World Affairs Council of Austin & BBVA Compass



Welcomes

Paul H. Stebbins

Agenda
12:00 pm Meal and networking
12:15 pm Speaker presentation followed by Q&A
1:15 pm Program concludes



FixUSNow.org

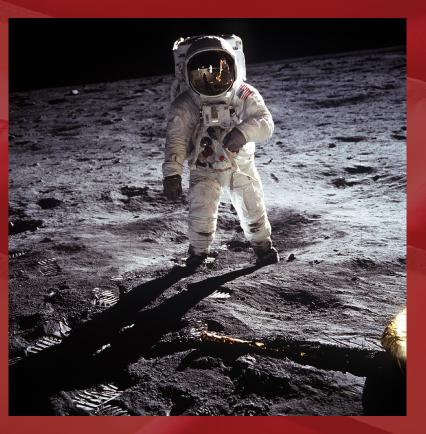


DEFENDING THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT







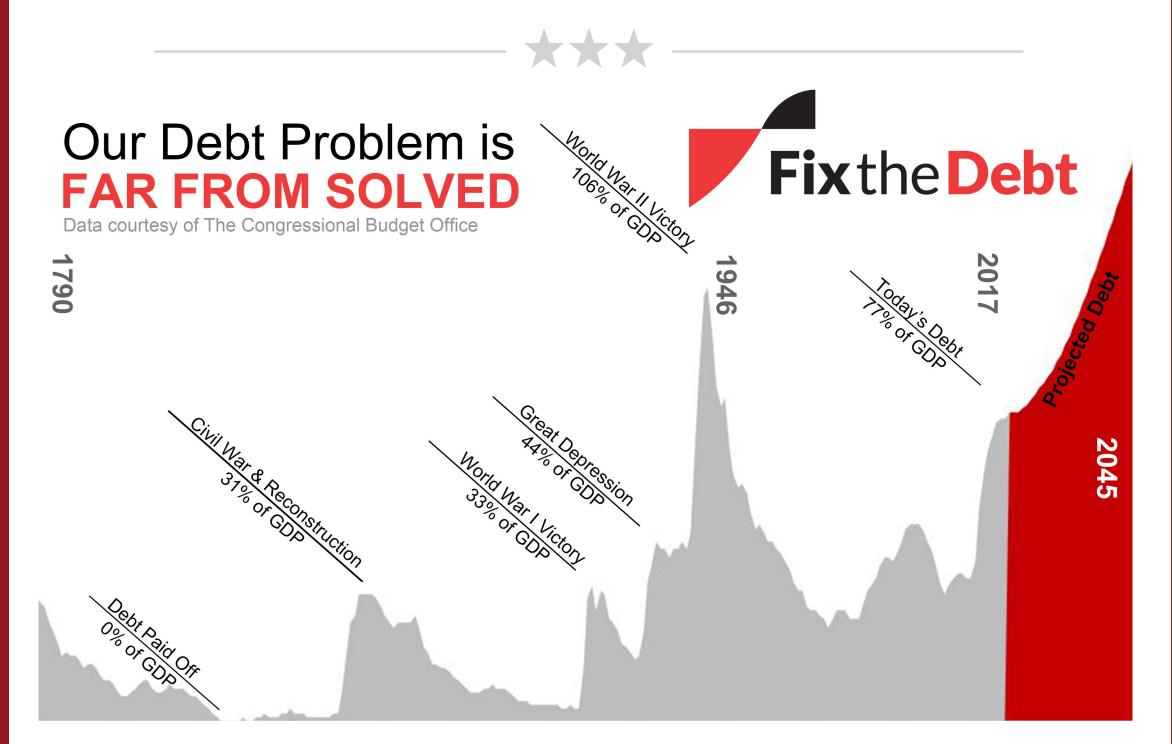




FixUSNow.org

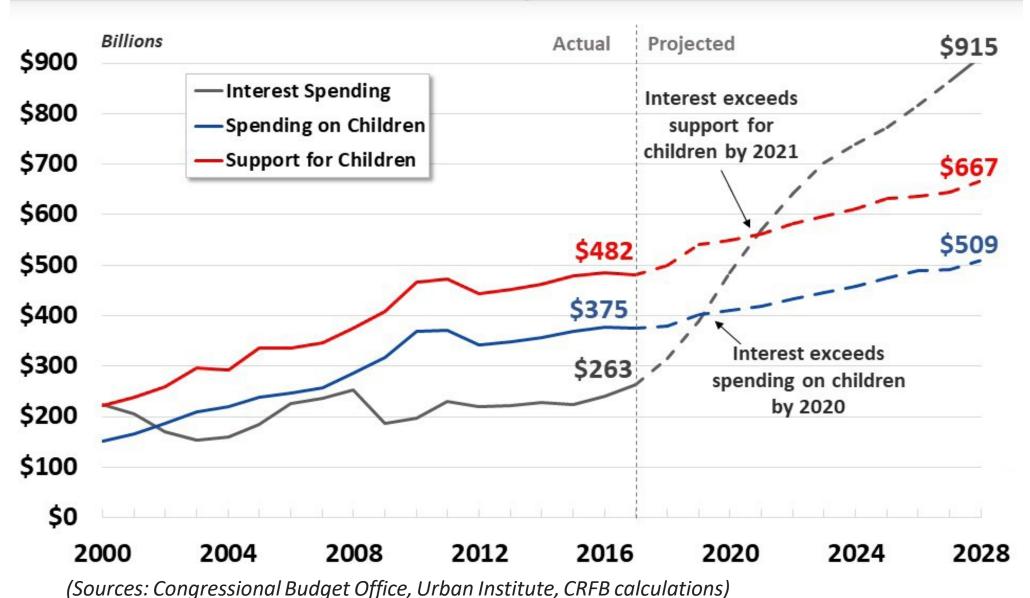


AN UNSUSTAINABLE PATH



A POOR INHERITANCE

We'll Soon Spend More Servicing the Past Than Investing in the Future



COMPROMISE IS POSSIBLE

The Debt Fixer's top areas of consensus:

- **82%** support reducing prescription drug costs
- ** **81%** support ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan
- **69%** support allowing private plans to compete with Medicare
- **67%** support increasing alcohol and cigarette taxes
- **67%** support replacing current student loan subsidies with income-

based repayment

http://www.crfb.org/debtfixer/





DEBT SYMBOLIZES A BROKEN SYSTEM

Avoids tough choices

Rewards *partisanship* over progress

Cannot achieve compromise

Focuses on *short-term* at expense of long-term

THREAT FROM WITHIN



When I walked out of the Pentagon after 28 years in uniform, I never thought I'd say this, but what is going on politically in America today is a far graver threat than any our nation faced during my career, including the Soviet Union. And it's because this threat is here and now, right at home, and it's coming from within us. I guess the irony of being a great nation is the only power who can bring you down is yourself.

- Colonel Mark Mykleby, USMC (Retired)

(Source: The New York Times 10/2/18)

OUR NATION IS AT A CROSSROADS

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CURRENT PATH



