

## **The Dildo of American Politics Rarely Arrives Lubed**

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### **Abstract**

We have always been taught that America is a land of golden opportunity, and that this is possible thanks to our democratic system that makes everyone equal, along with capitalism, which gives everyone equal opportunity. These two systems are painted and shown in a way that makes it seem like anyone can achieve the American Dream, whatever that is meant to be. The American Dream can mean many things and varies from person to person, but most often ends up with wealth and stability. The system, however, is not made to help the average person make it, as economic power has twisted its way to control political power. Elite theory says that a government only listens to the wealthy to uphold their status quo, and that democracy is only a veil to keep its citizens under the illusion that they can influence their politics. This is quite damning, with America having many policies to make the wealthy wealthier, while the poor never see any change for the better. Not only is the American government corrupt, but the foundational structures built around it are as well. The American people should strive for a system that is a true democracy, and for a government that truly cares for its people, but such a large change cannot occur by talking about the issue, but by acting on the issue.

### **The Dildo of American Politics Rarely Arrives Lubed**

There are four theories on how the American people run their government. The first is democratic theory, which is what everyone is taught we have. This theory suggests that everyone has an equal say on what happens in Washington. Then there is pluralist theory, which states that the government listens to its people when people with common beliefs group up to make their voices heard since such a large country does not have enough representatives to truly represent everyone. These groups work by strength in numbers, as a united group of voters can pose a threat to government officials who they believe are not representing them. Building off pluralist theory is hyper pluralist theory, which states that there are too many competing political groups, causing policy to slow to a halt because policymakers cannot make up a decision without making a political group discontent. Finally, there is elite theory, which is when the government only listens to the wealthy, and that anyone else has no say in how policies are made.

All four of these theories could be argued they represent the system of government America has, but when analyzing the institutions of America and how they affect the government, it becomes clear that elite theory is most in line with how the United States is run. A major part of this is because of how money directly influences politics. Analyzing American policy shows that it is built on increasing the wealth of the elite, and often this is at the price of everyone else's well-being. Even though politicians constantly promise change for the better, the elite always have the final say on what happens since money controls the government in corporate America.

## **Their United States of America**

Democracy is a political system where people vote for candidates to represent us and our views. Capitalism is an economic system where private individuals/businesses own property and control production. Democracy being all about equality and capitalism only letting the best thrive results in the mess that we call America. We do however have regulation in place to make sure that economic inequality does not become too dividing, however if there are corporations who have more control on the government than the government has on them, they essentially self-rule while leaving the idea of democracy in the heads of the people to let them think that their votes matter (Kelly, 2006).

The government textbook we were assigned views capitalism from an institutional approach, only focusing on the political institutions of America on paper and claiming how both democracy and capitalism support each other for the benefit of the public. It is critical but to a very shallow level, discussing how there is discrimination within what should be a market full of equal opportunity (Shea, 2023, 38). It also goes into the 4 factors of production and how capitalism allows for freedom of choice. It also talks about the role of competition, and how the government regulates the market to prevent unfair practices such as monopolies being formed which hurt public interest (Shea, 2023, 631). The textbook discusses the benefits of an open market that capitalism provides without mentioning how capitalism or mass wealth can affect democracy. A structural view on the government focuses on how powerful groups interact with each other such as the branches of government, political parties, and high-interest groups, and goes in depth with how these institutions and capitalism work together to maintain the system of life we live every day. Structural views on government are often more critical and in-depth

examinations of capitalism, linking the role that corporations have in widening economic and political inequality.

The US, being a sovereign nation means that it should only be allowed to rule as long as it has consent from the people that it governs. A citizen of such a sovereign nation would therefore hope that their best interests would be in mind when laws and bills are passed, but the widening wealth gap has grown, with lower and middle incomes stagnating as upper incomes rise, especially for the upper 5% (Menasce, Igielnik, Kochhar, et al., 2020). The growth of wealth for the billionaire class grew 3 times faster in 2024 than it did in 2023, meanwhile poverty rates have remained the same since 1990 (Berger, 2025). A large part of the economic and political gap is due to legal bribery in Congress or lobbying as it is known. Lobbying is backed by influential organizations that spend billions per year to pay out representatives to do what benefits them, leaving the people who voted for said representatives to have no say on what occurs in Washington. Lobbying is a billion-dollar industry, with no signs of stopping since it is in the interest of the elite (Tabb, 2006). What is the point of Congress, whose existence is to regulate in the interest of the people when financial institutions are deregulating the market, and big pharma is pushing for their products onto store shelves, even when they provide no value?

