

**More Better Choices**  
A Strategic Proposal for Strengthening Electoral Reform Advocacy and  
Advancing Partisan Diversification in a Divided America

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# I. Executive Summary

The crisis in American democracy has reached a breaking point. Public trust in government is collapsing. Congress is paralyzed by factional gridlock and performative polarization. And across the political spectrum, voters feel alienated from a system that no longer reflects the country's political complexity or offers voters candidates they can truly relate to.

This report begins with a simple premise grounded in democratic theory: In a well-functioning democracy, voters should be able to choose from parties and candidates that reflect some approximation of their actual values, interests, and worldviews. And when the ideological or cultural landscape shifts, the system should respond – not with inertia, but with new coalitions, policy concepts, and competing visions for the future.

However, the current configuration of the U.S. electoral system tends to short-circuit that process of organic adaptation. Instead, the two-party framework compresses a deeply complex and diverse electorate into a structure that rewards polarization and ultimately makes democratic responsiveness nearly impossible. The resulting stagnation has produced a cascade of institutional and civic dysfunction, and a growing sense among American citizens that representative democracy is no longer capable of solving real problems.

Reform advocates have championed a variety of promising structural interventions in the electoral system, including ranked-choice voting (RCV), proportional representation (PR), and nonpartisan primaries. But while these reforms have gained ground in some states, overall progress has been fragmented and slow-moving.

One part of the challenge is strategic: the electoral reform ecosystem today for the most part lacks a shared messaging framework or a coordinated strategic roadmap, which makes it difficult to engage allies, persuade skeptics, and sustain public interest across election cycles. Another part of the challenge is rhetorical: electoral reform measures are often framed – in campaign materials, in the media, in public discourse – in fundamentally legal and/or procedural terms that obscure their deeper purpose of revitalizing pluralism in American democracy.

Nonetheless, soaring dissatisfaction with the political system throughout the American electorate is converging as we speak with a wave of institutional upheaval instigated by the current administration. That convergence is fostering an unusually dynamic political environment – and a crisis or disruptive event could rapidly accelerate the public appetite for reform. If that moment arrives, the field must be prepared, not just with good ideas but with unified messaging and a coherent strategy for engaging with the entire range of relevant stakeholders.

Drawing on insights from strategic planning theory, democratic scholarship, and interviews with advocates and stakeholders across the reform landscape, this report proposes two linked initiatives designed to meet these challenges:

***More Better Choices*** is a communications campaign framework intended to unify diverse electoral reform efforts under a single, resonant message. It shifts the debate from legal design to democratic legitimacy, and from how votes are counted to whether voters feel that they and their

choices matter. And it reframes reform as an opportunity not just for voters, but for legislators and party leaders to build more coherent coalitions and reassert democratic leadership in an era of institutional decay.

*6PC* is an interactive multimedia project that simulates a functioning six-party Congress and offers a vivid and accessible way for Americans to experience what a more pluralistic democracy could look like. Together, these efforts aim to build narrative momentum, engage a wider range of stakeholders, and lay the groundwork for long-term structural change.

This report proceeds in sections. Section II explores the structural and ideological nature of the current democratic crisis and explains why electoral reform offers a uniquely systemic solution. Section III provides a strategic analysis of the current reform landscape, maps key stakeholders and their incentives, introduces a theory of change grounded in strategic planning literature, and presents the *More Better Choices* and *6PC* initiatives in detail. Section IV contains supplemental campaign assets, including draft op-eds, an explainer video script, a policy memo, and a draft grant proposal. A final section includes full academic references.

By combining strategic clarity with a message rooted in voter empowerment and public legitimacy, the reform movement may be able to channel widespread political discontent into support for meaningful structural change - and begin the process of rebuilding a more functional, inclusive, and responsive democracy in the United States. The proposal contained in this report is intended to strengthen and accelerate that process.

## II. Overview and Background Context

The United States faces a profound crisis of democratic governance, marked by escalating partisan polarization, legislative gridlock, populist resentment, and institutional decay, as well as a growing disconnect between the two-party framework and the ideological landscape animating the electorate. Extensive polling in the aftermath of the 2024 election – from CNN, YouGov, the Economist, NBC News, and other sources<sup>1</sup> – confirms that a large and growing number of Americans feel alienated from both major political parties. The Democratic Party, for its part, is riven by tension between its liberal center and progressive left. The Republican Party, under Donald Trump, has abandoned many of its prior ideological commitments and reconstituted itself as a vehicle for authoritarian populism. Neither party offers a clearly legible or stable program, yet partisan identification remains stubbornly fixed.

The story of how American politics arrived at its present state of dysfunction is still being written, but scholars have persuasively identified some key themes. The framework most relevant to our discussion here focuses on structural shifts in the partisan-ideological environment over the past eighty years. The basic story is fairly well-established in the literature: In the postwar era, both of the two major parties in American politics functioned as “big tents”; i.e. they were diverse enough to accommodate Americans representing a variety of ideological and cultural perspectives. In this environment, party leaders operated in a multidimensional negotiating environment, managing loose coalitions within their own caucuses, with considerable space to bargain in multiple directions, and with different combinations of factions, on an issue-by-issue basis.