Paralysis in Washington on critical issues



Policy instability and uncertainty



Vulnerable to foreign influence



Rising public discord and unrest Disenchantment with



government and democracy



OUR NEW REALITY



71%: believe that problems in America's politics have reached a dangerous low point, and are not similar to most previous periods of partisan disagreement

61%: significant changes are needed in the design and structure of American government



Seven in ten Americans, across political spectrum, say the US is losing its national identity

(Sources: WP/UM, Pew, & AP/NORC)

AMERICA FACES DAUNTING CHALLENGES

LOSING FAITH IN INSTITUTIONS

78%

of Americans believe it's important that Republicans and Democrats work together

19%

think they're doing a good job of it



Trust in..

The Presidency is down 54%

Congress is down 81%



Essential to live in a democracy?

72% of those born in 1930s think so... compared to **30%** of millennials (those born since 1980)

(Sources: Pew & World Economic Forum)

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL

[Partisanship] serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption...There being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it.

- George Washington, Farewell Address

To secure our national unity, Washington advocated pillars of liberty including political moderation, fiscal responsibility, religious pluralism and civic education. Our first president understood that our independence as a nation was inseparable from our interdependence as a people.

- John Avlon, "Washington's Farewell"

FEDERALIST 10 – JAMES MADISON

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite the most violent conflicts.

