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Chapter 1 : Reforming Government: What Really Needs to Be Done?

Yet we have gone hearing after hearing, year after year, and the inertia of government prevails. I think we must be tough. The system must be changed and we must respond to these problems. Let me give you just a couple of examples. The government now has at least financial management systems.

Scholar-Activist, Educator 5 Reasons the Presidential Primary System Is in Need of Reform The presidential primary system as it exists today is a surprisingly new phenomenon, and it is hardly unreasonable to believe that it can and should be overhauled. A voter approaching an election polling place station during a United States election. And so begins a bizarre series of rituals that, in spite of quadrennial gripes from a few pundits and shared Facebook posts, we seem to accept as an engrained and sacred part of the democratic process. But the presidential primary system as it exists today is a surprisingly new phenomenon, and it is hardly unreasonable to believe that it can and should be overhauled. State-by-state discrepancies make the primary process imbalanced Most states and territories hold primaries, which are organized and paid for by their respective state governments. The remaining states and territories opt for caucuses and party nominating conventions, where complicated rules and long processes mean voter turnout is often much lighter than in primaries. Some contests are open to all voters regardless of political affiliation, while others are solely intended for pledged party members. Such wide variation among states means that all votes are not created equal. Delegate allocation is confusing -- and undemocratic The process by which delegates are allocated also varies by state and by party. On the Republican side, each state is granted leeway in determining how delegates are assigned. Many states allocate delegates on a winner-take-all or winner-take-most basis, a process that effectively undermines individual votes. In Texas, for example, the state party only awards delegates to candidates who meet a 20 percent threshold of the popular vote, which essentially rendered meaningless the over 18 percent votes cast for Rubio. For Kasich supporters in Georgia where he fell far short of the 20 percent threshold, they would have been just as well writing in Paul Coverdell, who despite his postmortem conditions will receive the same number of Georgian delegates as Kasich come July. Meanwhile, Donald Trump will arrive in Cleveland with about 43 percent of the pledged delegates awarded through March, despite only receiving 35 percent of the votes cast in that same time. Closed primaries and caucuses discourage broad participation On this point, there are clearly pros and cons to restricting primary participation to party members. So clearly, political parties have a vested interest in keeping primaries closed to discourage agitation and maintain party loyalty. Yet, should open primaries even be a question in a democratic contest? And why should only Democrats and Republicans have a say in deciding which candidates are most qualified to serve as commander in chief? By shutting out unaffiliated voters, states with closed primaries and caucuses see much lower participation, which is arguably worse for political parties whose ultimate success in the general election is based on high voter turnout. Early states wield disproportionate amounts of power and do not reflect the broader electorate The power of early states rests in their ability to create momentum for candidates. Yet the combined population of the first four primary states -- Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina -- is a little more than 12 million people. Further, the electorate in first states to vote hardly represent the diversity of the nation as a whole. According to the most recent census, Compare that with the In New Hampshire the gap is amazingly even wider, with an even 94 percent identifying as white and white alone. Superdelegates are fundamentally undemocratic Hilariously enough, the arguably undemocratic role of superdelegates -- who are tasked with casting their votes for a candidate of their choosing at party conventions -- only exist on the Democratic side. Despite the fact that their votes are not bound by the results of popular elections in their state, their votes weigh much more heavily than the votes of average citizens. While superdelegates are solely a byproduct of the DNC, Republicans have their own version of the "smoke-filled room": And because there is no law barring unbound delegates from accepting bribes, they could theoretically sell their vote to the highest bidder on the convention floor. All of

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this matters because the rules that govern presidential primaries serve the plutocrats and party elites, rather than the will of the people. Our current system fuels the hour corporate media circus, forces most candidates into the pockets of special interests, disenfranchises voters, and perpetuates a two-part duopoly that undermines our democracy. Yet as long as the media and the two major parties stand to benefit from this process -- and the public is willing to play along -- we can continue to expect more of the same. Do you have information you want to share with HuffPost?

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Chapter 2 : Government is Good - How to Fix American Government and Revive Democracy

Reforming government: what really needs to be done?: hearing before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, second session, January 27, [United States.

