represent. This would guarantee small state representation at the committee level, where voting status would remain 1 full vote per Senator. But when the full body votes, votes would be apportioned. This arrangement means that matters of concern to smaller states

could be brought before the full Senate and heard on the merits before a vote. This too would require a Constitutional amendment.

Democratizing the Senate will not be easy. The biggest and most obvious hurdle is that no small state would readily agree to give up the power it currently enjoys. But just as concessions were made 235 years ago, accommodations can be made to small states now to secure their agreement. If option 2 were pursued, 26 states would either maintain or increase the number of Senators they have now. Only 11 additional states would have to then agree to the plan for it to be ratified. Under option 3, 20 states would maintain or increase their voting power. 17 states would have to agree to lose clout, making this arrangement a heavier lift.

The Constitution provides a mechanism for the first option. New states can be formed from the territory of an existing state or states if the effected states agree to the plan, and Congress approves. This option could be exercised incrementally, based on a general framework. Because it is incremental, the framework can be adapted to changing circumstances and conditions. Both large and small states would have to make concessions, and representational balance re-established.

Whatever course Democratizing the Senate would take, it is long overdue and necessary to preserve democracy. It will be difficult and take years, if not decades, to achieve. But the importance of such an effort cannot be overstated. The Federal judiciary and the Supreme Court do not represent the culture and ethics of most Americans. Small conservative states receive disproportionate amounts of federal funding. Federal law and executive policy are increasingly being used to create a culture that simply does not represent the values of most Americans. Reforming the Senate is a fundamental and necessary part of the change America needs for this century and beyond.

### **13. End Gerrymandering and Strengthen Voting**

Gerrymandering is the act of manipulating electoral boundaries to favor one or party over another. Gerrymandering is often characterized using the terms 'cracking' and 'packing.' Cracking refers to geographically dividing one constituency into small groups, while stacking is the opposite: manipulating the same boundary to create concentrations of different group of voters. Through this process, the party that already controls a legislative body can increase its hold by redefining electoral districts to guarantee its future success. Because state legislatures also define Congressional districts, gerrymandering can have significant impacts on our national politics.

With the opposition party dispersed in small groups across several districts, the ruling party only has to appeal to its base--its most fervent and extreme supporters-- to maintain enough turn-out to outvote the minority opposition in their district. This partly explains why the Republicans have been electing increasingly radical and extreme candidates at both the state and federal levels of government in recent decades.

Historically, both parties have used gerrymandering to preserve their majorities. In recent years, however, Democrats have become amenable to anti-gerrymandering efforts; in part because extremist Republican policies are inherently unpopular. In addition to this, the growth of sun belt cities and their immediate suburbs in have created opportunities for Democrats to make inroads in traditionally red states.

In response to these changing realities, the Democratic-led House passed the Freedom to Vote Act in 2021<sup>xxiii</sup>. The bill was stopped in the Senate by the Republicans, who invoked the filibuster, which would

have required 60 votes to overcome. The Democratic majority in the Senate was razor-thin, and *EVERY Republican Senator voted against the bill*.

The Freedom to Vote Act addresses gerrymandering, as well as many other flaws in our electoral system:

- This bill addresses voter registration and voting access, election integrity and security, redistricting, and campaign finance.
- The bill expands voter registration (e.g., automatic and same-day registration) and voting access (e.g., vote-by-mail and early voting). It also limits removing voters from voter rolls.
- Next, the bill establishes Election Day as a federal holiday.
- The bill declares that the right of a U.S. citizen to vote in any election for federal office shall not be denied or abridged because that individual has been convicted of a criminal offense unless, at the time of the election, such individual is serving a felony sentence.
- The bill establishes certain federal criminal offenses related to voting. In particular, the bill establishes a new criminal offense for conduct (or attempted conduct) to corruptly hinder, interfere with, or prevent another person from registering to vote or helping someone register to vote.
- Additionally, the bill sets forth provisions related to election security, including by requiring states to conduct post-election audits for federal elections.
- The bill outlines criteria for congressional redistricting and generally prohibits mid-decade redistricting.
- The bill addresses campaign finance, including by expanding the prohibition on campaign spending by foreign nationals, requiring additional disclosure of campaign-related fundraising and spending, requiring additional disclaimers regarding certain political advertising, and establishing an alternative campaign funding system for certain federal offices.

