

AMERICAN PROMISE

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



AMERICAN PROMISE

Thanks to you,  
we are turning  
a shared belief  
into reality.



Friend,

To say that 2020 was a difficult year for Americans would be an understatement. Amidst a global pandemic, we lived and continue to live through a convergence of crises around climate change, systemic racism, rising economic inequality, and political polarization and violence.

However, along with these crises, 2020 has offered us tremendous opportunity. It exposed major cracks in our democratic system. And through these cracks, more people than ever before are seeing the light, a shining beacon that you and others in the American Promise community recognized and fanned into existence over the last four years.

Recent polling completed by our partner Citizen Data shows that nearly 70% of voters believe that less money in politics will help make our politics better, a belief that uniquely transcends partisan and demographic lines.

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**Through our work, Americans are empowered to unite and effectively advocate for equal representation, human liberty, and a government that is responsive to the needs of its people, not the agendas of wealthy special interests.**

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The end of 2020 marks the completion of Phase 1 of 3 in our 10-year plan to amend the U.S. Constitution, get “big money” out of our elections, and give voice to ‘We the People’. We are grateful for your foresight and support, which has enabled us to arrive at Phase 2, ready to seize the moment and pass the amendment through Congress by 2024. As we gear up for a momentous 2021, we’re proud to look back at what we’ve achieved, together, even through these tumultuous times.



**JEFF CLEMENTS**

## Americans across the political spectrum want this amendment.

Education on the issue and the solution drives up support among all groups.

# 72%

CITIZEN SUPPORT

in states where we are building towards Ready to Ratify.

55-68%

REPUBLICAN SUPPORT

75-92%

DEMOCRAT SUPPORT

62-79%

INDEPENDENT SUPPORT

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## We're endorsed by the nonpartisan *Our Common Purpose* report.

After two years of study, research, and community meetings with hundreds of Americans from different backgrounds across the nation, the Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship — a bipartisan group convened by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences — created its vision to reinvent a more inclusive, effective, and resilient democracy for the 21st century by 2026.



“The Constitutional Amendment that American Promise has been advancing is the only amendment that the Commission has endorsed ... We’ve been really delighted with the working partnership we’ve had with Jeff and the team at American Promise.”

**STEPHEN HEINTZ**, President & CEO, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

# 400

PLEDGES SIGNED—INCLUDING 13 OF THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.



“It does not represent justice in America when ... the few who have the greatest amount of wealth ... manipulate and fuel the election process. We’ve got to take that money out of politics.”

**KAMALA HARRIS,**  
Vice President of the United States



U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland (NM-01) and Ishwari Sollohub.

American Promise New Mexico Chapter Leader **Ishwari Sollohub** stepped up to lead a training for our national network on how to secure an American Promise Candidate Pledge from candidates up and down the ballot, and both sides of the aisle.

# 21

STATES HAVE CALLED FOR THE AMENDMENT

## Alaska becomes the 21st State to join.

After gathering thousands of signatures and raising voter awareness, we celebrated a historic win at the ballot with AP Citizen Leader **Joe Geldhof**. In 2021, we’ll springboard from this victory into continued empowerment of our Alaskan Citizen Leaders with goals of launching a chapter, building awareness and support across the state, and creating the conditions for Congressional support.



“What I look forward to is a renewal of citizen participation in Alaska and every other portion of our union. In Alaska and other places, good ideas based on solid values are consigned to oblivion in our political decision-making because some narrow interest with vast resources puts in the fix.”

**JOE GELDHOF,** Alaska, American Promise Citizen Leader

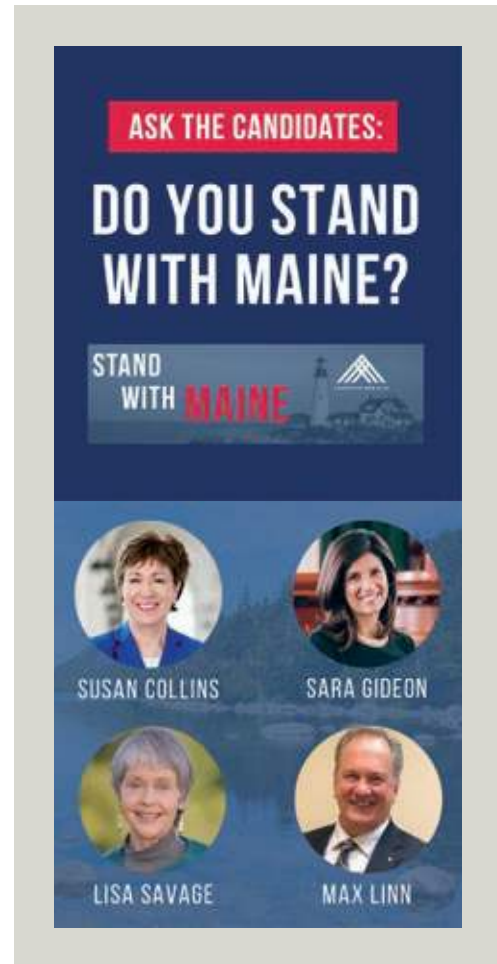
## Maine is getting ready to ratify!