But since the 1990s, a wide range of observers agree that partisan politics in the United States has evolved in a more polarized and dysfunctional direction.<sup>2</sup> That trajectory was compounded in the 2000s by a series of high-profile institutional failures – the 9/11 attacks, the Iraq War, the bungled federal response to Hurricane Katrina, the financial crisis, and the Great Recession. These events significantly eroded public trust, stoked resentment toward political and economic elites, and set the stage for the populist backlash that has reshaped American politics over the past fifteen years.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery, David. “Many Americans dislike both Biden and Trump. Here’s how polls say they’ll vote.” YouGov, April 10, 2025. <https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/49109-many-dislike-both-biden-trump-polls-vote>; Edwards-Levy, Ariel. “CNN Poll: A record share of Americans want the government to get more done. Few trust either party to do it.” CNN, June 1 2025. <https://www.cnn.com/2025/06/01/politics/cnn-poll-republicans-democrats>; Bowman, Bridget and Ben Kasimar. “Poll: A sizeable chunk of Americans think neither party ‘fights for people like you’.” NBC News, April 25, 2025. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/poll-sizeable-chunk-americans-think-neither-party-fights-people-rcna202884>

<sup>2</sup> Cuik, David J. “Value Disagreement and Partisan Sorting in the American Mass Public.” *Political Research Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (2023): 60-74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129211072558>; Abramowitz, Alan. “The Polarized American Electorate: The Rise of Partisan-Ideological Consistency and Its Consequences.” *Political Science Quarterly* 137, no. 4 (December 1, 2022): 645–74. <https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.13388>; Desilver, Drew. “The Polarization in Today’s Congress Has Roots That Go Back Decades.” Online Report, Pew Research Center, March 10, 2022. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/03/10/the-polarization-in-todays-congress-has-roots-that-go-back-decades/>.

<sup>3</sup> Harold, Jacob. “Understanding the Crisis in Institutional Trust.” Online Report, The Urban Institute, April 2024. [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Understanding\\_the\\_Crisis\\_in\\_Institutional\\_Trust.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Understanding_the_Crisis_in_Institutional_Trust.pdf);

In a healthy, well-functioning democratic system, such episodes of discontent and institutional distrust should theoretically generate new political alignments, platforms, and coalitions that reflect the electorate's evolving values and adapt to new and emerging issues. Indeed, it's not difficult to imagine how a less polarized version of American politics might have self-corrected over the course of the 2010s (e.g. by moving toward a more populist/egalitarian economic policy regime while re-emphasizing technocratic competence and responsive, transparent governance at the institutional level). That sort of evolution might have absorbed the political volatility of the post-neoliberal era while reinforcing democratic legitimacy and social trust among the electorate.

But despite the ascent of disruptive agents like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, the past decade of American politics was characterized less by organic evolution than by chaos, deterioration, and dysfunction. This report contends that the reasons why have a lot to do with partisan-ideological confusion on the part of the electorate.

In theory, partisan brands and ideological labels should serve as tools for citizens to orient themselves in the political discourse, helping voters connect their values to a meaningful set of policy preferences and political alignments.<sup>4</sup> But today, the Democratic and Republican brands are both mired in conditions of ambiguous crisis and transition. Even the terms “liberal” and “conservative” are increasingly incoherent, with each one potentially meaning a dozen different things in a dozen different contexts. (And, regardless, research shows that the direction of influence, from party to ideology and/or from ideology to party, is maddeningly convoluted.<sup>5</sup>) This kind of semantic disarray risks leaving voters unsure not only about what parties stand for, but about how to understand the political world itself.<sup>6</sup>

And without stable scaffolding to connect ideas and experiences with partisan-ideological platforms, many voters default to pure partisanship, not because of policy or ideological alignment, but because it provides a familiar and stabilizing identity in a disorienting world. That helps to explain why today, even as voters grow more frustrated with the overall system, the dominant partisan categories and the psychological power of polarization have remained strong.<sup>7</sup>

The bottom line is this: Despite the surface-level polarization in contemporary American politics, both parties contain competing factions with divergent policy views, rhetorical styles, and

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Gerstle, Gary. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Simas, Elizabeth N. *In Defense of Ideology: Reexamining the Role of Ideology in the American Electorate*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009228169>.

<sup>5</sup> Barber, Michael, and Jeremy C. Pope. “Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America.” *American Political Science Review* 113, no. 1 (February 2019): 38–54. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000795>.

<sup>6</sup> Hawkins, Stephen and Daniel Yudkin. “The Perception Gap That Explains American Politics.” *The Atlantic*, November 28, 2024. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/11/democrats-defined-progressive-issues/680810/>

<sup>7</sup> Mason, Lilliana. “‘I Disrespectfully Agree’: The Differential Effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59, no. 1 (January 2015): 128–45. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12089>; Lynn Vavreck, “Identity Politics: How All Your Identities Sway Your Vote,” *The Political Conversation with Wally Knox*, February 28, 2024. Online video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8ufz2-Y-Gg>

strategic aims; and cross-pressured voters remain relatively common underneath the surface of partisan identification.<sup>8</sup> But because the two major parties represent the only viable vehicles for political ambition under current electoral rules, the structural force of the two-party framework persists even as the substance underneath it dissolves.

Combine that dynamic with the impact of winner-take-all elections, gerrymandered legislative districts, and low-turnout partisan primaries, and you have a recipe for a sclerotic, unrepresentative democracy dominated by zombie parties whose strategic interests have little to do with either public service or persuasion (beyond pandering to their most committed and active base voters).<sup>9</sup>

It's tempting for many observers to jump directly from these observations – the reflexive, hollow character of contemporary partisan polarization and the expansive diversity of the ideological landscape relative to the two-party framework – to the prospect of a major third party emerging in the United States. Some, for instance, have imagined a progressive faction breaking off from the Democratic Party and forming its own party; others have imagined a new centrist party absorbing moderate liberals and “Never Trump” conservatives.