Most of our representatives in Washington are not the everyday citizens who live paycheck to paycheck but often come from wealthy backgrounds. This gives them the advantage of reaching political positions of power, which requires campaigning, and the road to power has never been affordable. It is very rare to see someone who is not the stereotypical old white man run to enter politics, nonetheless actually succeed. There is a reason for the rich entering politics however, Tabb (2006) stated that “Once in office elected officials tend to get far richer than they were when they entered politics. They are cut in on various deals. They become unusually

successful investors. Empirical investigation reveals that in any given year between 1993 and 1998 the senators who played the stock market did remarkably well. It turns out they were prescient in anticipating the market's movements up and down, purchasing a particular stock before it took off like a rocket and dumping stocks just in time" showing that the wealthy are not only at an economical advantage being able to perpetually increase their wealth by entering politics, but also that to achieve said wealth requires one to already have a high income.

Boyer (2006) stated that "Americans lose control over the meaning of capitalism when they equate "capitalism" with "democracy." American foreign policy uses this deception when the United States is said to be dedicated to furthering democracy in the world, but the truth is that the objective is mainly to further capitalism. The most favored term is freedom." This shows that Americans do not know the reality of what happens when the American military enters another country most Americans could not even find on a map. Most often when America invades a foreign country, unnecessary brutality follows. This is shown in history when the American government overthrew the government in Panama for control, declaring they were a threat to democracy. In reality it was for the economic advantage the water passage brought to American trade, or when America invaded Iraq falsely claiming Saddam Hussein was creating weapons of mass destruction when in reality it was for the lucrative oil reserves that could be taken and farmed to fuel American greed.

America labels itself as a state of prosperity and charity, a symbol of democracy that always wants the best for all. This however is conflicting when looking at the history of America interacting with other nations. America always being on the good side is twisted and turned into something that powerful organizations control at will. America uses its self-titled morality to justify its actions, whether it is invading Iraq to stop terrorism, or political assassination because

they were threatening peace (Churns, 2009). Whenever America does an unjust act and the information goes public, however, people will cry for a day until the media stops covering it and then let business continue as usual.

The media choosing what it decides is newsworthy and what is not is not without its evils, however. The media is a powerful tool, as it controls public opinion and influences what we think and how we think. “Media accounts can play a central role in not only legitimizing certain courses of action, but the placing of trust and credibility in particular versions of the possible directions for social policies. They can also be used to insert doubt and confusion into a debate such as climate change and may reduce commitments to action.” (Happer, Philo, 2023). Media affects us every day whether we like it or not, and it is used and abused by the elites to manipulate our thoughts. This violation of our attention is essentially a way to keep us distracted since we can only focus on so many things at once.

A major problem that capitalism causes with democracy is that political power can be abused by the elite no matter who ends up as president due to the elite’s nature to manipulate whoever will take orders without question. Capitalists prefer to use the Republicans as their hegemonic partner because the Republicans more reliably and regularly deliver what capitalists want than the Democrats do. But if and when the Republican bloc of alliances weakens or otherwise functions inadequately as a hegemonic partner, U.S. capitalists will shift to the Democrats. They will accept less favorable policies, at least for a while, if they gain a solid hegemonic partner in return (Wolff, 2020). This shows that fixing the problem of democracy is not as simple as voting for someone who shares views on the people’s self-interests, as the elite with all the resources at their hand can just find another puppet to take their place.