**The American Promise Maine Chapter elevated the amendment to the national Senate debate stage, and they're not stopping there.**

In 2020, we worked with the chapter to launch the Stand with Maine campaign to ensure that Mainers — not big out-of-state donors — decide Maine's elections.

Chapter members gathered thousands of signatures from across the state, wrote letters to the editor, built alliances with small businesses, civic, and social networks, and garnered support from state legislators across the political spectrum. **Together we leveraged the overwhelming support into action.**

Amidst the most expensive Senate race in the state's history the two leading senate candidates addressed it on a televised debate, and the editorial board of the *Portland Press-Herald*, the state's largest newspaper, wrote an opinion piece on the issue on the weekend before election day.



**“As an average Mainer, it is nearly impossible to compete with billionaires, but what they can’t buy with money is the deep love and passion we feel for the outdoors and the freedom our Constitution guarantees.”**

**DAVID TRAHAN**, Executive Director,  
Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, Institute of Legislative Action

## Bringing people together while apart.

Although learning and connecting looked different this year, we held exciting virtual events that have allowed us to safely bring our community together to learn, connect, and grow through partnerships. A few of our events included:

Author **Elaine Weiss** joined our **Citizen Leaders Book Club** to discuss *The Woman's Hour*. This inspirational event was held in partnership with the League of Women Voters Maine, the Congressional Management Foundation, the League of Women Voters Massachusetts, the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, the League of Women Voters Alaska, and the American Constitution Society.



- Economist and Harvard Business School professor **Rebecca Henderson** joined us to discuss the critical business case for the amendment, and how we can re-envision capitalism for the future. Professor Henderson, author of *Reimagining Capitalism in a World on Fire* and Board member at Amgen and Idexx, has joined our Advisory Council.
- During our Monthly National Call, **Senator Nina Turner** and **California Representative Ro Khanna**, Bernie Sanders 2020 National Campaign Co-Chairs, shared the progressive viewpoint of money in politics.
- **The Conservative Case to Get Money Out** featured a discussion with four Republican candidates, elected officials, and former elected officials about the many reasons conservatives support an end to big money's domination of politics and elections.
- We created **monthly and quarterly meetings** for Citizen Leaders and members of our National Business Network to come together to learn about and practice with new tools for outreach, hear success stories and tips from peers, and set goals for outreach efforts.



“Without taking money out of politics, we will never address the great problems of our time. Business must recognize that free markets need free politics, and must play a significant role in driving this change.”

**REBECCA HENDERSON**, John and Natty McArthur  
University Professor at Harvard Business School

# As we gear up for another year of expansion in 2021, our team continues to grow in size and reach.

In the past several months, we've added six new team members:



**DR. JESSICA HARE**  
Empowerment Director,  
Georgia



**GREGORY JOSEPH**  
Communications Director,  
Louisiana



**ZYEISHA "ZYE" ALLEN**  
Communications Coordinator,  
Georgia



**JACOB BROWN**  
Development Coordinator,  
Colorado



**MARNIE WALSH**  
Empowerment Coordinator,  
Vermont



**KYLE TAYLOR**  
Political Research Associate,  
California

We are committed to empowering all Americans to work together, build their civic engagement muscles, and win this Amendment.



*Jeanelle Austin. Photo: Isaiah Rustad*

To deliver on this commitment, our team partnered with **Jeanelle Austin** of Racial Agency Initiative to build a culture of inclusivity, sensitivity, and equity that extends into all of the work we do.

We are excited to build our capacity to work with all Americans to win this historic reform, to give equal voice to all the people of this nation, and to create a future filled with freedom and opportunity for every American.