Helps make health insurance more affordable to lower and middle income Americans and small business employers. Offers important new consumer protections. Enforces a lot of new rules that help eliminate wasteful spending. ObamaCare can only do so much to protect your rights. Here are the facts on why America needs health care reform: The cost of health care is not regulated by the government. Other people had private insurance but got so sick that they lost their job and lost their insurance. This study did not take into account other debts owed at the time of bankruptcy. Learn more about bankruptcy from Medical bills. Hospital Executives continue to make millions of dollars in profit while consumers struggle to pay their ever increasing medical costs. Health insurance administration expenses account for 8 percent of all health care costs in the United States each year. The United States ambulance industry makes more money a year than the entire movie industry does. According to the CDC , 75 percent of all healthcare expenditures go toward treating chronic diseases, many of which are preventable. Refusing coverage for pre-existing conditions, putting people in high-risk pools, or charging sick people more for coverage was one of the main ways premium rates were artificially kept low before the ACA. As of insurers continue to raise rates to maintain a profit under the increasing cost of the rest of the healthcare system. Nearly half of all Americans use prescription drugs. Over 25 for-profit companies made over a billion dollars in profit on of prescription drugs in alone. Part of the reason that accidental death statistics are so high is because some people get unnecessary surgery, some have slips and falls, and some are given unnecessary medication. If you want more facts about uninsured Americans, learn more about uninsured Americans from the Kaiser Family Foundation one of the best resources on health care reform and how ObamaCare helps. ObamaCare left room for insurance companies to raise premiums in order to include the cost of covering pre-existing conditions. The cost of covering those with pre-existing conditions has always been one of the biggest obstacles in healthcare and as our ability to detect and treat chronic illness gets better this only becomes more true. To add to this problem the underlying healthcare industries like drug makers, device makers, and hospitals continue to raise prices to retain their place in the for-profit market. As the root costs of healthcare go up the costs of treatment and detection go up too. Although ObamaCare helps to keep insurance affordable for low and middle income Americans. Premiums are projected to keep rising. What is still unknown however is how the new reforms will affect long-term growth in healthcare costs. One hope is that by expanding access to preventive services though regulation and subsidies chronic illness will be caught early more often saving us all wasteful spending and human suffering. Who is to Blame? The facts on health care can be scary. However, we as Americans have always faced seemingly unsolvable problems with frightening odds and come out on top. A for profit system will always do what it can to make a profit. Why are Rising Costs Bad? The truth of the matter here is that publicly held debt and the deficit are growing at an unsustainable rate according to the Congressional Budget Office CBO and Joint Committee on Taxation. There are only two ways to correct these trends: The longer we put off fixing the issues the larger chance we face an unwanted outcome. HealthCare, Military, and Social Security spending account for the majority of all federal spending. None of these are easy to address, but we have begun to work on healthcare. A May Gallup poll shows that, under ObamaCare the Affordable Care Act , the number of uninsured Americans is the least it has been since when Gallup started polling the number of people who were uninsured. Data from HHS on the uninsured in shows that this could actually the lowest uninsured rate since before The uninsured rate for U. As of July the numbers are even more impressive with the uninsured rate around

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Chapter 3 : Prison Reform and Alternatives to Imprisonment

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

NGOs and civil society Why promote prison reform? Central to the arguments to promote prison reforms is a human rights argument - the premise on which many UN standards and norms have been developed. However, this argument is often insufficient to encourage prison reform programmes in countries with scarce human and financial resources. The detrimental impact of imprisonment, not only on individuals but on families and communities, and economic factors also need to be taken into account when considering the need for prison reforms. Human rights considerations A sentence of imprisonment constitutes only a deprivation of the basic right to liberty. Prison reform is necessary to ensure that this principle is respected, the human rights of prisoners protected and their prospects for social reintegration increased, in compliance with relevant international standards and norms. Imprisonment and poverty Imprisonment disproportionately affects individuals and families living in poverty. When an income generating member of the family is imprisoned the rest of the family must adjust to this loss of income. The impact can be especially severe in poor, developing countries where the state does not provide financial assistance to the indigent and where it is not unusual for one breadwinner to financially support an extended family network. Thus the family experiences financial losses as a result of the imprisonment of one of its members, exacerbated by the new expenses that must be met - such as the cost of a lawyer, food for the imprisoned person, transport to prison for visits and so on. When released, often with no prospects for employment, former prisoners are generally subject to socio-economic exclusion and are thus vulnerable to an endless cycle of poverty, marginalisation, criminality and imprisonment. Thus, imprisonment contributes directly to the impoverishment of the prisoner, of his family with a significant cross-generational effect and of society by creating future victims and reducing future potential economic performance. Public health consequences of imprisonment Prisons have very serious health implications. Prisoners are likely to have existing health problems on entry to prison, as they are predominantly from poorly educated and socio-economically deprived sectors of the general population, with minimal access to adequate health services. Their health conditions deteriorate in prisons which are overcrowded, where nutrition is poor, sanitation inadequate and access to fresh air and exercise often unavailable. Psychiatric disorders, HIV infection, tuberculosis, hepatitis B and C, sexually transmitted diseases, skin diseases, malaria, malnutrition, diarrhoea and injuries including self-mutilation are the main causes of morbidity and mortality in prison. In countries with a high prevalence of TB in the outside community, prevalence of TB can be up to times higher inside the prisons. In most countries HIV infection in prisons is significantly higher than within the population outside prison, especially where drug addiction and risk behaviours are prevalent. Prison staff are also vulnerable to most of the diseases of which prisoners are at risk. Prisons are not isolated from the society and prison health is public health. The vast majority of people committed to prison eventually return to the wider society. Thus, it is not in vain that prisons have been referred to as reservoirs of disease in various contexts. Detrimental social impact Imprisonment disrupts relationships and weakens social cohesion, since the maintenance of such cohesion is based on long-term relationships. When a member of a family is imprisoned, the disruption of the family structure affects relationships between spouses, as well as between parents and children, reshaping the family and community across generations. Mass imprisonment produces a deep social transformation in families and communities. The cost of imprisonment Taking into account the above considerations, it is essential to note that, when considering the cost of imprisonment, account needs to be taken not only of the actual funds spent on the upkeep of each prisoner, which is usually significantly higher than what is spent on a person sentenced to non-custodial sanctions, but also of the indirect costs, such as the social, economic and healthcare related

