Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Americans have a right to fair representation and that America’s democratic institutions are in urgent need of repair to provide greater responsiveness and accountability to the people through critical reforms that empower the American voter, strengthen our Nation’s ethics laws, and fix our broken campaign finance system.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 28, 2018

Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. HOYER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BERA, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENEAUER, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CRIST, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GALLEGOS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HECK, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KIHLANNA, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. CLAY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BEN RAY LujÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MICHELLE LujÁN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSU, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEeks, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. O’HALLERAN, Mr. O’ROURKE, Mr. PALONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RASKIN, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD,
RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Americans have a right to fair representation and that America’s democratic institutions are in urgent need of repair to provide greater responsiveness and accountability to the people through critical reforms that empower the American voter, strengthen our Nation’s ethics laws, and fix our broken campaign finance system.

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This resolution may be cited as the “By the People Resolution”.

Mr. Ruppersberger, Ms. Sánchez, Ms. Schakowsky, Mr. Schiff, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Scott of Virginia, Mr. Serrano, Ms. Sewell of Alabama, Ms. Shea-Porter, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Shires, Mr. Smith of Washington, Mr. Soto, Ms. Speier, Mr. Swalwell of California, Mr. Takano, Ms. Titus, Mr. Tonko, Ms. Tsongas, Mr. Vargas, Ms. Velázquez, Mr. Walz, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Ms. Maxine Waters of California, Mrs. Watson Coleman, Mr. Welch, Mr. Yarmuth, Ms. Blunt Rochester, Ms. Bonamici, Ms. Brownley of California, Mr. Veasey, Mr. DeFazio, Ms. Jackson Lee, Mr. Payne, Mrs. Lowey, Mr. Gonzalez of Texas, Mr. Vela, Mr. Brady of Pennsylvania, Mrs. Murphy of Florida, Mr. Thompson of California, Mr. Michael F. Doyle of Pennsylvania, Mr. Engel, Ms. Bass, Ms. Rosen, Mr. Costa, Mr. Peters, Ms. Meng, Mr. Ryan of Ohio, Mr. Rush, Mr. Kihuen, Mr. Carson of Indiana, Mr. Ruiz, Ms. Moore, Mr. Carbajal, and Mr. Foster) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.
SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

It is the purpose of this resolution to express the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should advance a comprehensive set of political reforms to restore trust in, and integrity to, our institutions of democracy. Such reforms will—

1. empower the American voter;
2. strengthen our Nation’s ethics laws; and
3. fix our broken campaign finance system.

TITLE I—EMPOWERING THE AMERICAN VOTER

SEC. 101. EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE BALLOT BOX.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

1. the right to vote for all Americans is sacrosanct and rules for voting and election administration should protect the right to vote and promote voter participation;
2. in recent years, we have witnessed unprecedented efforts to turn back the clock and erect barriers to voting for disabled, minority, young, elderly, and low-income Americans; and
3. Congress should respond by modernizing the electoral system to—
   (A) improve access to the ballot;
   (B) enhance the integrity and security of our voting systems; and
(C) ensure greater accountability for the
administration of elections.

SEC. 102. PROMOTING NATIONAL AUTOMATIC VOTER REG-
ISTRATION.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) America is stronger when more Americans
participate in the political process;

(2) across the Nation, voter registration models
at best are outmoded, and present barriers for eligi-
ble Americans to have their voices heard at the bal-
lot box and, at worst, are under assault from at-
ttempts to limit access; and

(3) Congress should advance reforms to auto-
mate the registration of millions of eligible voters,
thereby improving registration files and election se-
curity, all the while helping to build a more rep-
resentative electorate.

SEC. 103. ENDING PARTISAN REDISTRICTING BY ESTAB-
LISHING STATE-BASED INDEPENDENT COM-
MISSIONS.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) fair representation demands Congressional
districts be drawn without undue political influence
and gamesmanship;
(2) a partisan arms race has broken out, with majority parties in the States crafting district lines to maximize political advantage;

(3) the public has lost confidence in the way that Congressional districts are drawn; and

(4) Congress should put an end to this partisan arms race and require all States to establish independent, multi-party citizen redistricting commissions to draw open, transparent, and fair statewide district maps after each decennial census.

