THE DEMOCRACY REBELLION
A REPORTER’S NOTEBOOK with HEDRICK SMITH
Thank you for your screening of

The Democracy Rebellion

Your screening is an vital step in educating your community and starting a public dialogue about democracy reform. You are receiving this kit because of your interest in hosting your own event. This guide is designed to help you organize your screening.

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This Film Offers Inspiration and Models for Reform

The Democracy Rebellion, a film by Hedrick Smith and Northern Light Productions, shows success stories of democratic political reform. Although national headlines are often negative, grassroots activists have been winning important victories for fairer, more open elections by inspiring, energizing, and mobilizing ordinary voters on a nonpartisan basis. Their examples offer a path forward towards a more inclusive democracy. (TRT: 56 minutes, comprised of 6 segments)
4 | What you’ll need:

The Democracy Rebellion

https://youtu.be/-AGtHN9_NV8

(full screening checklist can be found at the end of this guide)

- Printed Out Q&A Sample Questions
- A Screening Host
- A Post-Event Audience Call To Action
- Optional: Post-Screening Panel Or Discussion**

** If you are interested in having Executive Producer and narrator Hedrick Smith attend or speak at your event, please contact us at hedrick@reclaimtheamericandream.org. Hedrick has been reporting on political reforms for more than three years and has given more than 200 speeches on these topics -- his bio can be found at the end of this guide.
Ideas Of How To Use This Video In Your Campaign

Some organizations have already used this film or film segments to bolster their democracy reform campaigns. Here are some ideas of how the film can be used; but you may think of others. To customized to your needs, please come to us with your ideas and questions so that our team can be helpful to you: hedrick@reclaimtheamericandream.org

Video screenings that use Hedrick Smith (Executive Producer) and/or Susan Gray (Director) for civic education events and active public dialogues. Hedrick and Susan can travel for events that are aligned with the film’s mission. Some film subjects (Ellen Freidin, Rev. William Barber, Cindy Black, Ann Ravel, Gary Winuk, Rick Weiland, Drey Samuelson, Karen Hobert Flynn) may also be available to participate in events. Please let us know if you’re interested in this.

- Screening/event for persuasion of legislators.
- Screening/event for motivation and training of volunteers and campaign leaders.
- Using the film to create an event or buzz for awakening regional and local media to the successes of previous reforms and their impact.
- Using snippets from the film or graphics from this guide on social media to start a conversation about democracy reform with your followers.
- Hosting a FBLive or other web-streamed chats about issues in the film, including film content (See the FBLive chat we produced with Public Citizen here!)
- Conference screenings and talks by the producers.
- Customized short videos from the film that speak directly to an issue you are working on (See videos that we created for the League of Women Voters here.)
- Interview one of the filmmakers for your own platform. (Here’s an example of American Promise doing exactly that here.)
From the students’ march for our lives,
To the women’s march,
To the spreading teacher walkouts,
And citizen movements for reform,

Americans at the grass roots are fed up with Washington,
Rebelling against the politicians and power brokers—
Taking their fight to the states,
Battling to fix our broken democracy.

Fighting against dark money,
Voter suppression, gerrymandering,
Corruption by special interests.
Winning grass roots victories
Against billionaire and corporate money
With public funding of campaigns.
Outing dark money donors.
Voting to roll back “Citizens United.”
Working to win back our democracy.
Momentum for political reform is building all across the country at the grass roots. Citizen reform movements have taken action from Florida to Washington State, from Connecticut to Colorado, from North Carolina to South Dakota, from Ohio and Missouri to Utah and California.

What fires the passion for change is that most Americans no longer believe our democracy is working - not the way we want, not as the Founders intended. Most Americans say they think elections are rigged. Poll after poll reports that 70% to 80% say that special interests have too much power, that billionaires and corporations have captured Washington, and that politicians no longer listen to ordinary people.

For years, Americans have sent the message to Congress that we want our broken democracy fixed. But Washington has remained stuck in partisan gridlock. Finally, people get it: If we want reform, We the People must do it ourselves.
The fuse that lit the fire of grassroots rebellion was the Supreme Court’s decision in the Citizens United case in January 2010 that overturned a century-old ban on corporate contributions to political campaigns and allowed mighty corporations to spend their billions on elections. That opened the floodgates of billionaire and corporate money and triggered a backlash among voters.

Today, citizen movements are fighting back at the state level – exposing dark money, passing referendums to push Congress to roll back Citizens United and to restore limits on campaign funding, and creating programs for public funding that empower small donors.

Our documentary, *The Democracy Rebellion* tells half a dozen powerful stories of citizen rebellions challenging the power brokers by mobilizing people power. You will see grassroots heroes fighting to make our political system fairer, more transparent and more inclusive and winning victories against big money, vote suppression, and rigged elections.

These reform movements are not partisan battles among Republicans, Democrats and independents. They garner wide support all across the political spectrum. At the grassroots, reform is not a partisan issue. It resonates across party lines.

In Colorado, when the question of capping political money was put before the voters in 2012, huge majorities - 74% - voted against Citizens United. Every single one of Colorado’s 64 counties turned out a solid majority - red counties, blue counties and purple countries.
2018: A Boom Year for Reform

The elections of 2018 brought a boom year for reform. While the major parties split control of Congress, citizen reform movements were sweeping to victories in more than a dozen states.

