

How the GOP Could Steal the 2012 Election: Corporate Vote Theft and the Future of American Democracy

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Global Research, August 02, 2012

[Scoop](#) 2 August 2012

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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The Republican Party could steal the 2012 US Presidential election with relative ease.

Four major factors make it possible: the continued existence of the Electoral College, the systematic disenfranchisement of millions of American voters over the past decade, the widespread and growing use of electronic voting machines, and GOP control of the governorships and secretary of state offices in the key swing states that will once again decide the election.

To this we must add the likelihood that the core of the activist community that came out to protect the vote for Barack Obama in 2008 may not do so again in 2012.

Towering over it all, of course, is the reality that corporate money has come to totally dominate the American electoral process. The John Roberts US Supreme Court has definitively opened the floodgates with its infamous Citizens United decision. But for well over a century, at least since the 1880s, corporations have ruled American politics. Back then the courts began to confer on corporations the privileges of human rights without the responsibilities of human decency.

Citizens United has taken that reality to a whole new level. As the 2012 election approaches we are watching gargantuan waves of unrestricted capital pouring into political campaigns at all levels. The June recall election in Wisconsin saw at least 8 times as much money being spent on protecting Republican governor Scott Walker as was spent trying to oust him.

Nationwide this year, the corporate largess vastly favors Republicans over Democrats. But since both parties are essentially corporate in nature, that could change in coming elections, and may even vary in certain races in 2012.

We do not believe that once given the chance, the Republicans are any more prone to stealing elections than the Democrats.

And that is a major point of this book. On its surface, the prime focus of our nation's sorry history of stolen elections has to do with Democrats stealing elections from Republicans and vice-versa. In 2012 it will be primarily Republicans using gargantuan sums of corporate money to take control of the government from Democrats, and democracy be damned.

But in the longer view, the more important reality is that the corruption of our electoral system is perfectly geared toward crushing third and other parties whose focus is

challenging a corporate status quo deeply entrenched in war, inequality, and ecological destruction.

So as we trace the stories of election theft dating all the way back to John Adams and Tom Jefferson, we do fret over the corruption that defines so much of the back-and-forth between Democrats and Republicans. But we hope that you, the reader, will always remember that whatever the corporate parties do to each other separately pales before what they will do together to crush non-corporate forces like the Populist Party, the Socialist movement and the grassroots campaigns for peace, justice and ecological preservation. This applies to both candidates running for office and referenda aimed at directly changing policy.

Yes, we are concerned with the injustice and corrupting nature of the reality that corporate money could fund a series of anti-democratic tricks that will steal the 2012 election away from the intent of the American electorate. Given the choices facing us, this means Mitt Romney could well become president despite the possibility of a legitimate victory by Barack Obama.

But far more important in the long run is that the ability to do this by either corporate party (or both of them) means no third party will be allowed to break through in future elections to make meaningful change in this country—at least not through the ballot box.

No reality could be more grim for a nation that long-ago pioneered modern democracy and seemed to bring to the world the possibility of a society in which the possibility of continually making meaningful, life-giving change was guaranteed along with the right to vote.

American history is chock full of election abuse from both parties, dating at least back to 1800, when the Democrat-Republican Thomas Jefferson wrested the presidency from Federalist John Adams based on the “votes” of African-American slaves who were allowed nowhere near a ballot box.

That Adams spent the next six years muttering about that theft before he opened a legendary exchange of letters with his former friend and rival did nothing to rid the country of the Electoral College that made it possible. Nor did it prevent his son, John Quincy, from using it to steal the 1824 election from a very angry slaveowner named Andrew Jackson, who then formed the Democratic Party that now claims Barack Obama.

But in 2012, the GOP controls the registration rolls and the swing state vote count in ways that the Democrats do not.

It will be the Republicans’ choice as to how far they are willing to go to put Mitt Romney in the White House. But as this book will show, they have the power to do it if they’re willing to use it.

They did not have that option in 2008, when Barack Obama and Joe Biden defeated John McCain and Sarah Palin. Ohio had a Democratic governor and secretary of state that year. Obama safely carried the usually decisive Buckeye State in 2008, along with enough additional swing states to put him in the White House.

