

# A better way?

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Americans just plain do not like their politicians right now. All the polls show disgust with the president, a loathing for congress, and disdain toward the cast of characters vying for the Republican presidential nomination.

How many times have you heard someone say something like, "How did we wind up with these so-called leaders? Why can't we find people that care more about the country than they do in getting re-elected and lining their own pockets?"

Well, the short answer is the current system with its archaic nominating process, conventions, and big-money fueled myopia is the only game in town.

But what if I told you there could be a better way? What if I told you it might be possible to nominate and vote for the leaders you want and have those people address the issues that mean the most to you?

Before I tell you how that might possibly happen and before you grumble that the system can never be changed, a little history lesson to illustrate that sometimes the unthinkable does indeed become a reality.

If you lived 100 years ago, for example, your world was such that it would be almost impossible to imagine what things would be like in 2011.

In 1911: The average life expectancy for men was 47 years. Fuel for cars was sold in drug stores only. Only 14 percent of the homes had a bathtub. Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone. There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved

roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph. The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower. The average U.S. wage was 22 cents per hour. More than 95 percent of all births took place at home. Ninety percent of all doctors had no college education. Most women only washed their hair once a month. The five leading causes of death were: pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, diarrhea, heart disease and stroke. Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented yet. Two out of every 10 adults couldn't read or write and only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school. Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner drugstores. There were about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.A.

So what, you say, that was 100 years ago. What does that have to do with anything? Let me offer something more current. Have you ever used a computer, bought something online, done online banking, sent an e-mail, or owned a smartphone?

Well, the term "Internet" was first used in 1962, which was only 29 years ago. The World Wide Web was not operational until 1991, and even then web pages accounted for only 1 percent of Internet traffic. The first web browser



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debuted in 1993 and it wasn't until 1995 when all limitations were lifted for the web. That's only 16 years ago. Do you think we've come a long way in a short time? Can you even imagine your life right now without the Internet?

It's because of this that I find what's being proposed as a new system for nominating political candidates very intriguing. On

the surface it sounds "pie in the sky" but I've seen the unthinkable become thinkable in my lifetime, so why not this.

The proposal is called Americans Elect ([americanelect.org](http://americanelect.org)). Right up front I should tell you that what they want to accomplish is ambitious for sure, but due to existing technology is absolutely possible, both in terms of logistics and security.

On their website they lay out the plan. "Americans Elect is the first-ever open nominating process. We're using the Internet to give every single voter — Democrat, Republican or independent — the power to nominate a presidential ticket in 2012. The people will choose the issues. The people will choose the candidates. And in a secure, online convention next June, the people will make history by putting their choice on the ballot in every state."

They continue: "None

of our funding comes from special interests or lobbyists. Our only goal is to put a directly-nominated ticket on the ballot in 2012. The goal of Americans Elect is to nominate a presidential ticket that answers to the people — not the political system. Like millions of American voters, we simply want leadership that will work together to tackle the challenges facing our country. And we believe a direct nominating process will prove that America is ready for a competitive, nonpartisan ticket. Americans Elect is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that is funded by individual contributions ... no single individual will have contributed more than \$10K ... And our candidates will answer only to the American people ... by nominating a nonpartisan ticket, Americans Elect will create a path for our leaders to start working together on the challenges facing our country."

By the time you read this almost 2 million people will have registered to participate in the Americans Elect process. You can go to the website and join the discussion, help nominate candidates, and identify issues on which you think this country ought to focus.

Now, you may scoff at such a concept, but while you're doing that ask yourself this question: "How's the current political process working for me right now?" There must be a better way, don't you think?

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