No Kings Ever supports the passage of the Freedom to Vote Act as a necessary and substantive first step in reforming our system. See Item 11 for our proposal to enshrine the right to vote in the Constitution.

#### **G. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

The Constitution describes the structure and mechanics of a government and lists our rights. As such, it is a statement of principles that creates an American character which transcends every other personal identifier of our citizenry. To be an American is not to be a member of a particular culture, ethnicity or race. To be an American is to be an adherent to the Constitution. If you call yourself an American, you are a Constitutionalist.

As a foundational document, the Constitution is intended to provide political and institutional stability. But it is not unerring. While it was designed to be amended when needed, the bar for this is high. It has been amended just 27 times in the 237 years since it was first ratified. And 10 of those Amendments (the Bill of Rights) were ratified in 1790. It was last amended in 1992.

#### **14. Equal Rights Amendment**

The Equal Right Amendment (ERA) was first proposed in 1923. On March 22, 1972, the ERA finally passed the Senate and the House of Representatives by the required two-thirds majority and was sent to the states for ratification. An original seven-year deadline was later extended by Congress to June 30, 1982. When this deadline expired, only 35 of the necessary 38 states (the constitutionally required three-fourths) had ratified the amendment. The ERA is therefore not yet a part of the U.S. Constitution. The text of the amendment reads as follows:

"Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification"

No Kings Ever is proposing a revision to Section 1 that would read:

"Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation."

#### **15. Voting Rights Amendment**

Amendment Fifteen to the Constitution – the last of the Reconstruction Amendments – was ratified on February 3, 1870. It grants the right to vote for all male citizens regardless of their ethnicity or prior slave status. The official text is written as such:

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."<sup>xxiv</sup>

It is time to expand this right to include all American citizens at all times, with the exception of imprisonment:

"No citizen, natural born or otherwise, having reached the age of eighteen years who is not incarcerated, shall be denied the right to vote in any election. No citizen who is eligible to vote shall have their right to vote restricted, diminished or impeded by legislation, policy or practice.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

#### **16. Eliminate the Electoral College**

Eliminate the Electoral College and codify the direct election of the President and Vice President in the Constitution. One person, one vote.

#### **17. Limit Private Spending in Elections and Publicly Fund Elections**

Joint Resolution 78, introduced on June 22, 2023, proposed an amendment to the Constitution to set limits on Federal campaign contributions and spending, prohibit corporate spending in the political process, require Congress to develop a system of public campaign financing for all Federal candidates who qualify for the ballot, and allow the States to set reasonable limits on campaign contributions and spending in State and local elections, and for other purposes<sup>xxv</sup>. It reads as follows:

"section 1. To advance democratic self-government and political equality, and to protect the integrity of government and the electoral process, the right of citizens of the United States to vote in elections in which campaign contributions and spending are subject to enforceable limits as set forth in this article, shall not be abridged by the United States.

section 2. In any calendar year, no person may spend or contribute more than one hundred dollars for the purpose of influencing any other person's election for the office of Representative, Senator, President, or Vice President; nor spend for the purpose of influencing elections, including such person's own election, for the offices of Representative, Senator, President, or Vice President, or contribute to candidates for such offices, their campaigns, or political parties, more than an aggregate total of one thousand dollars; provided that Congress may by law prescribe lower limits and may periodically increase the amounts set forth in this section, but only to the extent required by changes in the value of money.

section 3. No corporation or other entity created by law shall contribute or spend any amount for the purpose of influencing any election for the office of Representative, Senator, the President, or the Vice President; but a political party or candidate's campaign may spend the amounts prescribed by law.

section 4. Not later than sixty days after the ratification of this article, Congress shall enact legislation as follows:

To limit the amounts that candidates, their campaigns for the offices of Representative, Senator, President, or Vice President, and political parties may spend on such candidacies.

To provide public funding for all candidates who qualify for any primary, general, or special election ballot for Representative, Senator, President, or Vice President in any State or in the District constituting the seat of Government of the United States, equaling at least eighty percent of the amount that may be spent; but for candidates for President or Vice President, Congress shall prescribe by law the manner in which such amount shall be apportioned based on the States or District wherein such person qualifies.

