

How to Fix the Freedom Flaw

The Freedom Flaw has been recognized by the [Association to Improve Government](#) as the cause of the current slide toward authoritarianism in world democracies. It is most apparent in the U.S.A., but it is also present in all democracies of the day.

The problem was an *unintended consequence* of an attempt to address major public protests in a period where the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, numerous political scandals and a general dissatisfaction with government existed. [The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970](#) was aimed at increasing transparency in government. It did have significant benefits in that regard but there were two aspects that had consequences few realized at the time. These unintended outcomes are related to the following two changes:

1. Committee Meetings to develop Legislation:

Previous to the act, Committee Meeting were closed to the public. Representatives met in private to draft legislation and were able to discuss, compromise and develop reasonable laws. The public was consulted to provide input but was not privy to these negotiations. The lobbyists were kept in the lobby. Representatives could express their opinions and vote their conscience as they developed legislation.

This Act allowed the public into the meetings, and this included lobbyists, special interest groups and anyone with an interest or agenda related to the legislation under consideration. Discussion, compromise and reason disappeared with that change since these attendees often were special interest groups that had significant influence over these politicians with regard to contributions, voter influence and power. They had the power to punish or reward the committee members and were not hesitant to use it. Today, lobbyists often submit written suggestions on legislation to the committee that assures their interests are included in the bill.

2. Voting in the House and Senate on Legislation:

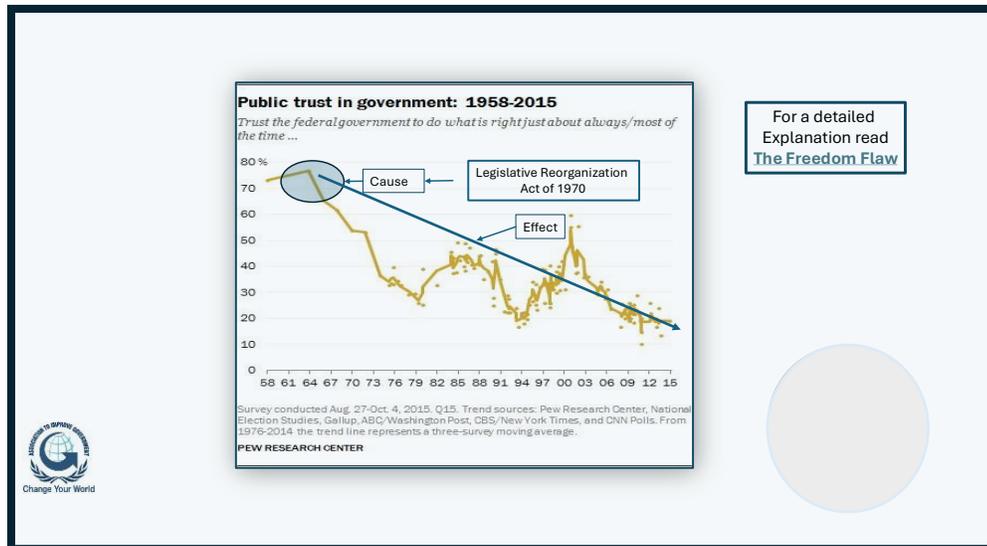
Before the act, voting utilized the Yea & Nay system. It was not a secret ballot, but few votes were recorded so the public did not have voter specific information on every representative for every vote. Representatives could vote their conscience as they passed legislation without fear of retribution.

Following the act, all significant votes were recorded. Display boards were installed that showed the vote of every congressman on every vote within seconds of their vote. Although the general public didn't scrutinize these voting records often, every lobbyist, special interest group, PAC, major corporation, elites and powerful organizations had staff that reviewed every vote by every Representative and Senator on every issue. This was used in all decisions related to supporting or not supporting politicians.

Cause, Effect and Solution

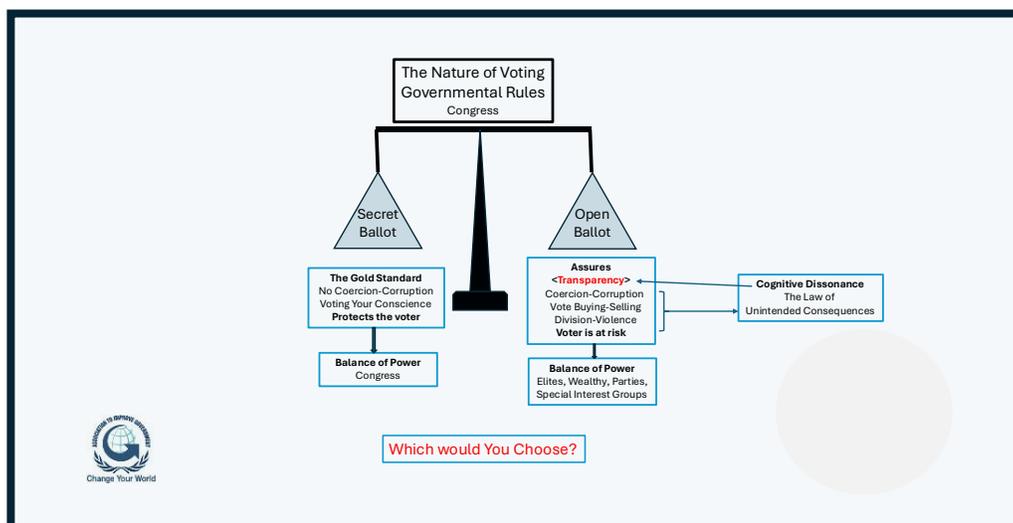
The [Congressional Research Institute](#) used scientific methods to discover that the cause of this dilemma in the US was related to a [The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970](#).