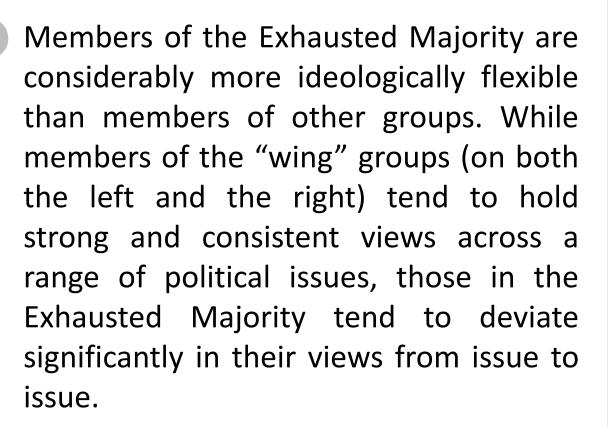
....It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests, and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another or the good of the whole.

The inference to which we are brought is, that the causes of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects.

The Hidden Tribes of America

EXHAUSTED MAJORITY





- More in Common, 10/18



Wings



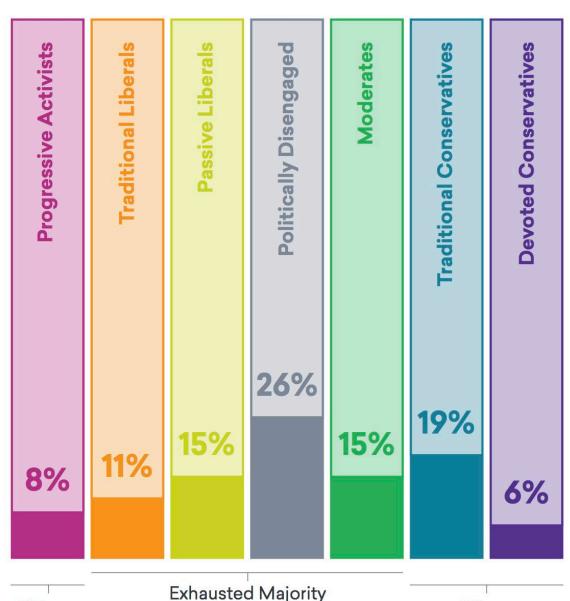








Wings



(Source: More in Common)



A STUDY OF AMERICA'S POLARIZED LANDSCAPE

More in Common Survey



ProgressiveActivists

8%

Younger, highly engaged, secular, cosmopolitan, angry

Traditional Liberals

11%

Older, retired, open to compromise, rational, cautious

Passive Liberals

15%

Unhappy, insecure, distrustful, disillusioned

Politically Disengaged

26%

Young, low income, distrustful, detached, patriotic

Moderate

15%

Engaged, civic-minded, middle-of-the-road, pessimistic, Protestant Traditional Conservatives

19%

Religious, middle class, patriotic, moralistic

Devoted Conservatives

6%

White, retired, highly engaged, uncompromising, patriotic



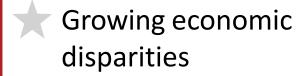
HOW DID WE GET HERE?

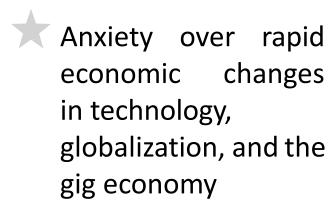
87% of Americans say *political polarization* is threatening our way of life.

ECONOMIC

POLITICAL

SOCIAL & CULTURAL





- Frustration over lack of upward mobility
- System viewed as "rigged" or "corrupt"

Politicians incented not to solve problems, due to gerrymandered districts, partisan primaries, etc.

- Increased money in politics skews the system
- Congressional rules encourage partisanship
- Ideological polarization of parties

Fragmented and polarized media and social media environment

Persistent racial, ethnic and geographic divides

Rising social isolation and decline of religious and civic institutions

Declining civility and civil discourse

(Source: AP/NORC)

MOST AMERICANS WANT US TO RESOLVE OUR DIFFERENCES



Nearly 80% of Americans believe it is very important for Democrats and Republicans to work together to solve issues



87% believe political polarization threatens our *very way of life*

THE GOOD NEWS "E PLURIBUS UNUM" IS ALIVE

77% of Americans believe our differences are not so great that we cannot come together.