But when John Kerry failed in Ohio 2004, he handed George W. Bush a second term in ways that paralleled Bush’s initial coming to power in the bitterly disputed election of 2000. In

both elections, the defeated Democrat refused to raise the issue of widespread corporate-sponsored fraud. This book lays out much of the evidence that both elections were, in fact, stolen, and shows how the same means used to do it back then are likely to be repeated this year.

The difference in Ohio 2008, as in much of the nation, was that candidate Barack Obama inspired millions of young, committed, active supporters to work overtime for his election. They came out in droves to promote and protect voter registration, monitor polling places, challenge faulty and discriminatory ballot procedures, scrutinize voting machines and otherwise guarantee a more fair and balanced vote count.

In his four years as President, Barack Obama has alienated much of the grassroots activist community that put him in the White House. Due to his stances on nuclear power, bank bailouts, social justice, civil liberties, medical marijuana and other issues that are near and dear to grassroots activists, Obama has prompted the progressive press to be filled with “disappointment” at the very least. As usual, the left community—infamous for its circular firing squads—has already begun tearing itself apart over whether to vote for Obama’s re-election.

But that debate is beside the point. Given the delicate corporate balance on the US Supreme Court, and a wide range of tipping point issues that include women’s rights and the environment, many or even most of those who worked for Obama in 2008 are likely to vote for him again this year.

But just their votes will not make the difference, any more than they did in 2008.

What was decisive in that election was the presence of tens of thousands of committed activists who were willing to devote hours, days, weeks to registering voters, getting them to the polls, making sure they survived challenges to their right to vote, watching over the ballots, doing exit polling, monitoring electronic voting machines and the counts they rendered, making sure the media was aware of resulting abuses—or spreading them through the internet—and otherwise guaranteeing that what had happened in 2000 and 2004 did not happen again in 2008.

Their presence is what put Barack Obama in the White House. But his policies there have done little to encourage those activists to come back to work for him in 2012. Their ballots will probably go his way, but the ardent commitment that defined the 2008 election is clearly missing. So is ACORN, a key long-standing grassroots voter advocacy organization that was destroyed by a concerted GOP attack that succeeded through the cynical but highly effective use of entrapment and disinformation that succeeded in its purpose while Obama stood silent.

Without that activist core to protect the voter rolls, balloting procedures and vote counts this year, Obama and the Democrats are highly vulnerable to a re-run of what was done to Al Gore and John Kerry in 2000 and 2004.

We do not yet know if Obama’s policies, so widely perceived as pro-corporate, will yield him enough corporate cash to match what Mitt Romney will raise. That both parties are dominated by corporations is a forgone conclusion. In 2008 Obama managed to balance that reality with a hugely successful portrayal of himself as a man of and for the grassroots.

At least among the activist community, that perception is long gone. It remains to be seen whether Obama's decision to court the corporations at the expense of the grassroots will yield him a financial war chest larger than what Mitt Romney can raise.

We also can't pinpoint the exact advantages—if any—the additional corporate dollars might yield Obama and the Democrats in their attempt to keep the White House.

But simply put: even if he succeeds in winning a legitimate majority of the American electorate, there are not likely to be enough grassroots activists inspired by the hard realities of Barack Obama's presidency to put in the grueling work that will be needed to guarantee a voter turnout and ensure a vote count fair enough to give him a second term.

In this book, we show why such a national grassroots effort to guarantee a fair election will be necessary to Barack Obama's re-election. And why without it the GOP is virtually certain to put Mitt Romney in the White House come January, 2013.

That such an effort would also be key to what happens in the races for the US Senate and House of Representatives goes without saying, and we'll discuss that after we deal with the presidency.

Carried along by the tsunami of corporate cash now pouring into American politics, there are four key factors that could allow the Republican Party to steal the 2012 presidential election:

The continued presence of the Electoral College;

The systematic disenfranchisement of millions of legitimate American voters, most of them likely Democrats;

The widespread use of electronic voting machines.

The Republican control of the governorships and secretary of state offices in the key swing states should decide the 2012 election for Romneys.

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