To require disposition to the Treasury of any unspent campaign funds after each election, without compensation.

To enforce, with civil and criminal penalties, the limits and prohibitions in this article.

section 5. After one year from the ratification of this article, no Senator or Representative shall receive any compensation or other emoluments from the United States during or for any period of time in office in either House during which the legislation required by section 4 shall not have been in effect.

section 6. The judicial power of the United States shall extend to all suits by citizens of the United States arising under this article, including suits brought directly under this article to enforce its provisions.

section 7. The States shall have power to implement and enforce reasonable regulations on the raising and spending of money by candidates and others to influence State or local elections, including but not limited to the limits and prohibitions in this article.

section 8. This article shall not be construed to grant Congress or the States the power to abridge the freedom of the press."

## **H. LEGAL REFORM**

### **18. Reform the Supreme Court**

Historically, the number of Justices equaled the number of Federal circuit courts. Today there are 13 Federal Circuit courts, but only 9 justices. The next Democratic Congress and President should immediately amend the Judiciary Act of 1869 to increase the number of Justices from 9 to 13. Appoint 4 reliably liberal justices to the Supreme Court to dilute the MAGA majority. With a 7-6 liberal majority in place, suits can be brought to reverse the most disastrous decisions of the Roberts Court: Citizens United (campaign spending); Dobbs v. Jackson (abortion); DC v. Heller and Bruen (gun rights); and Trump v. United States (Presidential immunity).

Institute 18-year term limits and arrange terms so each President appoints the same number of justices. This will result in a Supreme Court that more closely resembles the culture and priorities of the majority of Americans.

Pass a legally-binding code of ethics with legal penalties for accepting gifts of any kind.

### **19. Re-establish an Ethical and Constrained Executive**

Pass a new suite of anti-corruption laws in response to the behavior and actions of Donald Trump:

- **NO FELONS.** No person convicted of a felony in a State or Federal court shall be permitted to appear on any ballot for the office of Representative, Senator, Vice-President or President. No person so convicted shall be sworn in to any aforementioned office, and any person convicted while holding office shall be removed immediately without impeachment in the House or conviction in the Senate.
- **NO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR INSIDER TRADING.** Any person elected to the office of Representative, Senator, Vice-President or President shall, before taking office, sell, cause to be sold or otherwise divest from any interest they have in any for-profit entity or security. Any passive ownership or investment interest in any other concern or security shall be placed in a blind trust before taking office and shall remain there until the office holder leaves said office.
- **NO FAMILIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.** The immediate family of any person elected to the office of Representative, Senator, Vice-President or President shall, before the person takes office, sell, cause to be sold or otherwise divest from any interest they have in any for-profit entity or security. Any passive ownership or investment interest in any other concern or security shall be placed in a blind trust before their relative takes office and shall remain there until the relative leaves said office.
- **NO GAMING THE SYSTEM.** No person who is a candidate for the office of Representative, Senator, Vice-President or President shall have, within two years prior to filing as a candidate, participated in the formation of any legal entity as member, officer or stockholder.
- **NO GIFTS.** Any person elected to the office of Representative, Senator, Vice-President or President shall not accept, or negotiate for future possession, anything of value whatsoever from

any person whatsoever, on behalf of themselves, any person or legal entity. This prohibition shall not apply to personal gifts given by immediate family. Diplomatic or ceremonial gifts shall be given to, and permanently remain in the possession of, the National Archives.

- For the purposes of this article, “immediate family” shall mean spouse or domestic partner, natural child, stepchild, adopted child, ex-spouse, ex-domestic partner, grandchild, step grandchild, and adopted grandchild. “Gifts given by immediate family” shall mean anything not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) in value.
- The Office of Government Ethics (OGE) shall be removed from the Executive Branch and shall be placed under the supervision of the Federal Judiciary and funded by the Congress. The OGE shall not be defunded, closed or otherwise impeded by Congressional action without the approval of three-quarters of each house. OGE staff shall be appointed with the agreement of nine of the thirteen Supreme Court Justices. The OGE shall be vested with permanent authority to prosecute any federal officer. This power shall not supersede the power of Congress to impeach and convict the President, Vice President or members of the Judiciary.

