

A New Declaration - Petition for a Redress of Grievances

Continental Congress 2.0



Whereas, the First Amendment to the Constitution provides that - The people have the right to petition their government for a redress of grievances,

***Be It Resolved** that We, the People of the United States of America, in order to form a more perfect Union, Of, By and For the People, have convened a **New Continental Congress** this week of July 4, 2012 in the City of Philadelphia. We have deliberated, drafted and ratified this **Petition for A Redress of Grievances** to be served upon the United States Congress, Supreme Court, and President, prior to November 6, 2012.*

Our country is beset by problems too great to fit comfortably under the constructs of liberal, independent, or conservative rubrics. No single label fits, no single ideology suits, but what we all have in common (left, right, and center) is that we are all being marginalized and defeated as we struggle for life, liberty, happiness, comfort, and health. The institutional and governmental policies pursued by the moneyed interests of the elite 1% have destroyed the ability of our government to guarantee the rights and meet the needs of the People.

The elite 1% have enjoyed inordinate power and influence over our lives as they inundate us with propaganda through their media conglomerates and extract the wealth of our nation only to deposit it outside of the country. All the while, they are delighted by our inability to recognize and address our common plight in any meaningful way.

No MORE...No LONGER!

We are the truckers, the teachers, the first-responders, the engineers, the self-employed, the unemployed, the off-grid and organic farmers as well as the cutting-edge, fully-wired, digital entrepreneurs. We are the butchers, the bakers, the builders and the makers. We are the foundation and life-blood of our country!

We, as representatives of our Congressional Districts across this great nation, gathered in Philadelphia for a cause much greater than ourselves. If we are to succeed in renewing our democracy in the name of the People, we must put aside the petty partisan differences that might divide us. We must recognize that many of those differences have been created, demonstrated,

and amplified by the 1% in their efforts to maintain control and increase their own profits at the expense of the rest of us.

*It is to be expected that we will NOT agree on everything. But on this **ONE THING**, We must **ALL** agree:*

American Government cannot continue to be sold to the highest bidder.

*Two hundred and thirty-six years ago, another group of Americans joined together in Philadelphia over the days leading up to what we now proudly call **Independence Day**. Those Georgia planters, New York bankers, Massachusetts lawyers and Virginia scholars had radical differences and very little in common when they began, but they finished by signing a Declaration that gave birth to our great nation and changed the world. We, too, can change the world by renewing their vision and re-establishing the principles of our democracy.*

We, the Delegates of the Continental Congress 2.0, representative to our Congressional districts throughout our nation, who convened July 4th, of this year 2012, on behalf of the People, hereby petition the government of the United States of America for redress of the following Grievances:

Section I.

Whereas, our freedom of speech and the right to a government of the People, for the People, and by the People has been corrupted by the influence of money;

Whereas, the rights of organizations, including but not limited to corporations, nation states, labor unions, and other collected bodies sharing mutual interests, are not the same as living human beings and our government has allowed such organizations to have undue influence over policy decisions affecting the People;

We therefore demand the following:

1. A Constitutional amendment stating that no single organization shall have more influence over our government than that of a citizen and that only an individual human being may have full citizen's rights and personhood.
2. Speech within the United States shall remain free and not for purchase. The unrestrained spending that influences decisions made by voters and our representatives shall be strictly regulated to ensure a fair and balanced government for all.

Section II.

Whereas, the People have been disenfranchised by an election system that is unjustly weighted in favor of the major political parties and beset with an enormous cost of financing campaigns for office;

Whereas, this destructive election system has subverted our Democracy, has a myriad of state restrictions, and is currently organized in a way that is detrimental to optimal voter participation and responsible citizenship;

Whereas, campaign finance regulations and the current laws governing elections in the United States have resulted in a government of, by and for the elites;

