

Why democracy only works when people are in charge

1. Why do corporations have so much power and influence in elections and government?

EVIDENCE: Match LAW from Timeline with opinions from film.

1886 equal protection of law for corporations **2005** Energy Policy Act

1996 eliminates truth in ads and campaigns **2010** unlimited spending for corporations

_____ During election campaigns, it's harder to hear facts over misleading ads.

_____ Chevron is not a (natural) "person," but artificial persons have equal protection of law.

_____ Oil companies have elected lawmakers who pass laws to weaken laws that protect clean air, clean water, and safe drinking water.

_____ Corporations can spend unlimited amounts of money to influence elections.

2. Have "We the People" have lost control of our democracy to corporations?

EVIDENCE: Match LAW from Timeline with opinions from film.

1819 limits state control of corporations **1919** corporation exist to make money

_____ State governments used to control corporations through charters for specific short-term project, but the law changed.

_____ Corporations are now required by law and markets to make money for their shareholders (owners).

3. Are corporations using 1st Amendment rights to influence elections and pass laws?

EVIDENCE: Match LAW from Timeline with opinion from film.

1976 political speech = money **1978** commercial speech for corporations

1986 right not to speak for corporations **2010** unlimited giving for corporations

_____ People gain protected 1st Amendment right to unlimited campaign spending.

_____ Corporations gain protected right for advertising on citizen initiatives.

_____ Corporations gain protected right to censor public information (not speak).

_____ Corporations gave money to independent groups that spent \$300 million in 2010 mid-terms, more than every mid-term election since 1990 combined.

4. What ideas does film offer to fix the democracy crisis?



Why is the Constitution so hard to amend?

1. What are the 2 ways, 2 steps, and 2 key numbers to amend the Constitution?

Review vocab: propose, ratify, and convention.

2 ways

First step and key number

Second step and key number

By convention: How many states to propose? _____ How many to ratify? _____

2. Why is it so hard to amend the Constitution? Use discussion points.

Intentional!

Country is...

Small number:

How does the U.S. compare to other democratic countries? Use evidence from film.

U.S.

Germany

France

3. If it's so hard for people to amend the Constitution, who defines progress in the U.S.?

Is this democratic? Why or why not?

- The Supreme Court expanded its interpretation of existing laws (through case law).
- Case law remains LAW until overruled by later case law or by an amendment.
- No, it is NOT democratic because—
 - » Justices are appointed, not elected, and they serve for life.
 - » Not very diverse and often old.
 - » Sometimes 5 Justices decide define progress.

What ideas are offered in the film to make things more democratic?

Current idea: Amend the Constitution to make it easier to amend it.

Founder's idea: Let laws expire after 19 years.

Hint: Maybe Supreme Court should be made more democratic.