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costs, which are difficult to measure, but which are immense and long-term. The benchmarks for action in prison reform: Over the years a considerable body of United Nations standards and norms related to crime prevention and criminal justice has emerged. UNODC believes that effective prison reform is dependent on the improvement and rationalisation of criminal justice policies, including crime prevention and sentencing policies, and on the care and treatment made available to vulnerable groups in the community. Reform of the prison system should therefore always take into account the needs relating to the reform of the criminal justice system as a whole and employ an integrated, multi-disciplinary strategy to achieve sustainable impact. Thus, reform initiatives will usually need to also encompass criminal justice institutions other than the prison service, such as the judiciary prosecution and police service, as relevant. An integrated approach also takes account of areas that are typically not regarded as part of the "criminal justice system". These include, for example, the development of substance dependence treatment programmes in the community or psycho-social counselling programmes, to which certain offenders may be diverted, rather than being imprisoned, thus ensuring that services in prison are not overstretched, trying to meet the needs of a growing number of prisoners with special needs. The integrated strategy to prison reform can benefit immensely from the establishment and development of collaboration and partnerships with other UN agencies and other international and national organisations engaged in complementary programmes.

Pre-trial detention There are three main issues that need to be taken into consideration in the context of pre-trial detention: This situation contradicts the provisions in international standards, including ICCPR, that provide for the limited use of pre-trial detention, only when certain conditions are present. Secondly, pre-trial detention is the period most open to abuse in the criminal justice process. Recognizing the particular vulnerability of pre-trial detainees, international human rights instruments provide for a large number of very specific safeguards to ensure that the rights of detainees are not abused, that they are not ill-treated and their access to justice not hindered.

Prison Management In order for a prison system to be managed in a fair and humane manner, national legislation, policies and practices must be guided by the international standards developed to protect the human rights of prisoners. But often national legislation and rules relating to the management of prisons are outdated and in need of reform. In many countries the prison department is under the authority of police or military institutions and managers and staff have received no specific training regarding prison management. Staff morale is usually low and effective leadership to drive prison reform is lacking. Information collection and management systems are also very inadequate or non-existent in many prison systems worldwide, hindering the development of sound policies and strategies based on reliable, factual data. UNODC can provide much assistance in reforming national legislation, developing training programmes for prison managers to improve their leadership role and staff to apply international standards and norms in their daily practice, and by contributing to the institutional capacity building of prison administrations.

Alternative Measures and Sanctions Overcrowding is a key concern in almost all prison systems worldwide, while punitive criminal policies, as well as a shortage of social protection services in the community, continue to contribute to the rapid growth of the prison population in many countries. As mentioned earlier, overcrowding is the root cause of many human rights violations in prisons. Solutions to overcrowding need to be explored and implemented in almost all countries in which UNODC is operational. While overcrowding can be temporarily decreased by building new prisons, practice shows that trying to overcome the harmful effects of prison overcrowding through the construction of new prisons does not provide a sustainable solution. In addition, building new prisons and maintaining them is expensive, putting pressure on valuable resources. Instead, numerous international instruments recommend a rationalization in sentencing policy, including the wider use of alternatives to prison, aiming to reduce the number of people being isolated from society for long periods. The use of non-custodial sanctions and measures also reflects a fundamental change in the approach to crime, offenders and their place in society, changing the focus of penitentiary measures from punishment and isolation, to restorative justice and reintegration. When accompanied by adequate support for offenders, it assists some of the most vulnerable members of society to lead a life without having to relapse back into

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criminal behavior patterns. Thus, the implementation of penal sanctions within the community, rather than through a process of isolation from it, offers in the long term better protection for society. Social Reintegration

One of the principle objectives of the United Nations in the area of prison reform is to contribute to the successful reintegration of prisoners into society following their release. Social reintegration initiatives should start as early as possible within the criminal justice process in order to have maximum effect. This means that diversion from the criminal justice process especially of vulnerable groups to appropriate treatment programmes, non-custodial sanctions, instead of isolation from society and purposeful activities and programmes in prisons, can all be considered as elements of a comprehensive "social reintegration" policy. Interventions to support former prisoners following release from prison, continuum of care in the community for those in need, will all be more effective if the period in prison is used to prepare a prisoner for re-entry to society. This policy requires close coordination between criminal justice institutions and social protection and health services in the community and probation services where they exist. UNODC can offer key support and advice in this area, including supporting the development of social reintegration programmes in prisons and in assisting with the planning and implementation of continuum of care and support in the community.