But a variety of steep obstacles makes it extraordinarily difficult structurally for third parties in the U.S. to scale at the national level. And perhaps more importantly, a third party would represent only a minimal response to the core problem – that the two-party system overlays a far more diverse ideological landscape in today's American electorate.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the problem is not the number of major parties on the ballot per se, especially if we're only talking about adding one additional meaningful choice, but rather the way the current configuration of the electoral system distorts competition, suppresses ideological diversity, and disincentivizes coalition-building.

Accordingly, the proposal detailed in the next section of this report prioritizes a specific set of reforms with the capacity to drive partisan and ideological diversification in the context of the current two-party environment, while also laying the groundwork for something closer to a multiparty environment in the future. These include ranked-choice voting, proportional representation, nonpartisan primaries, congressional expansion, independent districting, and multi-member legislative districts. (*Reform efforts centered on campaign financing, election security, ballot access, or voting procedures, while critically important in their own right, fall outside the scope of this report.*) Any one of these reforms, if implemented at scale, could serve as a wedge against today's dysfunctional polarization. But, as the next section of this report argues, the most promising path toward real change may depend on the potential for specific combinations of structural reforms to function in complementary, mutually supportive ways.

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<sup>8</sup> Fiorina, Morris P. *Unstable Majorities: Polarization, Party Sorting, and Political Stalemate*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2017; Abrams, Samuel J. *Unequal and Unrepresented: Political Inequality and the People's Voice in the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Drutman, Lee. *Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop: The Case for Multiparty Democracy in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Hawkins, Stephen, Daniel Yudkin, Miriam Juan-Torres, and Tim Dixon. “Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape.” PsyArXiv, August 21, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/xz25v>.

### III. Strategic Analysis and Proposal

#### a. Current Electoral Reform Landscape

The electoral reform landscape today is diverse and energetic, with dozens of groups promoting a variety of models in states across the country. These organizations include the National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers (NANR), FairVote, Unite America, RepresentUs, Open Primaries, Rank the Vote, American Promise, New America, the Institute for Political Innovation (IPI), and the Independent Voter Project (IVP).

Over the past decade, these and other organizations have pursued a range of electoral innovations across the country, working both independently and in state-specific coalitions. FairVote has championed state-level initiatives in Maine, Alaska, New York City, and Portland, Oregon, while RepresentUs and Unite America have focused on building cross-partisan alliances for anti-corruption and voting reform, including successful pushes for open primaries and independent redistricting in Michigan and Colorado. The Institute for Political Innovation has developed and promoted the “Final-Five Voting” model (which combines nonpartisan primaries and instant-runoff RCV) as a plausible reform path, with active campaigns now underway in Wisconsin and Nevada. Other efforts, like Alaska’s “Final Four” system, represent variations on this theme, demonstrating growing momentum behind structural reform at the state level. Furthermore, a range of polling efforts – including from MIT’s Election Data and Science Lab, FairVote, and Unite America<sup>11</sup> – consistently show widespread support for the underlying goals of reform.

However, the reform landscape remains generally fragmented. Staff at key reform organizations usually know each other and frequently interact, but mostly on an informal basis – via roundtables, advocacy conferences, etc.<sup>12</sup> Organizations share resources and provide re-granting services to one another, but there is little in the way of a central framework uniting these efforts into a cohesive vision for what a reformed democracy should look like, let alone a coordinated messaging strategy to promote that vision.

The closest thing to a shared theory of change within the electoral reform field can be found in a recent Bridgespan/Civitas report, *Betting on the Tortoise: Policy Incrementalism in a Radical Age*.<sup>13</sup> The report draws on a century of reform history in the U.S. to demonstrate how most

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<sup>11</sup> Coll, Joseph A., Caroline J. Taubert, and Michael Ritter. “Understanding Policy Mood for US Election Reform.” MIT Election Data and Science Lab, October 26, 2021. <https://electionlab.mit.edu/articles/understanding-policy-mood-us-election-reform>; Macomber, Carlo. “Poll: Voters Overwhelmingly Support Eliminating Partisan Primaries, Requiring Majority Winners.” Unite America, August 7, 2023. <https://www.uniteamerica.org/articles/voters-overwhelmingly-support-eliminating-partisan-primaries-requiring-majority-winners>; Otis, Deb. “Majority Support Ranked-Choice Voting and More Voter Choice in States with 2024 Election Reform Ballot Measures.” FairVote, March 12, 2025. <https://fairvote.org/majority-support-ranked-choice-voting-and-more-voter-choice-in-states-with-2024-election-reform-ballot-measures/>.

<sup>12</sup> Wahl, Dustin (Deputy Executive Director, Fix Our House), Interview with the Author, April 29, 2025; Hladick, Beth (Research and Outreach Director, Unite America), Interview with the Author, June 3, 2025; Hutchinson, Rachel (Senior Policy Analyst, FairVote), Interview with the Author, June 30, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Wahl, Dustin (Deputy Executive Director, Fix Our House), Interview with the Author, April 29, 2025; Hladick, Beth (Research and Outreach Director, Unite America), Interview with the Author, June 3, 2025; Foster, William, Marc Solomon, Eric Chen, and Zach Slobig. “Betting on the Tortoise: Policy Incrementalism and How Philanthropy’s Support Can Turn Small Sustained Steps into Big Impact.” Report: Civitas Public Affairs Group, The

major policy victories are built on a foundation of small, deliberate advances over the course of multiple decades. In other words, the authors suggest that "slow and steady" is not only a useful slogan, but a substantive description of how major policy reforms can persist toward success when the underlying conditions are adverse.

