

# DIRECTORS' PERSPECTIVES

WHERE THE RSF BOARD EXPLORES CURRENT APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF HENRY GEORGE'S TEACHINGS.

## HOW DEMOCRACY FAILS AND SUCCEEDS

BY: FRED FOLDVARY

There are two types of democracy. First, the democracy of a small club with a voting membership of less than a thousand. Here, the members can personally meet and know the candidates for office, and can have their voices heard within the club. Second is mass democracy, in which the number of voters is so large that very few can personally know the candidates.

Obviously, the United States, and all other countries practice mass democracy. This comes in various forms, such as the US system of mass-voting for the chiefs (governors and the president) and for the representatives. There is the parliamentary system, such as in the United Kingdom, in which the political parties form coalitions that select a prime minister, the head of state being either a monarch or, like in Germany, a president as a symbolic chief.

Many people in the US are now worried about the coming election in November, wondering whether the results will be rigged or fraudulent. Some Americans worry that people will be fooled by false information, and whether emotion will triumph over reason. But, beneath the particular circumstances of the 2020 US election is the system, mass democracy – which is inherently dysfunctional even in the best of circumstances.



When there are thousands or millions of voters choosing a candidate, the office seeker needs to reach them using mass media: television, Internet advertising, bulk mail, and those annoying telephone calls. Advertising is costly; candidates for US president spend many millions of dollars. (Data on campaign spending compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.) This inherent demand for campaign funds generates a supply of such funds by the big-money special interests. Yes, there are contributions from individuals, but it is well known that special interests such as corporations, lawyers, labor unions, and real estate firms obtain political clout – and subsidies – due to their campaign contributions and subsequent lobbying.

## Reader's View



## *We Want Your Input*

Thank you to everyone who participated in our September survey on the upcoming election. Below are the results:

Q1: Do you plan to vote in the 2020 election?

Yes 93%

No 3%

Undecided 3%

Q2. With which party do you feel most closely aligned?

Republican 12%

Democrat 63%

Other 12%

None 14%

Q3. Which issue is most important to you in thinking about the 2020 Presidential election?

Economy 25%

Immigration 2%

Pandemic Response 22%

Violent Crime 2%

Racism 10.17%

International Relations and Trade 2%

National Security 3%

Abortion 5%

Other (Please Specify) 29%

**Take our October survey on  
Supreme Court Justice  
Nominations.**

**[www.Schalkenbach.org/survey](http://www.Schalkenbach.org/survey)**