Healthcare Equivalence of healthcare and the right to health is a principle that applies to all prisoners, who are entitled to receive the same quality of medical care that is available in the community. However, this right is rarely realised in prisons, where usually healthcare services are extremely inadequate. Prison health services are almost always severely under-funded and understaffed and sometimes non-existent. Most of the time under the responsibility of the authority in charge of the prisons administration, prison health services work in complete isolation from national health authorities, including national HIV and national TB programmes. The right to health includes not only the access to preventive, curative, reproductive, palliative and supportive health care but also the access to the underlying determinants of health, which include: Improved prison management and prison conditions are fundamental to developing a sustainable health strategy in prisons. In addition, prison health is an integral part of public health, and improving prison health is crucial for the success of public health policies.

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Chapter 4 : Reforming the Bureaucracy [calendrierdelascience.com]

Reforming government: what really needs to be done?: hearing before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, second session, January 27, by United States.

Reforming the Bureaucracy The bureaucracy is notorious for being out of touch with the people and difficult to navigate, a fact illustrated in cartoons, jokes, and even video games. Since , virtually every presidential election included a debate over the size of the federal government. Americans who believed the bureaucracy had become too large, too expensive, and too powerful were becoming more numerous, and as a result many politicians began to demand reform. Federal employees have so much job security that there is little fear of being fired for incompetence. There are so many agencies organized in such confusing ways. How can the ordinary citizen feel connected to government when everything is so impersonal? Public criticism of bureaucratic inefficiency is commonplace. In response, many people, including most Presidents, have tried to reform and reorganize the bureaucracy. The Merit System and the Hatch Act Government employees may not wear campaign buttons like this one of President McKinley at work, or while wearing a uniform or driving a government vehicle, according to the provisions of the Hatch Act. The merit system tries to ensure that the best-qualified people get government jobs and that party politics is limited. In , Congress passed the Hatch Act, which required employees, once they were hired, to have as little to do with political parties as possible. The Hatch Act forbids employees from engaging in many party activities. For example, they could not run for public office or raise funds for a party or candidate, nor could they become officers in a political organization or a delegate to a party convention. In the early s some bureaucrats complained that their First Amendment rights were being violated. However, in Congress softened the Hatch Act by making many forms of participation in politics permissible. Federal bureaucrats still cannot run as candidates in elections, but they may be active in party politics. Requiring Accountability One criticism of our merit-based bureaucracy is that once a person is employed there are no requirements that he or she be held accountable for their work. Since they no longer lose their jobs when a new President takes office, some criticize that they become complacent and inflexible. Some suggestions for making civil servants more accountable for their work include the following: Limiting appointments to years. After the appointment expires, the bureaucrat would then have to go through reexamination and their performance would be reviewed for possible rehire. Making it easier to fire a bureaucrat. Civil service rules that are meant to protect workers from partisan politics have made it difficult to fire anyone for poor performance. Reformers want to remove those rules. Rotating professionals between agencies and from outside. Reformers believe that this practice would bring "new blood" to agencies and encourage workers to get a broader view of government service. Cutting "Red Tape" One common complaint about bureaucracy is that "red tape" — the maze of government rules, regulations, and paperwork — makes government so overwhelming to citizens that many people try to avoid any contact. Filling out forms, standing in line, and being put on hold on the telephone all have resulted in many people being discouraged from ever applying for benefits they rightfully deserve. In response, Presidents of the 20th century offered no fewer than eleven major reorganizations of the federal bureaucracy. The NPR report contained many horror stories about useless red tape for both citizens and government officials themselves. The NPR called for less centralized management, more employee initiative, fewer rules, and more emphasis on customer satisfaction. As of the year , few of the recommendations have been followed. One reason that it is so hard to reform the bureaucracy is that it has two masters — the President and Congress. Especially during periods of divided government, one branch can be suspicious that the other is trying to gain control. As a result, one branch or the other resists reform. Finding the practical solutions that have bipartisan support is a difficult process, largely because the system of checks and balances is not particularly efficient. Nevertheless, bureaucratic reform is often attempted by the President and Congress. Meanwhile, the red tape remains rather sticky. You can be a party member, but not a party leader. The rules and regulations for federal employees in

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politics, governed by the Hatch Act, are sometimes complicated. See how they propose to cut red tape and make reporting easier for businesses, while still protecting the environment. Take a look at what the Environmental Protection Agency does to reform the bureaucracy – from building partnerships to improving environmental information. Why does this happen when there is a government program to provide food stamps to the less fortunate? Learn about the application process for food stamps in each state, and read the stories of working families whose experiences with the bureaucracy make it difficult to have a decent meal. Thalidomide Bureaucratic red tape saved hundreds of American babies from being born deformed. Later, the drug that some pregnant women used to cure morning sickness was proved to cause birth defects such as missing limbs and deformed internal organs. See the benefits of red tape in this article from the National Institute of Health.