From the perspective of electoral reform advocates, the logic of decentralized incrementalism is sound.<sup>14</sup> Contemporary thinkers in strategic planning have moved decisively away from static models that assume stable conditions or predictability. Scholars like Jeanne Liedtka, Henry Mintzberg, and Richard Rumelt emphasize the limits of traditional pipeline-style planning in favor of models that prioritize adaptability, emergent strategy, and ongoing feedback loops.<sup>15</sup> Liedtka, for instance, stresses the importance of design thinking as an active planning tool that functions through iterative engagement with the problem space. Mintzberg goes further, arguing that many of the best strategies emerge not from top-down vision but from tactical learning, where coherence arises after the fact through disciplined improvisation. In a fragmented environment like electoral reform, where no single entity controls the pathway to change, these insights are essential. Strategic planning must balance flexibility and constraint, allowing reformers to move opportunistically as alliances shift or legal windows open but without losing sight of the larger transformation they are trying to catalyze.

But advocates should be cautious because the logic of incrementalism is also seductive - and in an ecosystem with multiple organizations, each with its own sources of funding, operational needs, and internal politics, an across-the-board commitment to decentralization could encourage a self-serving status quo when more broad-based coordination is needed to advance key objectives. In other words, the risk is that incrementalism, left unstructured, can become a euphemism for drift and "slow and steady" may give way to inertia, risk-aversion, or redundant pilot programs. Avoiding that outcome means investing in a coordinating framework that integrates individual policy goals into a broader narrative and communications campaign focused on the deeper purpose of reform: opening up the political system to make space for new coalitions and ideas.

The emphasis on the deeper purpose of reform is important for three reasons: (1) it provides a conceptual link between various different reform concepts (RCV, PR, etc.); (2) it's the element of electoral reform that citizens and voters actually understand and care about – and hence should be front-and-center in all electoral reform messaging; (3) it helps to identify activities and organizations not typically associated with "electoral reform" – e.g. caucus-building in Congress, bipartisan policy advocacy coalitions – that may be able to play a role in supporting its underlying goals. Without such scaffolding in the public mind, each incremental win risks being misunderstood, mischaracterized, or isolated from the broader movement. This is where *More Better Choices* and *6PC* come in, not to interfere with local experimentation or the organizational

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Bridgespan Group, April 2024. <https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/349e70b6-2210-48a8-b947-acb2c61b1027/betting-on-the-tortoise-policy-incrementalism-and-philanthropy-April2024.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Moore, Andy (Executive Director, National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers), Interview with the Author, May 8, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Rumelt, Richard P. 2011. *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters*. New York: Crown Business; Mintzberg, Henry. 1994. *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners*. New York: Free Press; Liedtka, Jeanne M. 1998. "Linking Strategic Thinking with Strategic Planning." *California Management Review* 37 (4): 30–54. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41165821>.

autonomy of various organizations in the reform ecosystem, but as the infrastructure to connect these efforts in the public mind and a channel for shared momentum.

## **b. Proposed New Initiatives: *More Better Choices* & *6PC***

*More Better Choices (MBC)* is a simple, resonant public brand that captures the underlying promise of all three reforms: to make electoral competition more substantive and meaningful, to invite a broader range of views into the political process, and to ease the rigid sorting pressures that have calcified partisan identities.

The name is intentionally intuitive, a little playful, and broadly accessible across educational and political lines. It reframes RCV, PR, and nonpartisan primaries not as wonky procedural abstractions, but as the foundation for a more representative and responsive political future (i.e. more better choices for voters). While policy advocates continue to pursue structural wins through ballot initiatives, litigation, and legislative reform, *MBC* will provide the connective tissue for public understanding and strategic alignment. It will also target and distribute its message strategically in support of specific reform efforts in specific states. In communications materials, this brand can function as a strategic umbrella under which national organizations, state-level campaigns, and local educators can align messaging and frame the reforms as part of a unified, commonsense solution.

*More Better Choices* also provides a platform for structured engagement between reformers, election lawyers, political consultants, civic intermediaries, and elected officials. These stakeholders bring different knowledge bases, interests, and constraints to the table, and *MBC* can help leverage that collective value by hosting roundtables, publishing joint statements, and identifying shared challenges across the decentralized reform ecosystem. By investing in this deliberative infrastructure, *MBC* ensures that public messaging is reinforced by internal coherence, and that critical stakeholders and institutional actors feel invested in the reform process.

To connect the campaign to a clear legislative goal, *MBC* will work to promote and support the Fair Representation Act, reintroduced in 2024 by Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA). The FRA provides a clean, tightly scoped reform blueprint centered on proportional ranked-choice voting in multi-member House districts. It reflects the complementary logic of the reforms proposed in this report while offering a ready-made federal vehicle for narrative alignment and political education. While unlikely to pass in the current Congress, the FRA gives reformers a forward-looking bill to support strategic clarity and long-term mobilization.