Whereas, this system is dysfunctional and incapable of making sufficient progress on behalf of the People;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Legislation to establish all polling days/election days (Federal, state, municipal and otherwise) to be weekends or holidays.
2. Regulations to establish easier and more uniform absentee voting processes.
3. New standardized laws to ban all rules in the states that hinder the right of the People to vote. There should be no tests, special IDs, or fees required to vote in a national election.
4. Legislation to establish a permanent voter roll to be created and maintained by the Social Security Administration which will also distribute free voter photo identification for use in federal elections.
5. Legislation to establish a non-partisan commission or politically neutral group to redraw district lines based on geographical borders which are compact, contiguous, and reflective of socio-economic demographics.
6. Regulations to ensure that no political party shall be privileged or receive special advantage in any state for their candidates running for Congress or the Presidency.
7. Legislation to require publicly financed and funded campaigns for sufficiently popular candidates running for elected office and requiring radio and TV broadcasters to provide free and equal air time to those candidates.
8. Legislation establishing that no contributor shall be permitted to contribute more than 100 times the federal minimum wage per year to federal campaigns or political action committees.
9. Legislation to guarantee transparency and accuracy of vote tabulation in elections. Voting machines should be abolished unless votes are verified from the beginning of the process to the end.
10. Legislation or regulations to establish that Senators will not serve consecutive (six-year) terms and Representatives shall not serve more than two (two-year) terms consecutively.
11. A Constitutional amendment to provide for gender balance in the Senate. One Senate seat from each state is to be reserved for a man and one for a woman.
12. A Constitutional amendment to more accurately reflect the will of the People in presidential elections and abolish The Electoral College in favor of the popular vote.

Section III.

Whereas, our government and political system are corrupted by elected officials and appointed bureaucrats, who accept bribes and gifts during and after their tenure;

Whereas, such officials have participated in a “revolving door” system between the private lobbying sector and the governmental positions they hold;

Whereas, government officials have engaged in unregulated insider trading with the same companies and financial institutions they are empowered to govern;

Whereas, laws and regulations which require minimum prison sentences for any public officials, members of the military, employees, their family members, or individuals convicted of public corruption, insider trading, or bribery, are not strong enough;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Legislation or regulations to strengthen and re-enforce penalties for anyone found guilty of illegal lobbying and to ban gifts of monetary value to politicians, elected or appointed officials, and government employees.
2. Legislation to strengthen and enforce laws regarding elected or appointed government officials, members of the military, or any of their immediate family members found

guilty of: insider trading, public corruption or bribery, receiving gifts during their tenure, holding stock in any company they do business with while performing the duties of their position/employment or for five years after leaving said government service.

3. Legislation that prohibits the placement of any person to a position with a regulatory agency or bureau when that person holds stakes in the companies or entities that he or she is meant to regulate.

Section IV.

Whereas, our privately-controlled, virtually unregulated and extractive monetary system, unjust trade policies, and regressive tax systems have resulted in an ever-widening disparity in economic circumstances for average citizens and have greatly favored enrichment of the financial elites;

Whereas, our Congress has permitted, aided, and abetted endemic fraud by predatory lenders, bankers, speculators, and financiers which has deprived millions of Americans of their homes, property, and livelihoods;

Whereas, the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act led directly to unsound banking practices and to grandiose overextension of speculation throughout the financial sector and created dangerous threats to the financial condition of the country which resulted in the financial catastrophe of 2008;

Whereas, our government's lack of fiscal responsibility has produced a national debt close to \$16 trillion;

Whereas, the Congressional Budget Office projects a deficit drop under the current plan that is insufficient to bring down this debt;

Whereas, the trade deficit of the United States is over \$800 Billion and this disparity in trade significantly weakens the overall national economy;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Laws or regulations to establish a progressive tax rate to govern household income regardless of its source; such that, no household with an income at or below double the poverty line shall be subject to federal income taxation and tax deductions are eliminated.
2. Tax laws be written to ensure that:
 - a. any corporation or entity doing business and generating income in the United States, Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories shall be fully taxed on that income by removing deductions, subsidies and loopholes regardless of corporate domicile;
 - b. after legitimate business expenses (excluding lobbying and political expenses) pretax, net profits will be assessed at the prevailing corporate tax rate which will never be lower than the highest individual tax rate;
 - c. tax havens are not permitted and that profits as described above will be taxed at the U.S. corporate tax rate.
3. Legislation to ban speculative financial instruments, derivatives, and credit default swaps and to stop all primary residential home foreclosures, if banks have falsified documents, signatures (using robo-signing) then banks shall lose their claim on those properties.
4. Those guilty of criminal behavior and in control of fraud at the largest banking institutions must not be rewarded but must be required to repay their victims, the People, full restitution.
5. Congress reclaims its sovereign ability to create money by placing the Federal Reserve under the Treasury. New money would be issued and circulated to promote the General Welfare of the nation while the current money would be replaced using the same system that was used in the transition from the gold standard.