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Chapter 5 : Responsible Prison Reform | National Affairs

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Share on Facebook Tweet this "Increased government efforts could do much more to improve our lives in significant ways. For decades, conservatives have been pushing for smaller government, and have consistently called for reduced social spending, less regulation, and more tax cuts. But not everyone agrees. When the financial crisis hit in the fall of and the economy began to melt down, suddenly there were calls for bigger and more active government. On top of this, many Democrats have argued for increased government involvement in a wide variety of areas, ranging from education and energy development to infrastructure repair and health care reform. But is this broad expansion of the public sector really justified? Whether we need more government in this country really depends on the answer to three other questions. First, is there room for improvement in government programs? Have we reached the limits of what government can do in most policy areas, or could expanding these current programs produce significant added benefits for the public? Second, are any of our current social and economic problems worsening? Are we facing new and serious threats to our wellbeing? If so, this would logically indicate the need for more government. And finally, can we rely on markets and individual effort to solve these current and emerging problems? But if markets and individual initiative are not up to the task, this bolsters the case for a more collective, governmental approach. All three of these questions are complex ones, but as this article will show, we can begin to get some definitive answers to all of them. These answers strongly indicate that we do need more government – not less – in the United States. Room for Improvement As impressive as the accomplishments of government are in the U. In fact, many Americans sense this already. One of the most common complaints about government is that it is not doing enough to address a whole raft of problems. Sure the air is cleaner than it was, but we still have major smog problems in many cities. Of course we have done much to reduce poverty among the elderly, but a high level of poverty among the general population still exists. And while energy efficiency has improved, we still have an economy that is dangerously dependent on oil and other fossil fuels. But this is not the case. We know that government could actually do much more. How do we know this? Because governments in many other advanced democracies have already done much more to effectively address these problems. But this study also found that there is considerable room for improvement. Bok discovered this by comparing the accomplishments of the U. What Bok found in this comparative study was not comforting: Among the areas where we have under-performed other democracies: Growth of per-capita income.

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Chapter 6 : Health Care Facts: Why We Need Health Care Reform

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Share on Facebook Tweet this "The more democratic government becomes, the less afraid people will be of a large and active government" There are several ways that we can reduce the power of special interests and make our government more democratic. The most promising reforms include creating more economic equality among citizens, adopting public financing of elections, and using more representative voting systems. As I argued elsewhere on this site, the main problem right now with American government is a deficit of democracy. But what can be done about this? how can we fix our government and revitalize democracy in the United States? It is not as if this threat to democracy has gone unnoticed. Many citizens and organizations have been outraged about the rising power of affluent special interests. They have been working to address this issue of unequal power and have been pursuing several different approaches. These reform efforts fall into three broad categories. The first is to lessen the economic inequality in the private sphere that is being translated to political inequality in the public sphere. The second is to attempt to erect institutional barriers that prevent private power from being easily converted to political advantage. A third approach is to reform the voting process itself so that it becomes more democratic and more empowering to average voters. Toward Greater Economic Equality The first line of attack is to go straight to the heart of the problem: If these disparities are the basic cause of political inequalities, then these private inequalities need to be lessened if we want to move toward political system where power is more widely dispersed among all citizens. So we need to produce a fairer division of the economic pie that is created by the work of all Americans. However, such changes in the distribution of wealth and income will not come about naturally through the market, but can only be enacted through various kinds of public policies on the state and federal levels. Here are some policies that would help to reduce wage and wealth inequalities. This policy would immediately benefit those at the bottom of the economic ladder. During the last several decades, minimum wage has been increasingly falling behind the average wage and it needs to be increased. The wage has usually been pegged to the amount that would lift a family of three or four above the poverty level. Cities like Baltimore and Los Angeles have passed living wage laws that have increased the wages of thousands of workers in those urban areas. Earned Income Tax Credits. Many liberals and conservatives agree that the EITC has been very successful in subsidizing the wages of low-income working families so that they may stay out of poverty. This program must be maintained and hopefully expanded to cover even more low income workers. If government policymakers were more serious about reducing unemployment to a minimum, this would reduce both poverty and wage inequality. Many people are poor for lack of a full-time job. And when the employment market is tight, this forces companies to raise wages in order to attract workers. Reducing High Corporate Salaries. Decreasing economic inequality may involve not only increasing the incomes of those on the bottom, but also putting reasonable limits on the income of those on the top. The salaries of top corporate executives have been ballooning while average wages have stagnated. CEOs currently make salaries that are over times that of the average worker a much higher disparity than we see in most other Western countries. Government policies to strengthen the power of unions would probably have the highest payoffs in the effort to reduce wage inequality. Many other Western countries have lower levels of economic inequality precisely because unions are more common and have more clout. Union bargaining clearly helps to increase the wages and benefits of low and moderate income workers. We could do much more to facilitate the establishment of unions and to increase their bargaining power. For example, instead of the current lengthy process needed to establish unions, we could require instant recognition of any union that signs up a majority of workers in a workplace. We could also institute a ban on the use of permanent replacement workers a major tool used by management to break

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strikes. Canada has this ban and also requires instant recognition of unions – one reason their rate of unionization is three times that of the U. Another change that would help unions would be to remove the ban on secondary boycotts, where workers from one company are prohibited from supporting strikers in another company – say by refusing to cross a picket line. Finally, the Taft-Hartely Act should be repealed. This act impedes workers abilities to unionize and has legitimized a wide array of anti-union activities by employers.