The reform community should also invest in the development and launch of a new interactive, podcast-style multimedia platform and educational initiative: *6PC* (short for "Six-Party Congress") to complement the *MBC* campaign. This initiative will serve as a digital media platform, public education tool, and long-term organizing infrastructure. Using podcasts, livestreams, op-eds, mock legislation, and coalition-building simulations, *6PC* will bring to life the vision of a more pluralistic House of Representatives, featuring representatives from six

major ideological blocs. (These blocs are based on Lee Drutman’s cluster analysis of respondents in the Nationscape dataset.<sup>16</sup>)

- Progressive Left
- Labor Populism
- Moderate Liberalism
- Moderate Conservatism
- Christian Conservatism
- Populist Nationalism

The *6PC* initiative is not a traditional reform effort – it’s an imaginative platform to show what cross-bloc negotiation and coalition governance might look like in a system freed from binary constraints. It will start by demonstrating possibilities through dialogue, then transition to advocacy efforts and proactive engagement with members of Congress, especially those involved with the growth and formalization of cross-partisan caucuses and informal legislative blocs. These structures, already emerging within both parties, could serve as “proto-parties” in a more diversified partisan ecosystem. Encouraging their development now – particularly within the Democratic Party – could ease the transition toward a future multiparty Congress. Over time, we envision officeholders and candidates voluntarily identifying with *6PC* blocs as a way to signal nuances in their ideological positions.

What distinguishes *More Better Choices* and *6PC* from other reform efforts is their focus on the deeper democratic functions underlying structural reforms. Rather than promoting specific legal mechanisms in isolation, both initiatives foreground the core purpose of electoral reform: to build a system that acknowledges political diversity and encourages real negotiation.

### **c. Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Recommendations**

The question of how *MBC* and *6PC* should engage with various stakeholders is more complex, given the variety of relevant interests and stakeholders. For instance, the Democratic and Republican parties have evolved in sharply contrasting directions over the past two decades, not only in terms of ideological substance but also in their organizational cultures, media ecosystems, and relationships to democratic norms – and those differences matter a lot when it comes to reformers’ engagement strategy.

In the near term, the Democratic Party is more a structurally aligned potential partner, not because its members are ideologically “closer” to the reform agenda, but because Democrats are already a de facto multiparty coalition. Their caucus spans urban progressives, suburban professionals, and a variety of identity- and/or issue-based affinity groups. Many Democratic leaders are acutely aware of the tensions and contradictions within the party and increasingly open to structural solutions that relieve intra-party pressure (sometimes with the side benefit of expanding representational bandwidth). The key opportunity is to frame reform not as a threat to party unity, but as a way to channel factional diversity into more durable and constructive blocs.

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<sup>16</sup> Wegman, Jesse, and Lee Drutman. “How to Fix America’s Two-Party Problem.” *The New York Times*, January 14, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/01/14/opinion/fix-congress-proportional-representation.html>.

The Republican Party, by contrast, poses a more complex and volatile challenge. The national GOP has increasingly aligned itself with anti-pluralist, post-democratic messaging and tactics, which are anathema to the core goals of the electoral reform movement. However, there are fissures between establishment figures, institutional conservatives, libertarian-leaning factions, and the MAGA faction. Reformers should aim to engage selectively and on pragmatic terms but with few expectations, building relationships with state-level Republicans, conservative election officials, and libertarian-aligned voices who may support reforms like ranked-choice voting or nonpartisan primaries on procedural or anti-establishment grounds.

The broader strategic imperative is to depolarize the conversation about reform (i.e. to remove it from left-right, liberal-conservative, Democrat-Republican frameworks) without de-politicizing it. By inviting Democrats to lead with pluralistic ambition and creating off-ramps for Republicans disillusioned with the current trajectory of their party, the reform movement can align itself with the deeper currents of democratic renewal that still exist on both sides of the aisle.

For sitting legislators, especially those in politically vulnerable districts, structural electoral reform may offer a number of practical and strategic benefits. Multi-member districts and proportional representation could substantially ease the pressure of zero-sum primary contests and allow lawmakers to align themselves with more coherent ideological blocs. Rather than contorting their messaging to satisfy incompatible factions within a single-member district, legislators could stake out clearer policy positions and compete on a more level playing field. As outlined in the policy memo in Appendix C, these reforms would reduce the existential risk associated with every race and open new channels for self-definition and coalition-building within Congress, which rank-and-file members rarely have the latitude to pursue under current conditions.

Within the broader political ecosystem, stakeholders basically fall into three rough categories: likely allies, persuadable targets, and entrenched adversaries. The first group includes existing third parties (the libertarian party, the green party), nonpartisan issue advocates, civic intermediaries, and existing electoral reform organizations. These actors are natural allies for the *More Better Choices* campaign. Third parties and independent candidates, often excluded or marginalized under current rules, are obvious beneficiaries of reforms like ranked-choice voting and proportional representation. Civic organizations focused on democratic participation, political education, or good governance are longstanding partners of the electoral reform movement and may be in a unique position to spearhead campaigns and generate support among low-trust communities.<sup>17</sup> Reform NGOs like FairVote, Unite America, RepresentUs, and NANR are already doing foundational work and will be essential to any coalition that seeks broader narrative cohesion. The challenge here is less one of persuasion and more one of coordination. What's needed is a framework that allows these actors to align their messaging and campaign logic without compromising their autonomy, and to help them grasp the full potential value of that increased alignment.

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<sup>17</sup> Moore, Andy (Executive Director, National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers), Interview with the Author, May 8, 2025.