Even when voters do participate in elections however, there are more ways those with power can manipulate results, such as with gerrymandering. Gerrymandering is the process of manipulating district lines to push towards a certain political party. States are in charge of drawing their voting borders, and many states manipulate these borders to skew the results of what should be fair and equal voting towards one side. This brings the question of how democratic this is. The answer is that it is not. In 2010, conservatives gained control of 213 voting districts, gerrymandering the districts they had access to, and would gain 16-17 extra seats in the House of Representatives (Kirschenbaum, Li, 2021). Although gerrymandering is not limited to only the Republican Party, it is extremely undemocratic as even if a state had a majority vote, the districts could spell out a different result.

An argument against regulation could be made that regulation has not worked before so why would it now? This, however, is a very shallow response. Regulation has not worked before because there was not enough regulation put in place. Most people, especially older generations, genuinely believe an economy can be either laissez-faire where only the best survive or a command economy that would strip us of our economic freedom, but this is a very all-or-nothing response. Regulation is necessary in an open market and does not exist to strip us of our economic freedoms, but to protect us from economic abuse. Regulation cannot serve its purpose when corporations can influence the government that oversees them.

Lack of regulation in the past has never ended well for the American people, especially those who do not have a hefty savings account to help them rebuild. Time and time again, history shows how when wealthy people play with money that is not theirs, such as with the Great Depression or the Great Recession, both events which occurred mainly due to speculation from greedy investors and a lack of regulation. There is also the direct harm that deregulating food



safety requirements could have, placing Americans at risk of food poisoning, which results in about 3000 people dying each year due to an easily preventable situation (Scallan, 2011). These events occur because deregulation allows for low and risky standards that can easily lead to a problematic disaster.

All these problems with how democracy and capitalism interact may raise the question of why Americans do not push for an alternative system. It is most likely because we are taught from a young age that democracy and capitalism are the only systems that are fair and will survive the test of time. If we were founded as a democracy, why would we ever strive for change if this is as good as it gets? The truth is that part of the reason why the American people think like this is because the elites recognize that teaching us an alternative system could lead us to stop taking abuse from them. That is likely part of the reason why the government textbook we were assigned is selective with what it states on capitalism.

America cannot call itself a nation of equality when capitalism and democracy intertwine into a hostile and outright rigged system made to only benefit those with money. America was founded out of rebellion to stop being taxed by a monarchy that wanted to be financially dominant. Now in modern America we are divided between classes, being overworked and abused, but instead of a monarchy on another continent, it is by an oligarchy in our country's backyard. Why capitalism influences democracy is no accident, being a generational takeover of power. We deserve a fair democracy, as "(63%) express not too much or no confidence at all in the future of the U.S. political system" (Pew Research Center, 2023). Confidence in the American voting system is dropping, yet nothing has been done to address it. American capitalism encourages greed, and when politicians and even the president live under that motto, it is no wonder that our laws have not addressed the problems of capitalism. Capitalism and

democracy cannot work together and help the people at the same time unless major changes are made to regulation, or capitalism is replaced by a new system entirely for the good of the people. Just because we are told all our lives we live in a democracy does not make it true, and after structurally looking at how all these institutions disgracefully intertwine to work against us, it is clear that we live in an oligarchy.

### **The Bad, the Worse, and the Ugly Truth**

“Status quo, you know, is Latin for the mess we’re in,” said Reagan when remarking why he believed that tax brackets should be changed in favor of trickle-down economics. Ironically enough, however, he was feeding into the status quo of the interests of the wealthy and politically powerful since all this caused an increase in wealth inequality. Americans overall are greatly dissatisfied with the current state of the two party political system we have, with 28% adults having negative views on both parties according to a poll conducted by Pew Research Center (2024). This is part of a major trend as in 2004, only 6% of Americans viewed the two party system negatively, showing that the faith in the current system we have is not effective.

America as a country is run by an oligarchy with their motives, their goal to keep the status quo with them holding all the power, all the wealth, yet none of the blame. This idea has been maintained since the creation of the United States. The issue is not that voting for a Republican or Democrat is problematic, but that both parties help run a problematic system. In the election of 2024, Harris’s campaign funded about \$880 million, while Trump’s campaign funded about \$350 million (Jeffrey-Wilensky, 2024). The cost to run for president has greatly risen, with \$5.5 billion being spent for the election of 2024, compared to the election of 2004 which only cost \$1.9 billion (Open Secrets, 2024). Most of this funding is possible because of Political Action Committees, which allow for unlimited and anonymous funding for a campaign.