Free or Low-Cost Higher Education. We should be increasing the number of government grants not loans for college students – or better yet, we should make higher education free for all Americans. I Bill enabled millions of people to get a debt-free college education, which gave a significant boost to their asset-building efforts. A similar effort now would help millions attend college and ensure that they graduate without a crushing load of debt. This would significantly bolster Social Security and other retirement accounts for all Americans. More progressive tax rates would help to even the playing field. The rich should be paying more in income taxes. Estate taxes, which currently impact only the very richest families, should be maintained. Capital gains – which disproportionately go to the wealthy – should be taxed at the same rate as wages. Finally, a direct tax on wealth, from which most Americans would be exempt, would help to undermine huge concentrations of wealth. Many European countries already have such wealth taxes. Government policies should help to broaden employee ownership of businesses – the main generators of wealth in our country. A more equitable distribution of income and wealth would certainly be a step in the right direction in the effort to remedy the unfair distribution of political power that we have in the U. The goal of these policies is not to eliminate economic inequality in America; no one is arguing that everyone should make the same amount of money. The point is to begin to reduce economic inequality to a more reasonable and just level – a level at which it will no longer undermine the promise of political equality.

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Chapter 7 : Government is Good - Why We Need More, Not Less, Government

Government is played as a game, not as a fiduciary responsibility to get things done. Running the country is not what political leaders mainly think about. They wake up every morning calculating.

Eli Lehrer Summer Over the past few decades, the United States has witnessed an enormous increase in the number of people in jail and in prison. In , around the time that imprisonment rates began their sharp uptick, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that , people sat behind bars in the United States. As of mid, that number stood at about 2 million. The evidence shows that this mass incarceration has performed more or less as advertised. By any measure, nearly every neighborhood, city, and state in the United States has become safer over the past two decades. Crime rates in many categories are at less than half of their all-time highs. But the costs of incarceration – both financial and societal – are also becoming increasingly clear. The policies that were appropriate for a nation that had one of the highest crime rates among developed Western countries are not necessarily appropriate for a nation that now has one of the lowest. Just as conservatives once led the way toward the tougher sentencing rules and other policies that increased imprisonment rates, they should lead the way in sensibly shrinking the prison population. In fact, somewhat paradoxically, an increased emphasis on individual responsibility – which earlier prompted the move toward mass incarceration – also holds promise for a new conservative agenda for prison reform. Combined with a renewed emphasis on effective punishment, increased attention to circumstances within jailhouse walls, and a different social attitude toward ex-offenders, these sound, time-tested principles can shape the new vision for prison reform that America urgently needs. This view is now so widely embraced that almost no political leader disputes it publicly. But its simple emphasis on locking people up is very costly, both in fiscal and in human terms. Before examining this dominant view, it is necessary to consider the alternative. During much of the latter half of the 20th century, most of the American left subscribed to the notion that society as a whole is responsible for crime and that individuals commit crimes because of social deprivation or prejudice. Though this view is now derided by conservatives and many modern liberals, it does not lack for appeal or factual grounding. Briefly, the social theory of crime postulates that crime results from unfortunate social circumstances that few are able to overcome. This view also holds that the actual apparatus of the criminal-justice system – police, prisons, and courts – does little to diminish crime. Imprisonment was needed to incapacitate the truly dangerous, of course, but that did not describe most criminals. Punishing people for the harm they inflicted on society was seen as a barbaric practice, since society itself was responsible for crime. Insofar as the justice system offered answers, it was to rehabilitate criminals through schooling, counseling, and labor. Moreover, critics asserted, the justice system was terribly prejudiced against African-Americans and other minority groups. While the position that society causes crime is quickly dismissed today, even in left-of-center circles, it actually has a fair amount of evidentiary support. Children who grow up in homes without two parents, whose parents are not closely attached to the work force, and who drop out of school are much more likely to commit crimes than are those raised in more stable environments. Furthermore, for a long period of time in much of the country, the justice system was clearly prejudiced. As William Stuntz documented in his book, *The Collapse of American Criminal Justice*, the criminal "justice" system of the Jim Crow South was, in many respects, a cause of crime itself. Under Jim Crow, most common crime in African-American areas was simply ignored, but the system actively worked to facilitate lawlessness in the form of lynching, police riots, and outright abuse of anyone who threatened the racist status quo. Ultimately, however, public-sector efforts to combat crime by alleviating social problems failed. Significant increases in the size and scope of the welfare state and large drops in the poverty rate correlated closely with increases in crime partly, of course, because some social programs exacerbated the very social pathologies they were intended to cure. Efforts to rehabilitate inmates within prison walls likewise failed so dismally that, writing in *The Public Interest* in , criminologist Robert Martinson concluded that nothing, or almost nothing, worked. Furthermore, while crime in black communities

