

Study: US Congress Literally Doesn't Care What You Think

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Have you ever felt like the government doesn't really care what you think?

Professors Martin Gilens (Princeton University) and Benjamin I. Page (Northwestern University) looked at more than 20 years worth of data to answer a simple question: Does the government represent the people?

Their study took data from nearly 2000 public opinion surveys and compared it to the policies that ended up becoming law. In other words, they compared what the public wanted to what the government actually did. What they found was extremely unsettling: The opinions of 90% of Americans have essentially no impact at all.

This video gives a quick rundown of their findings — it all boils down to one simple graph:

Note: All sources linked at the bottom of this page

Princeton University study: Public opinion has “near-zero” impact on U.S. law.

Gilens & Page found that the number of Americans for or against any idea has no impact on the likelihood that Congress will make it law.

“The preferences of the average American appear to have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy.”

One thing that does have an influence? Money. While the opinions of the bottom 90% of income earners in America have a “statistically non-significant impact,” Economic elites, business interests, and people who can afford lobbyists still carry major influence.

Nearly every issue we face as a nation is caught in the grip of corruption.

10-YEAR SPENDING TO INFLUENCE U.S. GOVERNMENT, BY INDUSTRY

PHARMACEUTICAL

\$2.16 BIL.

ENERGY

\$2.93 BIL.

DEFENSE

\$1.26 BIL.

FINANCE

\$4.29 BIL.

AGRIBUSINESS

\$1.21 BIL.

COMMUNICATIONS

\$3.50 BIL.

From taxation to national debt, education to the economy, America is struggling to address our most serious issues. Moneyed interests get what they want, and the rest of us pay the price.

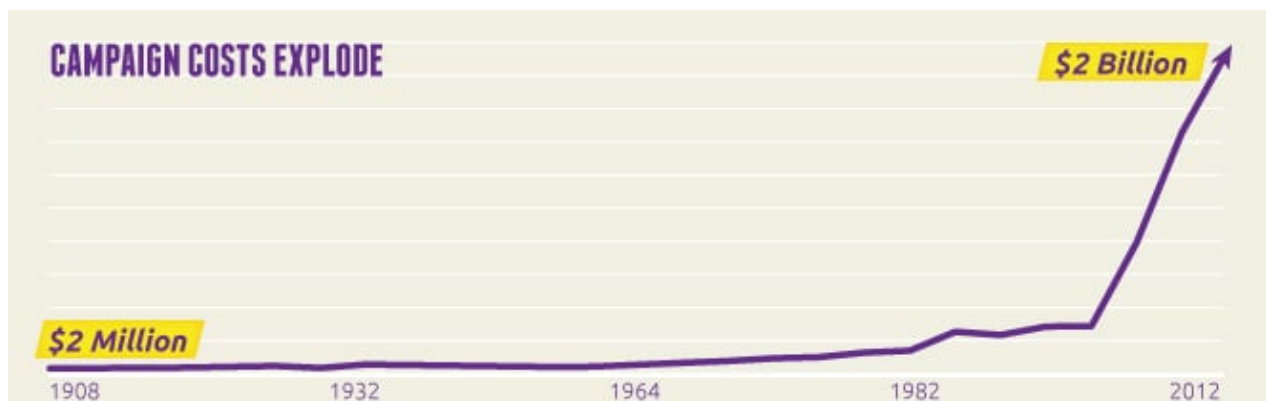
They spend billions influencing America's government. We give them trillions in return.



In the last 5 years alone, the 200 most politically active companies in the US spent \$5.8 billion influencing our government with lobbying and campaign contributions.

Those same companies got \$4.4 trillion in taxpayer support — earning a return of 750 times their investment.

It's a vicious cycle of legalized corruption.

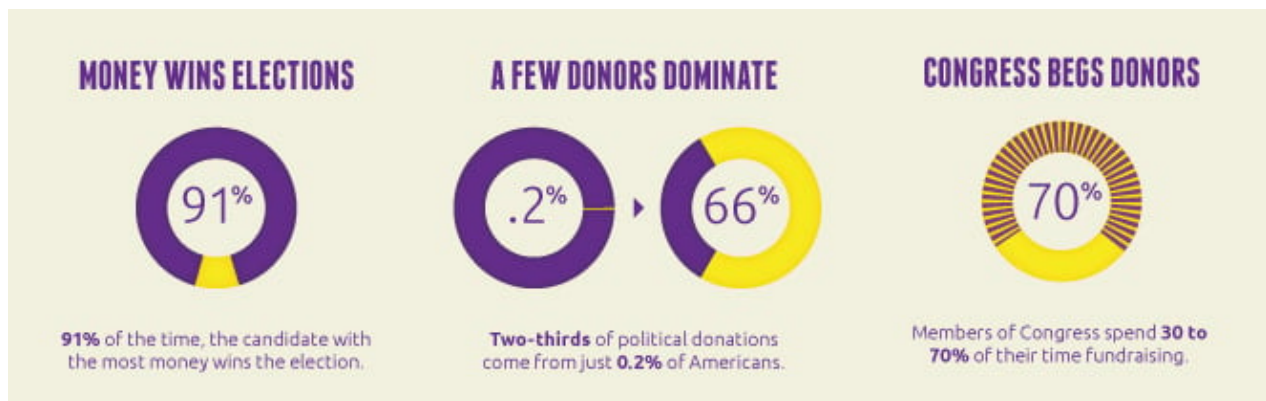


As the cost of winning elections explodes, politicians of both political parties become ever more dependent on the tiny slice of the population who can bankroll their campaigns.

To win a Senate seat in 2014, candidates had to raise \$14,351 every single day. Just .05% of

Americans donate more than \$10,000 in any election, so it's perfectly clear who candidates will turn to first, and who they're indebted to when they win.

In return for campaign donations, elected officials pass laws that are good for their mega-donors, and bad for the rest of us.



Our elected officials spend 30-70% of their time in office fundraising for the next election. When they're not fundraising, they have no choice but to make sure the laws they pass keep their major donors happy — or they won't be able to run in the next election.

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