



Rules Change -- *Rethinking the Playing Field for Corporations, People and Democracy*



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The ideas marketplace

View updates at: <http://ruleschangeblog.wordpress.com/ideas>

The Rules Change Project is designed to promote dialogue and discovery of common ground. We're defining the playing field for discussion within five general frames that can help understand relationships among specific initiatives and issues. If you want to make sure we are aware of your work, please email ruleschange2014@gmail.com. You can also see the working process of developing these Idea Marketplace concept by checking out [this wiki page](#).

THE FIVE FRAMES

1. The power, and voice, of money: Implementing campaign finance reform, Citizens United and the First Amendment. Reviewing the role of corporations in public policy, including charter reform.
2. Regulating, governing and owning business: Balancing the power of government and corporations – their purpose and long-term impact on all stakeholders – the environment, communities, employees – and investors. Co-ops and alternative ownership.
3. Engagement, advocacy and solutions: Moving from confrontation and partisanship to dialogue, deliberation, transparency and solutions – in the media, politics and workplaces.
4. Finding equality and justice for all: Measuring success and happiness – and a widening wealth and income gap. The impact of health care, taxes, wages and trade.
5. Securing sustainable communities and world: Measuring and creating incentives for investors and governments to focus on restoring an ecological balance across food, energy, transportation and habitat.

SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS

Here are some of the breakout or discussion topics under consideration. If you or your group would like to join as a participant, or help curate these or related sessions, please email ruleschange2014@gmail.com. You can also see the working process of developing these Idea Marketplace sessions by [checking out this wiki page](#).

A. Money, speech, elections and governing

1. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE? CITIZENS UNITED AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Following the Citizens United Supreme Court decision, an ever growing flood of campaign donations has made its way into state and federal political campaigns which most citizens feel powerless to change or reform. Though many national organizations are trying to address this issue, why has a critical mass of concerned, active citizens yet to be realized?

2. ENFORCING THE RULES: THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

In the 1970s, the Federal Election Commission was a saber-toothed enforcer of freshly minted campaign finance laws. But a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions have narrowed its scope – and appointments so partisan – to the point that few people have any idea of why it is needed or what can be done to reform it. How its original mission – carrying out a popular desire for transparent elections – be achieved in today's Washington without new authority or – at least – new focus?

3. ALEC AND CLOSED-DOOR POLICY: GOOD OR EVIL?

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has existed since the 1970s to bring together business leaders with state and federal legislators to discuss and draft bills addressing a wide range of issues affecting the economy and society. Most of the meetings are behind closed doors. Though very few citizens have ever heard of ALEC, the lack of transparency associated with activities has drawn increasing criticism in recent years. But can all policy be made in public? Can Washington be fixed behind closed doors?

4. EXPOSING DARK MONEY: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Critics say the growing receipt by candidates and policy groups of so-called “dark money” – very large political contributions made by unidentified donors threatens to transform our democracy into a plutocracy. What facts support this concern? Is it fair to equate anonymous money with anonymous speech, and give it First Amendment protection? Citizens need to better understand what options are possible for appropriate changes in financial-disclosure law and regulation.

5. CHALLENGING DYSFUNCTION: BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER & NO LABELS

The Bipartisan Policy Center and No Labels are two organizations founded by former members of Congress to forge greater civil dialogue and cooperation at all levels of government, state and federal, which few citizens know about. Who's paying attention? Why or why not?

6. ELECTING MORE WOMEN: WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

Compared with other democracies, the United States has relatively few women in elective office, something most citizens are not aware of. What are the impediments preventing more women from running for elective positions, and what can be done about them? Why does gender matter?

B. Business rules for the 21st century

7. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE / TAXING, MEASURING SUCCESS

Some citizens feel powerless to affect what they perceive as excessive executive compensation or corporate policy decisions that seem to primarily and first benefit stockholders above customers, employees, communities or the environment. Yet there are efforts brewing to change how we tax, govern and regulate corporations, how we teach executives – as well as how we measure “success.” Learn about them and about how you can influence their progress.

8. DATA FOR CHANGE: CONTEXT REPORTING

Recently developed metrics for measuring corporate social responsibility and community service provide citizens with critical information previously unavailable to make informed decisions about which companies they prefer to patronize or invest in. Context Reporting will present its new Data For Change campaign intended to broaden public awareness and involvement in accessing and generating these metrics.

9. ARE WE FAILING THE NEXT GENERATION?

For decades, MBA programs across the nation have placed a priority on maximizing shareholder value in the short term which is increasingly being questioned by students embarking on careers in business and finance. Are contemporary business and law schools failing to adjust to these concerns, and what can students do to engage their professors in a more robust debate concerning the values implicit in how these issues are taught?

Link: <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/e392f12c-adac-11e2-82b8-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2qt0KJWZO>

10. DOES REGULATION HAVE TO BE BAD? CONSIDERING THE VOLCKER ALLIANCE

Former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker believes fervently that well administered governmental regulatory agencies play a critical role in overseeing vital aspects of our economic, financial and political life. But they are in need of reform. Yet most citizens dimly understand how they function or what can be done to improve them.

11. CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY: PROTECTING THE COMMONS

If investors and the public begin to value businesses based upon their long-term commitment to maintaining liveable communities and a liveable Earth, many corporations will not last. What do we mean by “corporate sustainability?” Take a tour of multiple efforts to define the term by measuring specific corporate inputs and outputs – and telling the public in clear, apples-to-apples comparisons.

B. Wealth, economy and community

12. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A NEW ECONOMY? MOVING BEYOND LABELS

Capitalism, socialism, oligopoly, plutocracy. Let’s unpack the labels. The need for business to focus more on the long term, for fairer distribution of wealth throughout society and responding to environmental distress has been argued in academic circles for decades. How do we describe the needed rule changes – in law and in how we treat each other – without resorting to old-fashion concepts that smack of “positions.” What drives a sustainable economy and how might we drive there?

13. INCOME INEQUALITY: WHAT CAN / SHOULD BE DONE?

If Occupy Wall Street achieved one thing, it helped millions of Americans to focus on the “wealth gap.” A growing body of thought argues that when the super rich get richer and the middle class shrinks, our consumer-driven economy begins to implode –feeding a growing cycle of inequality. Who and what are working to break the cycle and how do we move to a post-consumer, post-carbon, free-market democracy?

14. FINDING LINKS: A SUBWAY MAP FOR RULES CHANGE?

Change does not happen in a vacume, and it begins one person, one group at a time. Who is tracking the links among groups working for change in the way America’s government and business affect communities? Marcy Murningham will unveil the Civic Stewardship Mapping Project – the first effort to provide an open-source, online, rich visual view of the lines, platforms, connections and route to rules change – including online tools and resources to engage and support local “communities of practice” she calls Civic Stewardship Leagues (CSLs). She’ll ask: How are these CSLs best organized to work with parallel efforts across the nation?