The second group – targets for persuasion – encompasses institutional actors whose interests may or may not entirely align with reform and whose support may depend on circumstantial factors. That includes funders and philanthropists, political journalists and media commentators, and state and local election administrators. Philanthropic organizations increasingly recognize that political dysfunction undercuts long-term policy goals in areas like climate, education, and public health; but many still regard electoral reform as too abstract or contentious to fund at scale. The task here is to translate strategic branding and campaign infrastructure into a theory of change that resonates with institutional funders. Media and commentary professionals can play a key role in promoting reform but they are often skeptical of spotlighting “wonky” reform concepts that don’t directly translate into compelling, accessible narratives.<sup>18</sup> That’s where *6PC* can play a bridging function: by modeling what a multi-party Congress might actually look and feel like, it gives political journalists a story to tell, as well as soundbites and video content to bring that story to life. For election administrators, the key is to demonstrate that reforms like RCV and nonpartisan primaries can make their jobs easier in the long run by reducing political volatility and reinforcing public trust.

A final group – entrenched adversaries – includes stakeholders whose interests or identities are fundamentally intertwined with the existing two-party framework. MAGA-aligned factions, hyper-partisan media outlets, and partisan consultants are unlikely to be partners in good faith. Of these, partisan consultants may be the most quietly corrosive. While they often present themselves as technical experts or loyal campaign professionals, many have a vested interest in preserving a system that forces candidates into negative campaigning and narrows the range of viable political identities.<sup>19</sup> As long as polarization remains the dominant mode of political engagement, there will be value for consultants to extract – cutting attack ads, managing donor relations, activating base supporters, etc., and electoral reform poses a direct threat to this business model.

Party leaders sit somewhere between targets for persuasion and likely adversaries. Some will view reform as a threat to their authority; others may see it as a way to restore coherence and durability to their coalitions. The key is to recognize that leadership incentives are highly contingent, and in moments of deep political crisis or when internal management becomes too unstable, reform may begin to look less like a disruption and more like a pressure-release valve. Reformers should be prepared to make the case that reform and partisan diversification will likely give them more options, not fewer, for managing their caucuses and navigating institutional breakdown.

At the center of all of this – more fundamental than parties, institutions, or interest groups – is the general public. American voters are not so much apathetic as confused and exhausted by the politics of the past fifteen years. Many are not plugged into fine-grained debates around electoral systems and reform concepts, nor are they likely to seek out policy white papers or research reports. What they do feel, viscerally and consistently, is that the overall political system is

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<sup>18</sup> Hladick, Beth (Research and Outreach Director, Unite America), Interview with the Author, June 3, 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Wahl, Dustin (Deputy Executive Director, Fix Our House), Interview with the Author, April 29, 2025; Hladick, Beth (Research and Outreach Director, Unite America), Interview with the Author, June 3, 2025; Hutchinson, Rachel (Senior Policy Analyst, FairVote), Interview with the Author, June 30, 2025.

rigged, unresponsive, and increasingly unrecognizable. Voters don't need abstract proceduralism. They need a vision.

That's the role *More Better Choices* and *6PC* are designed to play. They don't replace the legal and policy work happening across the reform field; they connect it to the public in a way that feels grounded and actionable. By offering a shared story and a concrete picture of what reform could actually look like, these initiatives create the clarity and momentum that voters need to reengage with the democratic process and support the movement for reform.

## **VI. Appendices**

## Appendix A

Op-Ed for Major National Political Publications (e.g. Politico, The Hill, The Bulwark)  
Target Audiences: Political Elites, Persuadable Skeptics, Potential Funders and Leaders

### **Electoral Reform Isn't a Fantasy. It's a Strategic Opportunity for Serious Operators.**

*By the More Better Choices coalition*

Electoral reform has a reputation problem. Among many experts and insiders, it's seen as admirable but quixotic – one of those ideas that polls well, plays to frustration, and then dies quietly in a Rules Committee drawer. The political logic, according to these skeptics, just doesn't add up. Any serious reform would have to be enacted by incumbents, who'd have to be willing to loosen their grip on a system that got them elected in the first place.

That logic is compelling, but it's also incomplete.

The House of Representatives today isn't governed so much as it's managed – almost always reactively, often frantically, and generally without durable coalitions. Leadership wields more procedural control than ever but less actual leverage. Members on both sides are hemmed in by primary risk, zero-sum incentives, and a performative media culture that rewards maximalism and punishes compromise. Even the most capable legislators spend more time navigating intra-party conflict than developing policy or negotiating serious deals.

Electoral reform – especially the model outlined in the Fair Representation Act – could open up a lot of space for new, more productive dynamics to emerge.

By replacing single-member districts with larger, proportional multi-member districts, the FRA would reduce the constant state of triage that defines modern congressional politics. Party leaders would no longer need to force ideological cohesion in every race or stretch a single message across incompatible constituencies. Multiple Democratic or Republican candidates could win in the same district, which would encourage a shift from internecine cannibalism to constructive competition.

The result? Less existential pressure on every race. More flexibility for members. More tools for leadership. Committees could function again. Members might actually want to stick around!

For Democratic leaders in particular, the politics of reform could be highly effective. Voters are desperate for meaningful alternatives and sick of being told that dysfunction is inevitable. A coordinated push for diversification and structural reform could reset the brand and position Democrats as the party of serious institutional repair.

The reform community understands it needs to evolve, too. That's why we've launched More Better Choices, a national campaign to unify messaging across ballot initiatives and legislative efforts. Our campaign presents electoral reform not as a technical intervention, but as the organizing logic for a better system.