- More in Common Survey, 10/18

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

It is not 'can any of us imagine better?' but, 'can we all do better?' The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

- Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862







OUR GOAL

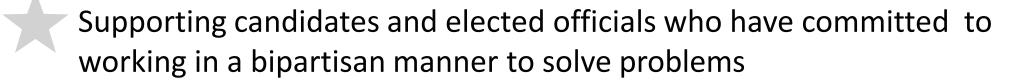
Make healing our fractured nation and fixing our broken political system a *top national priority that our leaders cannot ignore.*

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

- Thealing our divided nation is the defining challenge of our time
- Extremism on both sides of the political divide have led America into a deepening crisis
- A revitalized citizenry is the key to fixing our broken political system and preparing our nation to face the serious challenges ahead
- We value compromise over conflict, discussion over divisiveness, and progress over partisanship
- Americans share a common destiny; working together we can secure a future of freedom, justice and prosperity for future generations

THE GOOD NEWS A MOVEMENT IS BLOSSOMING

Efforts devoted to:



Reforming the incentives of our political system, including but not limited to:

Redistricting reform

***** Electoral and primary reform

★ Ballot access changes

T Campaign finance reform

Advancing bipartisan economic policies to address the structural trends contributing to economic anxiety

Promoting cultural and societal changes, including:

★ More civility in political and public discourse

Tenhanced civic engagement and education

New or improved media platforms to give voice to the ideologically homeless

A GROUNDSWELL OF EFFORTS

Examples:

Political Reforms



OPENPRIMARIES







Candidates





Economic



Cultural/Civic Engagement





Other







92 Y

THE GOOD NEWS

A MOVEMENT IS BLOSSOMING



All in Campus Democracy Challenge

All in Together

ALLSIDES

American Democracy Project

American Promise American

Public Square

American Sustainable Business Council

Ask Big Questions

Ballot Ready Better

Angels

Big Tent Nation

Bridge the Divide

Bridge USA

Bring It to the Table

Business for America

Center for Civic Design

Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress

The Center for Technology and Civic LIfe

Cities of Service

Citizen University

Civil Politics. Org

CivXNoW Common

Good

Compassionate Cities

Coffee Party

Common Ground Committee Congressional

Management Foundation Convergence

The Davenport Institute

Democracy Works Deploy/US

Digital Citizen Everyday

Democracy Essential Partners

Illinois Humanities

INDEPENDENT VOTING - Committee for a Unified Independent Party

Independent Voters Project (IVP)

InspireU.S.

Institute for Civility in Government (ICG)

Institute for Local Government (ILG)

Institute for Cutural Evolution

Issue One

Issue Voter

Jefferson Center-Thomas Jefferson Inst. For the Study of World Politics

Junior State of America

Leadership Now Project

Listen First Project

Living Room Conversations

Maplight

Mediators Foundation

Millennial Action Project

National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers National

Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) National

Conference on Citizenship

National Foundation for Woman Legislators

Natinal Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD)

National Institute on Money in State Politics New

Hampshire Listens

Niskanen Center

No Labels

Nonprofit Vote

OpenGov Foundation

Open Primaries Participatory Budgeting Project

Pluribus Project

Pro Con

Project on Government Oversight

Public Agenda

Purple America

Reclaim the American Dream.org

ReConsider

Represent.US

RStreet Institute

Serve America Movement

Stand Up Republic

Sustained Dialogue

StudentPIRGS

State Legislative Leaders Foundation

United Citizen Power (formerly Stronger US)

Take Back Our Republic

TechCongress TheChisel

The Democracy Commitment

Village Square

Voice of the People Inc.

Unite America

US Association of Former Members of Congress

We Do Better

Young Invincibles

It's time for us to engage in a conversation about how to make healing our fractured nation a top national priority

OUR NATION IS AT A CROSSROADS

THE BETTER PATH



Lasting solutions



Compromises in Washington



Restoration of trust in institutions vital to democracy



Return of civility and spirit of cooperation



A united America, ready to take on domestic and global challenges

BEAPART OF THE CONVERSATION

What do you believe is the main reason Americans are becoming more divided and losing faith in the political system?

What do you believe is the most important thing that could be done to fix the political system and bring the US together?

Are there any positive things happening in your community or state that Washington could learn from?

HOW CAN YOU JOIN OUR EFFORTS?

Sign up for the Campaign to Fix the Debt:

- **★** Text **FIX** to 345345
- ★ Email *info@FixTheDebt.org* with the subject *"join"*
- ★ Go to www.FixTheDebt.org and sign up

Receive information about FixUS by going to www.FixUSNow.org

WHAT YOU CAN DO JOIN FixUS

Sign up at www.FixUSNow.org and receive opportunities to:

- ★ Help identify and learn about our political problems & possible fixes
- ★ Join discussions about these issues with like-minded Americans (in person event, online, teleconferences)
- ★ Connect you with organizations and efforts trying to heal our divides
- ★ Engage your local community on these issues (via letters to the editor, hosting events, and recruiting others to join)