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was almost certainly not measured accurately in the Jim Crow South, there is no evidence that greater racial tolerance after the civil-rights era corresponded with decreases in the rates of most categories of crime committed by blacks. In fact, reported statistics indicate that those rates soared between the 1960s and 1970s as the civil-rights movement won its major legislative victories. Efforts to blame society for crime and to focus on rehabilitation thus failed dismally. Since most people, even those from deprived backgrounds, do manage to obey the law and avoid wrongdoing, this individual-centered view holds that criminals commit crimes largely because of internal moral failings. Social inequities exist, of course, but they do not cause or excuse crime. The individual-responsibility view proposes that all four classic purposes of the criminal-justice system should be reflected in the law. First, the risk of punishment deters weak-willed people from committing crime. Second, locking people up provides a near-certain method of incapacitation, as criminals behind bars cannot prey on society. Third, incarceration is an effective punishment in that it excludes people from society, denies them most choices, and forces them to live for years in unpleasant surroundings. Finally, rehabilitation — drug treatment, literacy classes, and so forth — stands the best chance of success if it is compulsory, which further recommends incarceration. Although the individual view of crime was typically held by people on the political right — many of whom were skeptical of government efforts to remedy social inequality, some of whom were skeptical of certain elements of civil-rights legislation, and at least a few of whom were racially bigoted — it also came in time to be embraced by some political liberals, just as the social view had been by some conservatives. Along with other liberal lawmakers, then-senator Joe Biden helped President Ronald Reagan enact major legislation related to the "War on Drugs. At the same time, a longstanding system of "indeterminate sentencing," which gave judges and parole boards significant freedom to shorten sentences, found itself replaced with a more mechanistic system. Statutory sentencing guidelines increasingly specified minimum time behind bars for a wide variety of specific crimes, and "good time" systems replaced parole boards with formulas that reduced sentences by a set amount for each day inmates stayed out of trouble. The strategy was widely credited with increasing sentence length. Judged by its intended results, the strategy of locking more people up plainly worked. Crime rates started dropping in the early 1980s and have fallen almost every year since. While new policing tactics, demographics, and cultural trends certainly contributed to the decline, there is no doubt that mass incarceration did as well. Only improved policing can plausibly claim as large a contribution to the long and ongoing drop in crime. The benefits of this decline also manifested themselves in the plunging costs of crime to society. As such, preventing even a few crimes can be well worth the financial costs of incarceration, since a single convict might commit dozens of crimes in a year. As the societal costs of crime have fallen, criminal justice has diminished as a public concern. In the 1990s, as many as half did. While crime-reduction policies played a significant role in every presidential election from 1980 to 2000, in the presidential contest, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney never so much as mentioned crime in any one of their debates or in their nomination-acceptance speeches. Without question, this indifference stems from the fact that crime rates today are much lower than they have been historically. The Uniform Crime Reports issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigations show a nearly consistent drop in overall crime from the 1960s until today. The telephone polls conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics to survey crime victimization show an even longer-running decline, dating all the way back to the 1950s. Although differences in legal standards and definitions make exact comparisons difficult, gross crime rates in the United States a measure dominated by assaults and property crimes are lower than they are in other sizable Western countries. Relative to Londoners, for example, New Yorkers are half as likely to have their cars stolen or to face serious assaults. Of course, crime remains a major problem in some areas. It is still a leading political issue in a handful of large cities, such as Detroit. Local television news programs, operating under the banner "if it bleeds it leads," still make much hay of grisly crimes. Growing incarceration rates have both coincided with and been a cause of this significant shift. These costs can be measured in fiscal terms, in the failure of imprisonment to prevent certain repeat behavior, in the impact of incarceration on certain communities, and in the tension between high incarceration rates and democratic values. The financial costs of large-scale incarceration are immense. But

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these costs represent only the tip of the iceberg. Removing 2 million people from the labor force causes dislocations of all sorts. People in prison and jail have a difficult time maintaining personal relationships. This contributes to large numbers of children growing up in single-parent homes, or without any parents at all which, in turn, correlates strongly with more of those children turning to crime. The policy of large-scale incarceration has also failed to demonstrate lasting success in the area of rehabilitation. Despite concerted efforts and millions of dollars in public spending, recidivism rates barely declined during the s. Since vastly more people are serving time behind bars, this pattern of high recidivism suggests that prisons are fostering even more criminality. The costs of incarceration also fall particularly heavily on the black community. Contrary to some conventional wisdom, there is evidence to suggest that blacks who are convicted of crimes actually get treated slightly more leniently in sentencing than their white counterparts. Black murderers, for example, are less likely to face the death penalty than white killers are. A report from the U. Sentencing Commission did find that black federal offenders serve longer sentences than their white counterparts. And while crime rates in black communities have actually declined at a faster rate than they have among other communities, crime figures among African-Americans still remain much higher than the numbers for other groups. While this means that the benefits of reduced crime accrue disproportionately to blacks, it means the social costs of incarceration, too, are felt most intensely in African-American communities. The irony becomes stronger when one realizes that at least some prisons and jails are not only unpleasant, but frankly torturous. Policymakers thus face a paradox: Locking up lots of people has contributed to a significant drop in crime that, at least from a political perspective, has helped to "solve" a once-major social problem. But incarceration is overused, expensive, and offensive to democratic values. Simply opening the prisons and releasing many people who have been convicted of crimes, however, would almost certainly return crime rates to intolerably high levels. This leaves another course of action: Forcing them to make amends achieves the goal of retribution and, in the process, should limit their ability to repeat the offending behavior. An effective system of punishment would also be intrinsically rehabilitative, dissuading the perpetrator from wanting to repeat the behavior in the first place. More than a quarter of prisoners have drug problems and a roughly equal partly overlapping group are alcoholics. Ideally, all offenders with serious drug or alcohol problems should be strongly encouraged to participate in treatment programs consequences in terms of both sentence length and conditions of confinement should be much harsher for those who refuse treatment and these programs should be viewed as a form of punishment. This may cost more, but it would be money well spent particularly if sentences overall became somewhat shorter and fewer addicts became repeat offenders. These programs should be the opposite of the plush rehab centers favored by celebrities. Prisoners should be placed in extremely spare facilities with plenty of medical support but almost nothing in the way of entertainment or "fun" until the inmates demonstrate that they have broken their bad habits. Just as important, all able-bodied prisoners should be forced to work hard. Most people who end up in prison have not worked and do not work in the legitimate economy by most estimates, fewer than one-third of offenders hold full-time jobs at the time of their arrests and instead live off of criminal activity or government transfer programs. Forcing work on inmates will end these habits and should rightly be seen as a way of making punishment more effective. The primary purpose of these jobs should not be to offset the costs of imprisonment or even to help prisoners develop job skills but, like drug treatment programs, to break the habits that landed them in prison in the first place. A major point of prison work, in other words, should be work itself. That said, the key to making work a habit is to make work rewarding. As in the federal prison system, jobs behind bars should be paid, albeit very modestly.