And to show what that system might look like, we're also launching 6PC, a podcast-style multimedia platform that imagines a six-party Congress and simulates real legislative negotiations across ideological blocs. The goal is to give voters, donors, and decision-makers a reason to believe in what could come next.

The stakes aren't abstract; they are real. Reform isn't a threat to power; it's a tool to use it better. And it might be closer to within reach than it seems.

## Appendix B

Longform LinkedIn Post

Target Audiences: Mainstream Middle America

### **To Fix American Politics, Give Voters *More Better Choices*.**

*By the More Better Choices coalition*

American politics doesn't feel functional anymore. It feels stuck. Nothing changes, nothing works, and no one really represents you.

You're not imagining things. Most voters today say they don't feel fully at home in either major party, but the structure of our elections doesn't give them real alternatives. It forces them into a choice between two national brands, both of which are internally divided, increasingly dysfunctional, and more focused on defeating the other side than solving problems.

This isn't just about money in politics or partisan gridlock or bad candidates; it's about a system that hasn't evolved to reflect the country we live in now. That system can change. And it starts by giving voters more meaningful options on the ballot – and not just between parties, but within them as well.

That's the goal of a national campaign we're launching to unify and simplify how we talk about reform. It's called *More Better Choices* because that's what electoral reform is really about. It's not a technical process or a policy niche, but a chance to build a better, more representative democracy in America.

Here's how it works: Reforms like ranked-choice voting, nonpartisan primaries, and proportional representation give voters a better chance to express their actual views—and give elected officials more flexibility to form coalitions and govern. A lot of the time, these changes need to happen one state at a time. But together, over time, they loosen the grip of the two-party system and make room for a more responsive and pluralistic political culture. So it makes sense to think of them as a collective, especially since they're all aimed at the same basic goal: again, giving voters more better choices.

These kinds of reforms aren't hypothetical. They're already being tested at the state level in places like Maine, Alaska, and Nevada. And now, they're gaining traction nationally. The Fair Representation Act, recently reintroduced in Congress, combines several of the most promising reforms, replacing single-member House districts with larger, multi-member districts and using ranked-choice voting to ensure fairer outcomes. If passed, it would be the most significant structural update to American elections in generations.

Still, too many people haven't heard about these reforms. And too many others assume that the politics are impossible.

Most Americans don't need convincing that the current system is broken. They just need to know that something better is within reach. That's why the More Better Choices coalition is working to unite Americans across the political spectrum around a shared vision of a more representative and functional political system – and a shared roadmap for how to get there.

We don't have to settle for crisis and dysfunction. With the right reforms and the right message, we can build a better and more democratic system – one that reflects the full reality of who we are, what we believe, and what we want for the future.

## Appendix C

Script for 90-Second YouTube-style Explainer Video  
Target Audiences: Average Voters, Political Hobbyists

**[Title Card: “More Better Choices”]**

**V/O Narrator (friendly, conversational):**

*You may have heard about stuff like “electoral reform,” “ranked-choice voting,” or even “proportional representation.”*

*Sounds complicated, right? It’s actually super simple:*

*Those are all just fancy ways of saying “More Better Choices.”*

*More candidates who actually reflect what you believe.  
Better choices on the ballot so you don’t have to choose the lesser of two evils.  
And a system that rewards politicians who get stuff done for the voters who elected them.*

**[Cut to: Voter at a ballot box, confused by two bad options.]**

*Right now, too many elections feel like a coin toss between the extreme left and the extreme right.  
And Congress? When was the last time you heard about anything other than chaos and drama on the Hill?*

**[Cut to: Quick flashes of headlines: “Shutdown Looms,” “No Speaker Elected.”]**

*The truth is, the current electoral system rewards gridlock. It punishes new ideas.  
And it locks voters into two narrow lanes, whether those lanes fit or not.*

*But what if we could build a system where voters had more options?  
Where third party candidates competed without fear of “spoiling” the race?  
Where elected officials could actually form coalitions and get things done?*

**[Cut to: Animated cycle of scenes: voting, congressional debate, signing legislation, shovels going into ground, construction equipment, etc.]**

*That’s the idea behind More Better Choices, a new campaign to reimagine our elections so they work better for all of us.*

*It’s not about helping one party or hurting another.  
It’s about making democracy work better—by giving voters real choices, and giving Congress better tools to govern.*

**[Final screen: QR Code and Logo – “More Better Choices” with tagline underneath:  
“More voices. Better outcomes.”]**

*So the next time you hear about “electoral reform,” remember:  
It’s not complicated. It’s just about More Better Choices.*

**[End card: QR Code and “Subscribe. Learn More. Take Action.”]**

## Appendix D

### Memorandum

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**To:** House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries  
**From:** More Better Choices  
**Subject:** How the Fair Representation Act Could Strengthen Democratic Leadership in the House, Ease Factional Tensions, and Help Redefine the Party  
**Date:** TBD

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#### Executive Summary

The Fair Representation Act offers House Democrats a chance to reassert control over a fracturing and rapidly deteriorating legislative environment. Electoral reform is often framed as a high-risk institutional overhaul, but the FRA provides a path to a more resilient, pluralistic House Democratic caucus where ideological diversity can be managed through structured negotiation as opposed to reactive messaging.

By replacing single-member districts with multi-member districts and implementing proportional representation with ranked-choice voting, the bill would reduce primary pressure, relieve internal tension, and give leadership greater flexibility to manage the party as a modern coalition. It also gives Democrats a fresh reform narrative.