Although everyday Americans can contribute to their respective parties' funding, the majority of both parties' funding comes from massive corporations/major interest groups who are betting on becoming richer after the election. Because both parties are fueled by corporate money, why would they want to change the status quo?

Both parties are terrible in their own respective ways, whether it is the utter incompetence of the Democratic Party, or the comical evil of the Republican Party. Yet a third party winning the ballot has not occurred since Lincoln's presidency. All of this was further shown in the 2024 presidency, with Kamala Harris being the Democratic nominee and Donald Trump being the Republican nominee. They both had their respective plans for change, Harris promising to increase minimum wage, increase taxes for higher brackets, help with student debt aid, and increasing the coverage of Medicaid, Trump promised to reduce taxation on the wealthy, place immense tariffs on foreign markets, deregulate the market further, and increase the spread of private healthcare (Pilotte, 2024). When said like this, the choice would seem obvious to anyone with a decent moral compass, especially with all of Trump's threats towards minorities that he opposes being especially worrying.

Supposedly the Democrats and Republicans have very different views, yet both are very similar politically and economically when looked into in depth, both being backed by massive interest groups that use the mass media to lie to our faces. Donald Trump stated in the Republican debate in 2015 that he only gives back to people who give to him. This is shown by how he blindly supports Israel, wants to blow up Iran, and wants to maintain power over Russia and China without thinking of the consequences that could occur. The Democrats are not innocent either, sharing a similar foreign policy to the Republicans; it is just that they mask their true intentions with positivity and progressive reforms. Donald Trump was loud with his plans

for when he became president, while Kamala kept everything vague to essentially say nothing (Kavanagh, 2024). This has resulted in voters, even consistent Democrats voting for Trump out of frustration, and idiocy for believing Trump will save them when in reality the people he cares for are those who shower him with money.

The similarities between the Democrats and Republicans are especially clear when looking at the political compass. Both Kamala Harris and Donald Trump when placed on the political compass are placed in the authoritarian right quadrant. This is not new, with the trend of our presidential candidates being authoritarian right since the 1980s with the beginning of Reagan. Most candidates who lean towards the blue quadrant often have one or more of the following traits: “Rejection of democratic rules of the game”, “Denial of the legitimacy of political opponents”, “Toleration or encouragement of violence”, and “Readiness to curtail civil liberties of opponents, including media”. All these presidents check out at least one of the four boxes, with Donald Trump being the only president to fit all four requirements (Serros, 2023, 159). This is troubling for American voters, as now political candidates are becoming more comfortable with their beliefs, even if they are undemocratic and even downright violent. Election after election, hundreds of millions of Americans vote for a candidate they believe will lead to a better future. Yet these candidates will only change policies that help the people who support them financially.

Economically, America has stagnated in its policies for decades. Poverty has been a major issue in America since the urbanization of America, and yet somehow there are 580,000 Americans who are homeless. Yet what is even more shocking is that for every homeless person, there are about 28 vacant homes (United Way NCA, 2024). We have all the money we need to save the poor, yet never enough money to satisfy the rich. The wealth gap is at an all-time high,

the top 10% holding 66.7% of the wealth, and the top 0.1% holding 5 times the amount of wealth as the bottom 50% (Statista, 2024). How such an egregious gap in wealth and power has occurred was by no accident, with political policies always being in favor of the already wealthy, and never crises of chronic poverty across the states.

The Trump inauguration of 2025 showed one of the most disgusting and obvious forms of favoritism, with some of the richest men on earth showing up to give their support, including Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and even Tim Cook. Now why would the top 1% of the top 1% be openly supporting Trump? It is because they all know they are about to make record-high profits with the help of Trump's policies. Joe Biden four days before Trump's inauguration stated "Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power and influence that really threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedom". People ignored his statement either because of ignorance or because they no longer believed in the letdown of his presidency, but it does not undermine the fact that even he recognized the turbulent future of Trump's America.

