Politics: Who Wants Controversy? Essay, Research Paper

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Who Wants Controversy? Let’s Talk Politics?

And Why It’s All Bad.

Politicians are all noble. There is no corruption in modern politics. The American system of government is a smooth, efficient machine that runs without flaws.

Now do I have your attention? These are some ideas that politicians would love for us to believe. However, let’s examine the facts, shall we? In our perusal of political corruption and fallacy, we shall cover three topics. Lies, leeches, and losers. The first category, political lies, will cover the purposeful misinterpretations of data that the government willingly slings forth to the public in order to disguise their actions and muddy the truth. The second topic, leeches, deals in the domain of campaign finance deceit, and how corporations and private interests groups are buying American politicians. The third topic, losers, deal with the politicians themselves, the ones who willingly take advantage of our skewed system.

Lies. Start with the unemployment rate. According to Martin Gross (Gross, 22), the government boasts an unemployment rate of only 5.4 to 5.7 percent. At that rate, almost everyone in America has a job. Now, let’s look at the true figures. The government neglects to add 1.7 million people who are without a job, and without unemployment insurance. In other words, they aren’t counted because they didn’t look for work that month. 409,000 people looked for jobs over the last year, but not that month, and thus they aren’t unemployed either. Five million heads of families are on the welfare system, yet people on welfare are not considered unemployed. 4.1 million people are part-time workers who want a full-time job, but can’t get one. 2.1 million are temps who work only that month, yet they are considered fully employed as well. So, where does that lead us? Altogether, this adds up to around 18 percent of Americans without a job, possibly the worst rate among the Western industrial nations. Lies.

Leeches. Where do politicians get their money? Special interests. They use PACs, or Political-Action Committees, to channel money to the politicians (Etzioni, 5). There are over 4,016 PACs, each with huge amounts of money. They can distribute up to $10,000 to politicians that they think can be brought to their cause (Gross, 14). What’s more, individuals can “donate” as much as they want to nonfederal party accounts. Also, if a candidate doesn’t have the money to buy something, and a rich friend just happens to, then the rich friend can pay as much as he/she wants for whatever the candidate wants (Gross, 45).

Losers. In 1993, Governor Guy Hunt of Alabama raised a lot of money for his campaign. So much, in fact, that he had a surplus of $200,000. Gov. Hunt decided that he had earned that money, and quickly slid it into his own bank accounts. He was arrested, and actually found guilty. He left office. He was only the fourth governor ever to be convicted of a felony (Gross, 62). However, the cases concerning political crime are increasing. In 1974, 523 cases were held. At the last part of 1993, over 3,000 cases were held (Gross, 69). In the late 80’s, Senator Mark Hatfield received “gifts” and did not disclose the nature or the gifts themselves to the Senate. The Senate decided that this was a bad thing and decided to look into it. Turns out that the Senator had received over $25,000 worth in merchandise and loan reimbursement. And his punishment? He was chastised by the Senate; scolded quite thoroughly by his peers. In no way did he actually face penalties of any kind, or have to pay for his actions (Gross, 166-167).

So. The facts have been laid before you, and it is up to you to decide what to do with them. Our current system is flawless. Our current system is steeped in history, full of righteousness and glorious freedom. And I am sure the politicians of today want it to stay just the way it is.

Etzioni, Amitai. Capital Corruption. New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Publishers,

1984.

Gross, Martin L. The Political Racket: Deceit, Self-Interest and Corruption in American

Politics. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.