We recommend preparing the ground quietly through selective member education, private coalition-building, and message-testing with reform-aligned partners. The goal isn't a headline; it's a positioning play: to make House Democrats the party of institutional renewal and political choice.

#### Context and Rationale

The Democratic caucus already basically operates as a coalition, but the House is not built to support one. The structure of single-member districts forces artificial cohesion where flexibility is needed. The FRA delivers that flexibility.

Multi-member districts would reduce the threat posed by primary challenges and allow a wider range of Democratic candidates to succeed without fracturing the party. In districts where both moderates and progressives have real constituencies, both can win seats thus eliminating the need for messaging wars or loyalty tests (and probably encouraging more productive dialogue between the factions over time).

#### Strategic Advantages for Leadership

Internally, a more parliamentary-style environment would enable leadership to work with issue-focused blocs more flexibly, brokering majorities along the lines of overlapping interests instead of managing a brittle coalition with the usual blunt tools. That would in turn create more room for legislative strategy and less time spent containing conflict.

It could also strengthen and help to redefine the Democratic brand by seizing the mantle of reform and pluralism. Supporting the FRA signals seriousness about institutional repair without jeopardizing existing power structures.

## **Conclusion**

The Fair Representation Act offers a modern framework for managing a big-tent party and positions Democrats as the party of credible, pluralistic reform. We urge Democratic leadership to begin laying the groundwork now – not with a splashy rollout, but with quiet coalition-building and message testing. This is a long-term play. But the political upside is real, and the moment is ripe.

# Appendix E

## Grant Proposal

**Project Title:** More Better Choices: A National Campaign for Structural Electoral Reform and Partisan Diversification

**For Submission to:** Arnold Ventures, Quadrivium, Omidyar Network

**Funding Request:** \$860,000 over 18 months

### 1. Overview

American democracy is facing a crisis and it's hard to see a way out that doesn't involve the implementation of major structural reform. While dozens of organizations are working on electoral reform, the field remains fragmented, and the public remains largely uninformed about the most promising solutions. What's missing is a unifying theory of change that speaks to both institutional strategy and the public imagination.

*More Better Choices* is a coordinated campaign to fill that gap. Built around a simple and resonant public brand, the initiative will work to promote the deeper objectives behind three mutually reinforcing reforms: ranked-choice voting, proportional representation, and nonpartisan primaries. These reforms, pursued in concert, represent the clearest structural path toward a more representative and functional democracy.

At the center of the campaign will be *6PC*, a multimedia public education platform that brings the concept of a six-party Congress to life. Through interactive storytelling, coalition-building simulations, policy debates, candidate endorsements, and narrative branding, *6PC* will offer voters and the general public a vivid picture of what a reformed democracy could look like and why it's worth fighting for.

### 2. Theory of Change

Our approach builds on the incrementalist strategy outlined in "Betting on the Tortoise" by Bridgespan and Civitas, which documents how national reform movements achieve systemic change through decades of local wins and sustained investment.

*More Better Choices* complements that model by building the narrative scaffolding necessary to unify reform coalitions and educate the public about the potential benefits of reform. By combining strategic branding, coalition coordination, and public-facing storytelling, the campaign aims to:

- Lower the activation threshold for ordinary voters by replacing procedural jargon with plain-language values (e.g., "More Better Choices").
- Unify reform efforts under a shared conceptual umbrella without centralizing control.

- Lay the psychological and political groundwork for major reform legislation (e.g., the Fair Representation Act).
- Cultivate a new generation of leaders and voters who can navigate a multiparty system.

### **3. Program Components**

Narrative and Brand Development: Develop and deploy the *More Better Choices* brand across toolkits, social content, and outreach collateral; align messaging across partner organizations and state-level initiatives.

The 6PC Platform: Launch a digital media hub that animates a six-party Congress through fictionalized personas, podcasts, mock bills, and coalition-building simulations. Feature “candidate” interviews, legislative debates, and party alignment tools to engage users. Explore earned media partnerships and cross-promotion with aligned civic education efforts.

Stakeholder and Coalition Engagement: Organize convenings of reform leaders, funders, and Hill staff to explore informal caucus-building and future legislative strategy. Build an advisory board that includes scholars, state officials, and reform veterans. Offer strategic support to state-based campaigns where 6PC parties might take root.

### **4. Budget Summary (18 Months)**

Personnel (3 core staff + consultants): \$300,000  
 Design & Branding: \$100,000  
 6PC Platform Development (web, podcast, content): \$200,000  
 Convenings & Stakeholder Engagement: \$80,000  
 Paid Media & Distribution: \$100,000  
 Evaluation & Metrics: \$30,000  
 Fiscal Sponsor/Admin: \$50,000

Total: \$860,000

### **V. Outcomes and Evaluation**

Success will be measured not only in policy wins but in strategic alignment and narrative reach. Specific benchmarks include:

- Launch of *6PC* and growth to 10,000 engaged users in the first year.
- Earned media coverage in 10 national and local outlets.
- Alignment with at least 8 key reform organizations under the *More Better Choices* banner.

- Demonstrated increase in public understanding and favorability of PR, RCV, and nonpartisan primaries, as measured by survey and digital analytics.

This is a moment of acute institutional risk – but also rare opportunity. *More Better Choices* and *6PC* offer a credible, cost-effective way to align the reform movement, meet the public where it is, and shift the conversation toward a healthier democratic future. We invite you to join us in building the infrastructure for that future.

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