6. Rejection of the corporatist ‘free trade’ policies and tariffs implemented since the early 1980s by returning to the successful Hamiltonian ‘fair trade’ policies and tariffs which provided much of our nation’s revenues from 1789 through the late 1970s.
7. The legislative and executive branches must effectively address the trade deficit so that our businesses prosper, more jobs are created, and therefore more revenue produced that can be taxed and used to pay down the national debt so that our descendants will not have to carry that burden.
8. Legislation to re-instate the Glass-Steagall Act and provide for strict enforcement of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in order to prevent the practices that led to the financial catastrophe of 2008 and the great recession that followed.
9. The legislative and executive branches of the federal government must swiftly move to significantly reduce the national debt through a balanced approach of increasing revenue and reductions in spending. Spending reductions should be achieved through cutting waste and redundancy as well as budgetary reductions in military and defense.

Section V.

Whereas, the People have a Right to clean air, clean water, untainted soil and safe food and it is the responsibility of the government to protect those rights in order to secure the wellbeing of current and future generations;

Whereas, our government has failed to enact and enforce laws preventing the destruction of our natural environment while willfully misinterpreting and ignoring empirical evidence of significant harm caused by human interaction with that environment;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Legislation to establish an independently funded program for the development of safe, non-toxic, reusable, renewable, and carbon neutral sources of energy such as, but not limited to, solar, wind, geothermal, and thermonuclear fusion; the funding of which shall be derived by levying a tax on those energy sources that produce carbon emissions.
2. Legislation to provide the Environmental Protection Agency, and other appropriate agencies, the power to regulate and penalize business entities that intentionally or recklessly bring harm to the environment. The fines, penalties, and/or criminal charges must be equivalent to the full impact of damages incurred to the environment, taking into consideration the lasting impact brought upon the environment.
3. Laws that eliminate the protection afforded to any employee, officer, or director of any organization or business entity that is directly or indirectly engaged in intentional or reckless practices that bring harm to the environment.
4. Legislation or regulations to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to below 350 parts per million, which represents the safe upper limit that will ensure the survival of all life on the planet.
5. Legislation or regulations to require the collection and processing of all recyclable materials throughout the nation.
6. Legislation or regulations to restrict the commercialization of mining and harvesting of natural resources in our public lands and parks and to require responsible environmental practices by business entities and persons within the parks. This is required in order to preserve our National Parks and Lands for the enjoyment of all the People in perpetuity.
7. Regulations to provide the mandatory labeling of all genetically modified organisms (GMO) and products and to require complete, fully-transparent federal and independent oversight of the testing and operations conducted by the producers of such, including full reporting on and publication of all findings to the People.

Section VI.

Whereas, our government has failed to protect essential civil liberties that are guaranteed to all Americans by the Bill of Rights;

Whereas, the government of the United States has violated solemn treaties made with Native Americans, these violations have served to deprive them of their property and liberties, and this persecution has led to injury and death for Native American people;

Whereas, when Native Americans have fought to assert their rights they have been persecuted by the government with policies that have suppressed their language, heritage, and religion and promoted environmental degradation of sacred lands;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Repeal of the Patriot Act and those sections of the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act that permit indefinite detention of U.S. Citizens.
2. New treaties, laws and regulations enacted to ensure that access to the internet will remain uncensored for all people in the world to use and express themselves without government or corporate interference.
3. Laws to establish that an individual's personal data is to be considered intellectual property, protected under the Bill of Rights and not to be collected, transferred or removed without warrant or without expressed consent.
4. A constitutional amendment stating: Equality of rights for adults under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or any state or jurisdiction, on account of race, color, age, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation.
5. An end to violations of the treaties established between the government of the United States and Native Americans.

Section VII.