# Momentum is growing in our national effort.

2,154

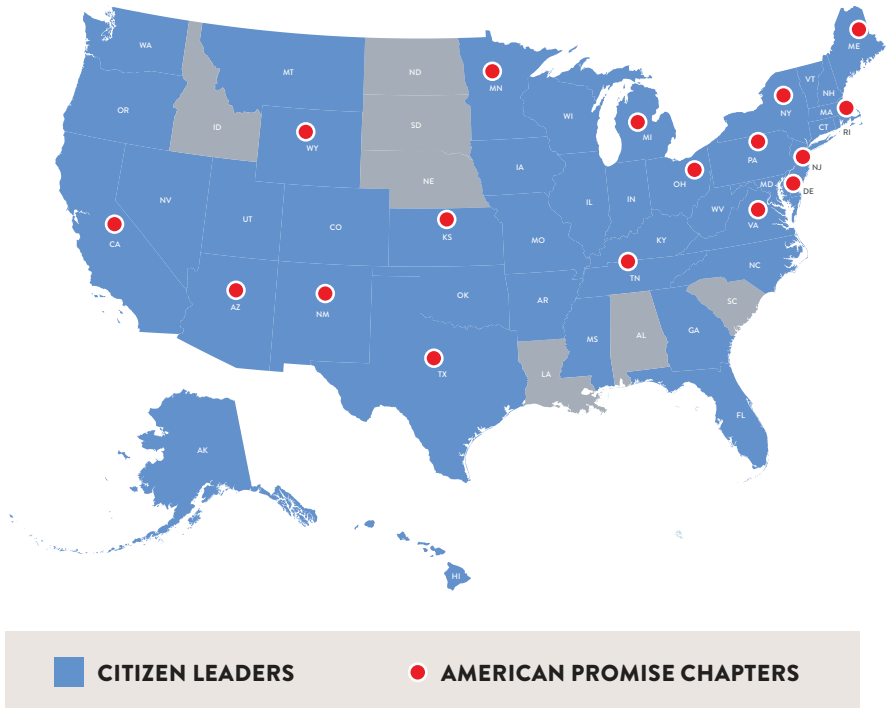
NATIONAL EVENT REGISTRATIONS

150+

BUSINESS STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE SIGNERS

43

STATES WITH CITIZEN LEADERS



National Citizen Leadership Conference, October 2019. Photo: Sam Troia



## Board Rosters

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Debra Winger



Photo: Sam Troia

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## Volunteers are stepping up to make the amendment a reality.

### 2020 NATIONAL FINANCE COUNCIL

Under the leadership of Chair Tara Edelman, this year saw the expansion of our National Finance Council, a dedicated group of volunteers who work with AP staff and boards, committing their time, skills, and networks to generate philanthropy around our urgent issue.

### MEMBERS

Tara Edelman, Chair  
John Boynton  
Jack Doty  
Ron Epstein  
John Gates  
Lindsay Kafka  
Sarah Lazarus  
Jack McBride  
Susan Ryan

# Advisory Council

12 new members of the American Promise Advisory Council bring a broad range of experience and leadership to the organization. Their varied political, economic, and demographic perspectives reflect the cross-partisan nature of the campaign for a constitutional amendment to get big money out of politics. We thank them for sharing their time and energy with American Promise.



“America goes to war for crony capitalism not freedom, democracy, or the spread of human rights, not even for our own security... America needs to eliminate this pernicious connection—to dry up the money that greases it, to get rid of the laws that sustain it, to take crony capitalism’s money out of politics.”

—**COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON**, Distinguished Adjunct Professor in Government, College of William & Mary



“There is an acute imperative to get money out of politics... We celebrated our 231st anniversary as the world’s longest continuously running democracy and I’d like to see us all get to a 232nd, I think the 28th amendment is going to be an important pillar of doing that.”

—**LISA LEWIN**, CEO, General Assembly, Steering Committee, Leadership Now



“I have a lot of hope because I believe in the power of people ... Even in our divisive political moment, everyday people have the ability to make change because the American spirit is defined by overcoming challenges in the face of overwhelming odds.”

—**MANU MEEL**, CEO, BridgeUSA

## MEMBERS

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Prof. John Coates  
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Thank you to our donors.

Your generous funding ensures that generations of Americans will share in the promise of equal rights, human liberty, and effective self-government.

## MULTI-YEAR COMMITMENTS

We want to thank our donors who have made multi-year commitments. These ongoing partnerships support the sustained, planned growth essential to achieving our shared goals of building a representative democracy.

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“Plainly put, I don’t see how any other major issues that I care deeply about can be solved in a long term way, any crisis safely averted, any sea change toward the betterment of life in the United States of America until we have the 28th Amendment.”

**DEBRA WINGER**, Award-winning actress and producer

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National Citizen Leadership Conference, October 2019. Photo: Sam Troia.

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*Ella McGrail, National Citizen Leadership Conference, October 2019. Photo: Sam Troia.*

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## Thanks to your generosity, 2020 was our most impactful year yet.

Due to the hard work of so many, **funding increased by 40% over last year.**

Year-end philanthropy was extraordinary: The response to Giving Tuesday and leadership commitments from those in our community resulted in a **208% increase** from December last year.

Revenue Total	\$2,105,878
Expenses Total	\$1,161,893
Programs	64%
Administration	16%
Fundraising	20%

*All financials are unaudited. For questions or to receive a copy of our audited financial statements, please contact [Lizh@americanpromise.net](mailto:Lizh@americanpromise.net).*

We are constantly inspired by our community of supporters. You are why we will secure *a future that works for all.*

AS WE LAUNCH PHASE 2 OF OUR 10 YEAR PLAN,  
WE ARE READY TO SEIZE THE MOMENT!

**AMERICAN PROMISE**

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