Bigotry is splitting America, with human rights being a major reason why people voted for Harris was due to her more hopeful stance towards minorities, as Trump's policies would target abortions, immigrants, queer groups, and people who disagree with Trump's view would be placed in danger. How is it that such a vile person can run for the presidency with 34 felonies, win, and then hurt all the people he dislikes? Trump has grand plans, especially with the help of Project 2025, a political manifesto that began in 2023 by the Heritage Foundation with the intent of taking over the American government and placing it under authoritarian Republican control. Although Trump when questioned about Project 2025 always claimed to know nothing about it, many policies from the first three months of his presidency are eerily similar to those proposed in

the political initiative. Such acts include abolishing the Department of Education, ending diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, and freezing federal assistance (Quinn, 2025). Not only are these bills passed a fraction of what is planned for the future, but the end game of Project 2025 is to make America a true authoritarian state.

Project 2025 would hurt all Americans by fully abandoning public interest, “aiming to tear down the system of checks and balances and reimagine an executive branch on steroids and free from any shackles,” according to Sozan and Olinsky (2025). Trump has handpicked underqualified goons knowing that they will listen to his every word and placed them in vital positions of the American government, all without a democracy to elect said leaders. Such people include Marc Rubio who was made Secretary of State hours after Trump was inaugurated, even though his past shows a hostile view towards neighboring countries and foreign superpowers. There is also RFK Jr., the new lead for the Department of Health who doubts the effects of vaccines and lacks proper medical qualifications, making many wild claims that hold no truth, and even having a tapeworm in his brain for 2 years (Craig, 2024). And who could forget Elon Musk, the richest man in the world who is now in charge of the recently created Department of Government Efficiency, a position he likely named himself and was given to him after he broke the record for political donations by donating \$277 million for Trump’s campaign in 2024 (BBC, 2025). All these grossly unqualified people who no one voted for are only being made in charge because they are close buddies or loyalists to Trump’s cause should bring a wave of concern to American citizens.

Human rights are a major concern when analyzing Trump’s policies, such as his views on women and the right to abortion, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and immigrants. Women’s rights have been regressing since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and Trump has only

been propelling the country in that direction, even being proud of the harm he has caused, calling himself the “guy who ended Roe v. Wade.” Although there are still states that support abortion, Trump plans on going further on his campaign of hatred by using a 150-year-old law called the Comstock Act. The Comstock Act would be a backdoor to a nationwide ban on abortion, not even needing Congress to be involved, which further pushed the anti-democratic practices occurring in our country. Harris on the other hand was vocal on supporting safe and accessible abortions, being extremely against the Republicans' goal to deny women their rights. Harris's campaign also promised to end gender discrimination in education, healthcare, and employment. These views gave her a massive boost from female voters, especially from minorities, with 54% of women in an exit poll reporting they voted for Harris (Buchholz, 2024).

Trump's prejudiced views continue with his hateful treatment of immigrants. In his first presidency, his views were cut and clear, believing that he could build a wall between the land of the free and Mexico, and have them pay for it all themselves. His second term as president is even clearer with extremely racist remarks towards any group of color. He outlandishly claimed Haitians were “eating the dogs” and “eating the cats” but now has a form of secret police with the Immigration and Customs Unit. According to Cuison-Villazor, “ICE has broad, sweeping powers to question, arrest, detain, and process the deportation of any noncitizen” (2025). ICE's role has extended to grabbing people off the streets, and interrogating people they believe are not US citizens, despite their 5th amendment which gives them the right to not testify against themselves in a criminal case. Hundreds of people, however, have been deported unlawfully without due process, and over 300 people have had their student visas revoked.

These gross violations of human rights are a frightening wake-up call to millions of Americans, with many cases of American citizens who are mistaken for noncitizens being denied

the ability to contact a lawyer or attorney, resulting in a quick and unfightable deportation. Mass deportation at this scale is causing more problems than just human rights violations however, as it is extremely expensive and is jamming immigration courts. According to Pahnke, “deporting around 12 million undocumented people is estimated at costing over \$315 billion”, but immigration courts are jam packed with cases, having a “backlog of 3 million cases.”(2024) This directly impacts everyday Americans because they are essentially paying for it, and because immigration courts are so full, people who want to legally become citizens cannot, being a massive waste of time and money.