Whereas, Congress has abdicated its responsibility for the declaration of war, allowing the United States military to engage in unconstitutional military actions and occupations abroad in the name of National Security;

Whereas, there is an unacceptable lack of transparency in negotiations between the military and multi-national industrial contractors who profit from perpetual war;

Whereas, our government has failed to uphold the promised benefits and medical care to our men and women returning from military action and unless their injuries occurred in battle, our veterans are routinely denied health services;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Strengthen the War Powers Resolution Act of 1973, to implement controls on the executive branch for deployment of armed forces, and prohibit the use of military force without the consent of the legislative branch.
2. That our government be required to adhere to the United Nations Charter, Article 2, Paragraph 4 and the Kellogg-Briand Treaty (a.k.a. The General Treaty for the Renunciation of War) making warfare illegal.
3. Full disclosure of government policy and monetary relationships for all unsanctioned and/or unauthorized programs associated with the military industrial complex, including the high technology research and development industry.
4. Systems to provide humanitarian services and all promised medical and psychological benefits to military personnel and veterans who have not been dishonorably discharged, and their families.
5. An immediate freeze in the use of nuclear and depleted uranium weapons.

6. Raise global awareness of Peace Day, a day of global cease fire and non-violence on September 21st annually. Engage all sectors of society and observe the International Day of Peace in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/282.
7. The United States submit the National and International “Peace Everyday Treaty” for Global Truce and Global Cease Fire to the United Nations.
8. The United States government sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
9. Reinstate the Grand Jury process in America to represent the People.
10. The arrest of any person or persons indicted or charged with war crimes for intentionally and knowingly engaging in warfare based on false premises or pretexts and the extradition of such individuals to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

Section VIII.

Whereas, public education is a national security issue in that without a well-educated populace, a Democracy cannot adequately provide for the common defense or promote the general welfare;

Whereas, the security of a modern nation is integral to that nation’s “human capital” and is only as strong as the education system the nation provides for its citizens;

Whereas, our public education and job training systems are abysmally under-funded and too many individuals find systemic pay discrimination and low wages once they enter the workplace;

Whereas, We the People cannot tolerate the current situation that exists in our country, wherein so many capable, enthusiastic, working-age citizens remain unemployed and/or underemployed;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Legislation and regulations to address the inadequate funding and current organizational shortcomings in our education and job training systems. These systems must create a highly educated and adaptable work force that is ready to transition our country to an independent renewable energy economy for the 21st Century and beyond.
2. Eliminate the immense student loan debt that is currently limiting the career choices and financial future of this generation.

Section IX.

Whereas, the formation of media conglomerates has created a concentration of influence and power in the hands of a few multi-national news and entertainment corporations;

Whereas, mainstream corporate media, often with no regard for the public they are meant to serve, mislead and misinform the People, suppressing informed debate in the focused pursuit of profits;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Legislation or regulation to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine,
2. Dismantle existing media monopolies and a return to limits on ownership through the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and similar regulations,
3. Regulations to ensure transparency in ownership of media corporations,
4. Full funding for National Public Media,
5. Provide incentives for alternative and entrepreneurial media start-ups.

Section X.

Whereas, our government has failed to prevent insurance, pharmaceutical and healthcare companies from profiteering from illnesses and injuries of the People;

Whereas, healthcare is a human right and the profit-driven healthcare system is immoral and economically unsustainable;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Legislation to repeal and replace existing health care laws with immediate enactment of "Medicare for All", or a similar single-payer system to meet the needs of the People. Elective services beyond Medicare coverage can be privately financed on an individual basis.
2. Legislation or regulations to make all public health care facilities and special clinics, veteran and civilian, available to all persons based on medical need.
3. Legislation or regulations to allow the "Medicare for All" system to negotiate prices of pharmaceuticals universally.
4. Research for new formularies must be publicly financed and managed for the benefit of the public, regardless of age and across the board. This publicly financed research on pharmaceuticals may not result in products to be sold for profit.
5. Regulation to expand the definition of medical care to include alternative services.

Section XI.