## **20. Improve Accountability of the Executive Branch**

Pass a suite of laws to support the rule of law and ethical conduct in government based on the Brennan Center of Justice’s National Task Force on the Rule of Law and Democracy<sup>xxvi</sup> which include the following:

- Congress should pass legislation to create an ethics task force to modernize financial disclosure requirements for government officials, including closing the loophole for family businesses and privately held companies, and reducing the burdens of disclosure.
- Congress should require the president and vice president, and candidates for those offices, to publicly disclose their personal and business tax returns.
- Congress should require a confidential national security financial review for incoming presidents, vice presidents, and other senior officials.
- Congress should pass a law to enforce the safeguards in the Constitution’s Foreign and Domestic Emoluments Clauses, clearly articulating what payments and benefits are and are not prohibited and providing an enforcement scheme for violations.
- Congress should require written justifications from the President for pardons involving close associates.

## **21. Improve Functionality of the Executive Branch**

No Kings Ever supports the recommendations of the Brennan Center for Justice’s Volume II of Proposed government reforms. These call for a fact-based approach to governance. According to the report’s authors, “we have big problems to solve in this nation. If we cannot agree on the facts underlying potential solutions to those problems, and we do not have qualified and dedicated people in place to develop and execute on them, we will imperil the future of our democracy.”

Central to this effort is the government’s development and dissemination of scientific data on a wide array of topics ranging from the economy to the weather. The United States has a clear national security

interest in making and implementing laws, policies, rules based on the best information available. Attempts to manipulate, distort and/or suppress data must be punishable by law. To that end:

- Congress should pass legislation that establishes scientific integrity standards for the executive branch and requires agencies to create policies that guarantee those standards.
- Congress should pass legislation requiring agencies that perform scientific research to articulate clear standards for, and report on, how political officials interact with career researchers.
- Congress should pass legislation to define and prohibit politically motivated manipulation and suppression of government research and data in the executive branch. It should also prohibit discrimination and retaliation against government researchers on the basis of their scientific conclusions.
- Congress should pass legislation to ensure the proper functioning of science advisory committees.
- Congress should enact legislation requiring proactive disclosure of government research and data.
- Congress should enact legislation requiring disclosure of the nonpolitical expert regulatory analysis that underlies agency rulemaking.

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1332>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.epi.org/publication/rtwa-2025-impact-fact-sheet/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://progressives.house.gov/progressive-principles-for-tax-reform>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.openmarketsinstitute.org/learn/consumer-choice-monopoly>

<sup>v</sup> <https://camoinassociates.com/resources/6-reasons-monopolies-are-bad-for-the-economy/>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2909?s=1&r=1>

<sup>vii</sup> [https://riley.house.gov/2025/04/15/josh-riley-co-sponsors-bill-eliminate-federal-taxes-social-security-benefits/#:~:text=The%20%22You%20Earned%20It%2C%20You%20Keep%20It,\\*%20Strengthen%20Social%20Security%20for%20future%20generations](https://riley.house.gov/2025/04/15/josh-riley-co-sponsors-bill-eliminate-federal-taxes-social-security-benefits/#:~:text=The%20%22You%20Earned%20It%2C%20You%20Keep%20It,*%20Strengthen%20Social%20Security%20for%20future%20generations)

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK154469/>

<sup>ix</sup> [https://www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343\(09\)00525-7/fulltext](https://www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343(09)00525-7/fulltext)

<sup>x</sup> <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/cfpb-takes-aim-at-double-billing-and-inflated-charges-in-medical-debt-collection/>

<sup>xi</sup> <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/healthcare/484301-22-studies-agree-medicare-for-all-saves-money/>

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xiv <https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-statistics>

xv <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10158>

xvi <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/recent-trends-in-the-cost-of-college-show-the-continued-importance-of-federal-and-state-investment/>

xvii <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1963>

xviii <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/5078/all-info>

xix <https://americanpromise.net/our-plan/>

xx <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-Permanent-Apportionment-Act-of-1929/>

xxi <https://protectdemocracy.org/work/expanding-the-house-of-representatives-explained/>

xxii <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/45g370k4>

xxiii <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2747/text>

xxiv <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/constitutional-amendments-amendment-15-right-vote>

xxv <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-joint-resolution/78/text>

xxvi <https://www.brennancenter.org/topics/government-power/ethics-rule-law/national-task-force-rule-law-democracy>