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Chapter 8 : 5 Reasons the Presidential Primary System Is in Need of Reform | HuffPost

press briefing by omb director mick mulvaney on a comprehensive plan for reforming the federal government and reducing the federal civilian workforce james brady s. briefing room p.m. edt mr.

Secure Borders are a Pre-Requisite for Freedom. Why does our government refuse to enforce national borders? Libertarians believe that protection of its citizens is the only legitimate duty of government. However, this belief conflicts with another libertarian idea - that borders are artificial barriers to the free movement of people and trade. We live in the real world, where theory is not achievable. Open borders are desirable from a free-market standpoint, but only when conditions are comparable across a national border. Otherwise, these unequal conditions create market distortions and false incentives that undermine social compacts and that create chaos. For example, America has an extremely generous and complex system of social welfare programs that were developed during a period when the vast majority of citizens understood that only through hard work and honesty can society afford to assist a proportionally small number of citizens who cannot support themselves. Across the border with Mexico live millions of uneducated unskilled people, an agrarian culture that encourages large families, and a corrupt government based on bribery. The market incentives created by the radical differences in social systems are so powerful that only a highly enforced border can prevent us from being overrun with poor people looking for generous social welfare benefits paid for by American taxpayers. America is a western society founded on Judeo-Christian tradition, laws, language and culture that is under attack from Islam, a radically different ideology that is based on an imperative to destroy modern western society and return the entire world to the world of Mohammed in A. Only a highly enforced border will keep Islamo-fascists from infiltrating and attacking America. America is being invaded. All talk of measures to apprehend terrorists is meaningless as long as they can simply walk into our country unimpeded. True reform begins with the apprehension and removal of all illegal trespassers, in order to demonstrate a serious intent to establish control. Yet our leaders continue to talk of amnesty as a reward for those who show contempt for our borders, language, laws, and culture. Because government prohibition has created artificially high profits for drug dealing, terrorists are using drugs to finance their operations see reform 9. The government has again created an artificial market, this time for drugs, that inflates their value and that provides a lucrative source of financing for terrorists. The black market in over-taxed cigarettes is used for the same purpose. Our government is creating artificial market conditions that finance terrorism. America has doubled its population in less than forty years. Third World overpopulation threatens our freedoms. Our government is forcing us to support this invasion. Citizenship should not be a free ride for anyone who can manage to walk across an open border. It should be a precious, earned privilege available to a select few worthy individuals who demonstrate a commitment to Western values. True immigration reform would remove the market distortions created by open borders, by requiring those who wish to enter the US, and their sponsors, to pay the costs of immigration, including: After making payments over 20 years, each legal immigrant would be eligible for citizenship. Additional reforms are needed: To protect our culture, by making English our official language. To assure that citizens have more Constitutional rights than non-citizens. Citizenship should mean something. To stop granting automatic citizenship to the American-born children of illegal immigrants anchor babies Most human problems result from overpopulation. America cannot become the dumping ground for world irresponsibility. Examples of government surrendering to the invaders: The INS refused to deport illegal alien D. Sniper John Malvo, whose illegal status was known to government agents, was allowed to remain in the in flagrant violation of law. INS say it was "in compliance with procedures". The US government has no intention of stopping the invasion of terrorists and criminal aliens. The Head of Homeland Security admits he will not enforce immigration laws. To learn more about what you can do, please visit these excellent web sites:

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Chapter 9 : Ten Reforms That Will Save America

The United States needed to reform health care because the cost was so high. Medical bankruptcies affected up to 2 million people. Rising health care costs threatened to consume the entire federal budget.