Whereas, the United States imprisons more people per capita (1 in every 100 citizens) than any other country on Earth;

Whereas, this serves to increase the profits of the expanding private prison-industrial complex and this fuels incentives to dramatically over-criminalize certain portions of the populace;

Whereas, many citizens are imprisoned for non-violent, drug-related crimes that only cause harm to themselves while white-collar criminals, who have defrauded the American people, go free;

We therefore demand the following:

1. De-privatize all prisons.
2. Regulations that focus on rehabilitation of prisoners and protection of the public rather than the vague and subjective concept of "punishment."
3. Establishment of alternatives to imprisonment for non-violent and first-time offenders. Public money that currently supports incarceration of such offenders should be directed to new, more extensive programs aimed at drug rehabilitation, public service and treatment for the mentally ill.
4. End the expensive and ineffective War on Drugs. Legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana for medical and personal use for adults. Treat marijuana products comparably to the treatment of products that contain alcohol.
5. Decriminalize drug possession and use in all U.S. jurisdictions and treat drug addiction as a medical problem rather than a criminal one. Abolish the DEA and redirect its resources to other purposes.
6. Establishment of regulatory oversight and de-militarization of police operations through the creation of a fully transparent investigatory organization.
7. A crackdown on white-collar crime through the use of aggressive enforcement, prosecution, and sentencing for theft, based on the amount stolen and the number of people affected.

8. Establish new rights for the accused and convicted, including publicly funded DNA testing for all convicts where applicable. Equal, publicly-funded attorney services, including investigatory costs, should be provided at every stage of the accused's case. Failure to provide such services should result in federal funding penalties.
9. The death penalty should be abolished. We are a humane body.

Section XII.

Whereas, existing immigration laws lead to exploitation, create fear, distrust, and racial tension and exacerbate the treatment of immigrants as second class humans;

Whereas, the atmosphere created by the lack of a dignified and well-structured National immigration system betrays our proud heritage as a nation founded and built by immigrants;

We therefore demand the following:

1. Passage of the "Dream Act".
2. Removal of exclusionary restrictions on immigration to allow economic refugees to be processed through existing border checkpoints.
3. Undocumented immigrants currently residing in the U.S. should be given a non-punitive path to documentation and ultimately citizenship.
4. Collaboration between ICE and local law enforcement agencies should be prevented.
5. Criminal penalties for businesses that exploit undocumented workers should be increased and enforced.

Section XIII.

Whereas, the citizens of Puerto Rico and the several territories cannot vote for the President of the United States, and;

Whereas, with only one representative in Congress that cannot vote in the House Floor, the citizens of Puerto Rico and the several territories do not have adequate representation in the government responsible for legislating laws that affect their daily lives, and;

Whereas, the citizens of Puerto Rico and the United States Territories' have been disenfranchised as voters and this is incompatible with American representative democracy, and;

Whereas, Puerto Rico has been part of the United States since 1898, its residents are American born citizens since 1917 and Puerto Ricans have served in all major U.S. wars thereby contributing to the well-being and security of our country. Therefore, we the people, recognize the right of Puerto Rico to full U.S. Statehood and the right of the territories to their self-determination;

We therefore demand the following:

Congress fulfills its Constitutional and moral obligation to sanction a binding process aimed to fully decolonize Puerto Rico and other territories using internationally recognized non-territorial, non-colonial status options resulting in either Statehood or Independence.

Section XIV.

Whereas, residents of the District of Columbia have no voting representation in Congress; and having fought the American Revolution under the banner of “No taxation without representation”, this is an especially egregious flaw in the governance of America;

Whereas, the executive and legislative functions of the District of Columbia are subject to review and limitation by the federal government, such that its judges (from traffic court to the D.C. court of appeals) are appointed by the President of the United States and its budget must be approved, amended, or overridden by the U.S. Congress;

We therefore demand the following:

1. An amendment to the Constitution to provide two voting seats in the U.S. Senate to the residents of the District of Columbia and voting representation in the House of Representatives commensurate with its population.
2. An amendment to the Constitution to institute genuine home rule and budget autonomy for the government of the people of the District of Columbia.

Our petition for a redress of grievances is the result of the Continental Congress 2.0 Delegates’ collective effort, as is our Constitutional Right for Redress granted by our forefathers.

This document has been delivered to all branches of the Federal Government and the American people expect a timely response.

Failure to address our grievances will result in legal action taken in federal court.

Our Democracy must be restored. Our effort to reclaim the power for the People will not end until that goal is accomplished.

We will also bring this document to the court of public opinion, the most powerful court of all.

The sovereignty of the United States derives from We, the People.