This study by the PEW RESEARCH CENTER measured the effect over many decades as Public Trust in Government plummeted to all-time lows. It served as evidence of when the problem began and allowed these Harvard-based scientists to identify the cause.



The Balance of Power in Congress

These changes in the Rules of Congress disrupted the balance of power in Congress and allowed special interest groups, the parties, the elites, wealthy/powerful individuals to take control of the Congress using coercion, corruption, threats, vote buying and violence.



Tactics to Correct the Freedom Flaw

This is a particularly difficult feat to accomplish specifically because the Rules passed in the 1970 Act make it so. We will list possible ways to approach the problem. First, let's consider the dilemma faced by our representatives in accomplishing this mission.



You can see that the special interest groups hold the balance of power and have the ability to punish any Representative or Senator that votes contrary to their wishes. What you should also realize is that the two most powerful special interest groups are the Republican and Democratic parties. The probability that any of these groups would agree to a change that would eliminate their power to control legislation and legislators is very low. They actually call the member in charge of assuring conformance, “The Whip.”

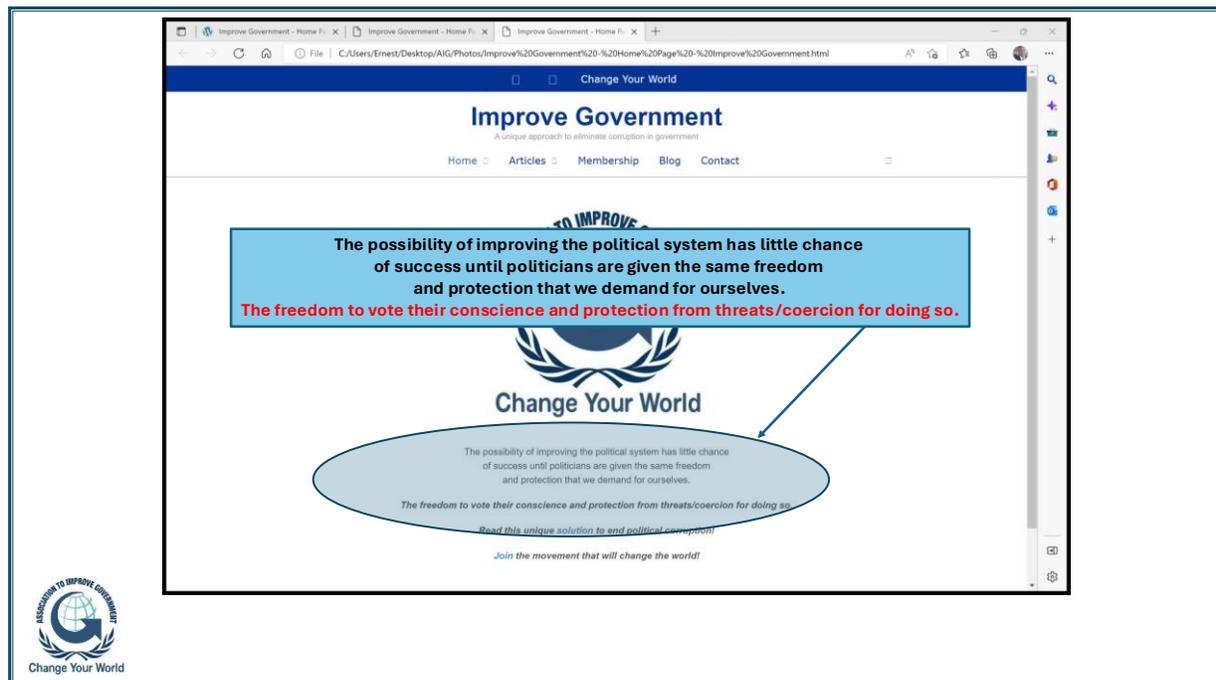
Expecting our representatives to put their country first is a noble idea. When the system assures, they will face loss of status, loss of job, public harassment, threats to them and their families and serious violence, we should understand why they usually submit to this pressure from the party, special interest groups and powerful/wealthy elites. All of these groups have the financial resources and organizational power to corrupt our representatives and control the actions of our government. They do not hesitate to use it.

There are an unlimited number of examples where politicians are stripped of position, fired, primaried, exposed to public harassment, investigated, defamed, subjected to violence, etc. Keep this in mind as we list possible tactics to correct the Freedom Flaw with two changes:

1. **Reinstate the ban on public access to Committee Meetings.**
2. **Initiate a requirement for Secret Ballot voting on all significant legislation.**

Tactics:

- Pass legislation to force the use of the secret ballot process for all significant votes.
 - a. See [‘The Cardboard Box Reform’](#) on YouTube.
- Pass legislation to reinstate the ban on public access to Committee Meetings.
- Pass legislation to allow any representative to call for a Secret Ballot on any vote.
 - This could be temporary in order to verify the impact. (2 years perhaps)
- A public referendum in all states where it is allowed as part of the federal election.
- Perhaps an executive order could initiate these requirements.
 - It would take a President putting the country above his party.
- Take the argument to the Supreme Court as the current situation deprives our elected representatives the **“Right to vote their conscience and protection for doing so.”**
 - All voters in public elections have this right and protection.
- Initiate some form of public referendum on this issue to force congress to act.



The Association to Improve Government is a nonpartisan organization. Its mission is specifically to fix the [Freedom Flow](#) and return public trust in governments.