SEC. 104. RESTORING THE INTEGRITY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) we must remain vigilant in protecting every American’s right to vote, regardless of race, color, or creed;

(2) systemic voter discrimination and intimidation still occurs in communities across the country;

(3) the Supreme Court, in Shelby County v. Holder, struck down core provisions of the Voting Rights Act, undermining decades-long protections for communities of color that faced historic and continuing discrimination; and

(4) Congress should restore protections for voters in States with a recent history of discrimination
and bolster prophylactic protections for those communities with a history of voter disenfranchisement.

SEC. 105. PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTION SYSTEM.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the security of election systems must be improved;

(2) attacks from hostile actors, both foreign and domestic, must never compromise the integrity or security of our election system; and

(3) Congress must advance comprehensive reforms to protect and harden our election system, providing the resources and tools to our State and local partners to ensure attempts to undermine our election system remain unsuccessful.

TITLE II—STRENGTHENING OUR NATION’S ETHICS LAWS

SEC. 201. ENDING THE REVOLVING DOOR OF SPECIAL INTERESTS INTO AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the line between public service and private interests is too often blurred, because government positions are regularly filled with industry insiders who work to secure undue access and influence for their former employers, and that this preferential
treatment is later used to secure for those same individuals future employment and profit, fueling a cycle of exploitative government service;

(2) the public is rightly disgusted by this “revolving door” into and out of government, and as stewards of the public trust, government officials should be—

(A) required to submit to a stringent set of ethical guidelines that restrict their engagement on matters directly related to past employment;

and

(B) prohibited from seeking immediate employment after their government tenure with private interests with business related to their government service.

SEC. 202. EXPANDING ETHICS LAWS TO APPLY TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO PROMOTE GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) government officials at every level, including the Office of the President and Vice President, should be held to the highest ethical standards;

(2) government service should not be a means to personal profit, nor should conflicts of interest cloud the judgment of our Nation’s leaders;
(3) all existing and applicable ethics laws and
protocols to prevent conflicts of interest should apply
to the Office of President and Vice President; and

(4) candidates for President and Vice-President
should be required to disclose their tax returns as a
condition of their candidacy, as the electorate de-
serves to be provided with the necessary information
to determine if an individual can pursue the public
interest unencumbered by private conflicts of inter-
est.

SEC. 203. REFORMING THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETH-
ICS.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the entirety of the Federal Government, and
the public servants who comprise it, must comply
with all relevant ethics laws and regulations;

(2) it has become apparent that—

(A) there are significant differences in the
ways that certain agencies, government employ-
ees, and political appointees abide by the rel-
evant ethics statutes; and

(B) the existing enforcement tools are defi-
cient;

(3) Americans are right to expect their public
servants to be free from conflicts of interest; and
(4) Congress should bolster compliance across the Federal Government and ensure those charged with overseeing the law have the necessary tools of enforcement.

SEC. 204. UPDATING THE LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT AND PROHIBITING BUNDLED CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LOBBYISTS.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) all Americans have the right to petition their government, as granted by the First Amendment;

(2) the modern-day lobbying industry has abused this right, deploying sophisticated tactics to maximize their influence and to minimize transparency and public scrutiny of their actions;

(3) the American people deserve to know who is influencing their representatives in Congress;

(4) professional lobbyists should not be able to circumvent campaign finance contribution limits to gain improper access and influence Congress to advance the positions of their clients; and

(5) Congress should act to impose stronger lobbying rules and prohibitions.
SEC. 205. STRENGTHENING BRIbery LAWS TO GUARD AGAINST PUBLIC OFFICIALS PROFITING FROM PUBLIC SERVICE.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) public servants, both elected and unelected, should not use public office for personal profit;

(2) recent court cases have narrowed the scope of existing bribery laws, inviting unscrupulous public officials to test the outer bounds of the law; and

(3) Congress must act to ensure public servants do not use their public power for private gain or to enrich themselves, either directly or indirectly.