Harris’s views on immigrants are more humane, however. According to Miello, Harris’s policies for immigration and the border are more moral. Her beliefs while she worked under the Biden administration were more relaxed on border security. Now in the 2024 presidential race, she said she planned on continuing the enforcement of border control but also planned on “creating legal pathways for people from other countries to become citizens of the United States.” She also believed in striking the root of the problem by addressing the problems of violence and poverty in neighboring countries (2024). These policies are a much more human take on tackling the issue of immigration and likely gained her wide support from people of color, especially since she was not actively slandering people of color like Trump has been for years.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community are also facing severe bigotry, especially trans people who seem to be a scapegoat for everything. Trump’s views on trans people have been very open to anyone paying attention, and many of his policies and statements show that. One of the first things he passed in office was a bill that recognized someone as the sex they were born with, denying anyone whose assigned sex does not match their preferred gender, and also



denying anyone outside the usual spectrum of gender. According to the Associated Press, Trump proudly stated “medical professionals are maiming and sterilizing a growing number of impressionable children under the radical and false claim that adults can change a child’s sex.”(2025) This is completely false, and no children in America have ever received gender changing surgeries as minors. Trump continues to show a history of lying with no evidence to back up his views.

Other bills he has passed include denying passports that have someone's preferred gender on them, trans women being placed in men's prisons even though trans people are the most endangered minority in prisons, essentially being a different way to give them a death sentence (The Pitt News Editorial Board, 2025). Trump has also passed a bill to block schools from accessing federal funds if they support young trans people in socially transitioning. Harris on the other hand is not the most helpful, but at least she is not targeting trans people. According to Alfonseca, Harris did not support medical treatment for people transitioning, but in her campaign of 2024, she has changed her views dramatically, stating as vice president of the Biden administration that she supports the Equality Act, a bill that would protect LGBTQ Americans from discrimination (2024). These rapid changes in Harris’s views cause voters to question if her intentions are as honest as they seem, and if she would have committed to them, but when voters were faced with voting, minorities mostly voted for Harris because she was not Trump.

After analyzing how similar economic and political policies are between both parties, the only major differences between the two are social issues, with the Democrats being more in favor of addressing social issues. Every election, both sides campaign to paint the opposing party as if they will bring doomsday to the country, when in reality it is a competition to see which side of the elites will receive a bigger paycheck in the mail. In the end, both parties are terrible,

and when analyzing the political compass, it shows that the election is not a race between the left and right, but the right and far right. This shows that no matter who is elected, the status quo of keeping the elite at the top will continue unless the system they created to make the American people have a say in American politics is dismantled and rebuilt from the ground up by the people, for the people. That way corruption could be rid of by removing the possibility of money and status from influencing democracy.

### **Conclusion**

As history has proved time and time again, there is never a perfect solution to government, as even the mightiest of empires will become rubble once enough time passes. America paints itself as the golden standard of democracy, a perfect nation with the noble intention of spreading democracy, even if it requires some military engagement. America never was a true democracy since its start, with only rich white males being able to cast their votes at the founding of the nation. Although progress has been made to make everyone equal in voting power, economic power directly influences control, which has shifted power from the people to the rich and powerful. What we have now is an oligarchy falsely presented to us as a democracy. Ask any person what type of government we have, and they would likely tell you America is a democracy, so why shouldn't the United States strive for that? A true democracy would be one where money cannot influence the outcome of elections, nonetheless influence the policies that come from elections. To achieve such a goal however would require the dismantling of America from the ground up, as the status quo of keeping the rich on top is ingrained into the foundation of America and the many institutions that it is made up of.

Such a task might seem impossible, but it has to be taken into consideration that the top 1% of the population makes up only 1% of the population. History time and time again has

shown that the will of the people can topple the sturdiest forces of oppression; it only is a question of when and how such a turning point in America's history will occur.

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