TITLE III—FIXING OUR BROKEN CAMPAIGN FINANCE SYSTEM

SEC. 301. EMPOWERING SMALL DONORS AND DIMINISHING THE INFLUENCE OF BIG MONEY CAMPAIGN DONORS.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) concentrated money in politics has corroded the public’s trust in their representatives and their ability to provide fair representation, and is undermining faith in the institutions of democracy;

(2) to reduce corruption or the appearance of corruption from the undue influence of the wealthy and well-connected donors in our politics, Congress should enact bold reforms to our campaign finance
system that increase and multiply the power of small
dollar donors in our democracy; and

(3) these reforms can provide everyday Ameri-
cans, and the candidates they support, with the tools
they need to compete with big money, enabling a
new generation of candidates to run and win office,
ultimately building a Congress that is more respon-
sive to the public interest, not the special interests.

SEC. 302. DISCLOSING “SECRET MONEY” AND PROMOTING
TRANSPARENCY OF POLITICAL SPENDING.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) undisclosed “secret money” is a scourge on
our democracy and denies voters the information
they need to make informed political decisions;

(2) when individuals or organizations enter the
political town-square to voice their opinions, they
should do so openly, honestly, and with the full ben-
efit of transparency;

(3) in recent years hundreds of millions of dol-
lars have poured into our political system from un-
disclosed sources due to a series of ill-advised court
decisions, lax enforcement, and a failure to update
donor disclosure laws; and

(4) Congress should strengthen our campaign
finance disclosure laws to shine a bright light on this
shadowy political spending and on the sponsors of campaign advertisements, thereby giving Americans the information they need to make informed political decisions.

SEC. 303. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION TO REASSERT CONGRESS’ AUTHORITY TO REGULATE POLITICAL SPENDING AND TO OVERTURN THE CITIZENS UNITED RULING.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) Congress and the States should be able to regulate and set reasonable limits on the raising and spending of political money;

(2) the Citizens United court case violated this principle by permitting unlimited political spending by nominally independent outside organizations;

(3) in practice, this has created a new wild west of outside political spending, empowering the wealthiest few to exert even more control over our democracy; and

(4) Congress should move to restore its authority to regulate the raising and spending of political money by passing a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United and other related rulings.
SEC. 304. PREVENTING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN OUR ELECTIONS.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) elections in the United States should be the sole province of the American people;

(2) recent efforts by hostile foreign actors to disrupt our elections, and thereby our democracy, must be met with resolve; and

(3) Congress should—

(A) institute a robust set of reforms to create real-time transparency of political advertisements on all advertising platforms, ensuring all Americans have the information they need to judge the source and content of a given political advertisement; and

(B) enact new, stronger prohibitions on political spending by foreign actors and on spending by domestic subsidiaries of foreign-owned corporations.

SEC. 305. RESTORING FUNCTION TO THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the Federal Election Commission needs urgent repair;
hamstrung by its partisan composition, the Commission has failed in recent years to live up to its mandate of enforcing Federal election law; and

(3) Congress should enact sensible reform measures to restore the Commission’s ability to police campaign finance violations.

SEC. 306. STRENGTHENING COORDINATION LAW TO PREVENT CANDIDATE-AFFILIATED SUPER PACS.

It is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) independent political spending must remain independent or else it renders contribution limits to candidates ineffectual;

(2) the efforts by some to evade or skirt existing campaign finance anticoordination law exposes the nominal independence of supposedly “independent” political spenders who are clearly affiliated with particular candidates; and

(3) Congress should strengthen the anticoordination statute to—

(A) shut down candidate-specific super PACs; and

(B) effectively prohibit direct and indirect coordination between other outside spenders and candidates and parties.