The most earth-shaking changes in 2018 were powerful revolts against partisan gerrymandering in Colorado, Michigan, Missouri and Utah. They took the job of drawing election district boundaries away from politicians and turned that vital task over to independent, trans-partisan commissions or neutral experts, to make elections fairer. In Ohio, voters adopted a measure that blocks gerrymandering by one party, by requiring a bipartisan vote in the legislature.

In a dozen other states, grassroots reform movements won victories on a score of reform measures, ranging from Maine’s adoption of rank-order voting, to anti-corruption ballot initiatives in North Dakota and New Mexico, and Connecticut’s joining the national compact to insure the popular vote victor wins the Presidency despite the Electoral College.

Landslide majorities in Phoenix and Portland, Oregon endorsed sunlight laws to expose campaign dark money, especially on political TV ads. In Portland, a whopping 87% approved a ban on corporate contributions in city elections plus a 6-1 public funding match for small donors. Baltimore and Denver voters also embraced public funding of local campaigns.

On voters’ rights, Florida generated the most stunning breakthrough - a surprising 64.5% super majority in favor of restoring the voting rights of former felons who have served their time, except for those convicted of murder or sex crimes. In 2018, seven other states moved to make voting and registration easier. Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio and Washington all adopted automatic “motor voter” registration when residents obtain or renew their drivers’ licenses. Maryland and Michigan voted for “same day” registration on Election Day.
Reform Action In Recent Years

15 states have adopted gerrymander reforms and action has been taken in 10 more states to overturn partisan gerrymandering, either through legal reforms or lawsuits.

20 states have adopted some form of public financing in elections, four of them with robust programs to fund gubernatorial and legislative elections.

20 states have passed referendums or taken some legislative action to call on Congress to reverse Citizens United and to amend the U.S. Constitution so that campaign finance can once again be regulated.

21 states and the District of Columbia have adopted same-day voter registration that allows qualified residents to register on Election Day.

13 states have adopted so-called “motor-voter” registration, automatically registering voters when they obtain or renew a state driver’s license or, in some states, interacts with a major state agency. To make voting even easier, three states have adopted mail-in voting.

All 50 states have laws or rules requiring disclosure by candidates or political committees of campaign donations, though the amount, timing and depth of disclosure varies widely, state by state.

To find out where your state stands on political reforms, check the state-by-state rundowns, issue by issue on www.reclaimtheamericandream.org
Action Resources

As you prepare for your event, take a look at the resources that we are providing you, both our videos and our website. We have a 56-minute reform documentary (see the link below), plus links to individual segments on different reform issues, as well as links to organizations that can be helpful you.

**The Democracy Rebellion YouTube Channel**

Here you can find the entire 56-minute documentary, six video segments broken out individually as well as other short reform videos on states and reform campaigns not covered in the film. You can share links to these shorter videos on social media platforms to help you promote your event. Use the links below to go directly to the documentary and the individual video segment.

- **Full Documentary**
  - The Democracy Rebellion

- **Link to Short Intro**
  - Rebellion At The Grass Roots

- **North Carolina Fights Photo ID law**
  - Protecting Voter Rights

- **South Dakotans vs Corruption**
  - Uprising on the Prairie

- **California vs Dark Money**
  - Outing Secret Donors

- **Washington State vs Citizens United**
  - Grassroots vs. 'Citizens United'

- **Connecticut - Public Funding System**
  - The Way To Beat Big Money

- **Florida-Gerrymander Reform**
  - How To Unrig Elections
Click on the link to our website, above, and you’ll find valuable information on reform issues such as dark money, voters’ rights, gerrymander reform, repealing “Citizens United,” and public funding of campaigns. Each topic has an issue briefing; a state-by-state progress report; a success story; a reading list, and a list of helpful organizations. Use the website to prepare for your event and feel free to share its contents with your network.

**How to Contact Organizations working on each reform issues:**
As you develop events and campaigns on democracy reform, having a support network can be a vital asset. We recommend that you connect with others, especially people in your home region who are interested in working on similar issues. More broadly, you can find organized national groups and experienced individuals who can provide advice, organizational support, and even speakers for your event. To contact them, Try using these links:

- [Organizations Working to Amend the Constitution](#)
- [Organizations Working to Disclose Campaign Financing](#)
- [Organizations Working on Redistricting](#)
- [Organizations Working on Campaign Funding](#)
- [Organizations Working on Voting Rights](#)
- [Organizations working on Inclusive Capitalism](#)
Our documentary, The Democracy Rebellion, more transparent and more inclusive elections. You can choose to focus on one tells six stories of reformers fighting for for more of these issues for a reform campaign in your home state or region. Or you can study them all and see how citizen activists mobilized People Power. To help you, here is a quick synopsis of each segment, some broader context, and sample questions to help you kick-start a discussion in your group.

Washington State – Grassroots vs. 'Citizens United' (10:41)

Story: One striking feature of the grassroots rebellion against the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision is that it has enlisted and mobilized armies of political amateurs and volunteers committed to winning reform. People like small businesswoman Cindy Black have come off the sidelines and emerged as potent citizen leaders. In 2016, Black defied the odds and the conventional political wisdom that it takes $3 million to win a statewide ballot initiative in Washington State. Black’s statewide army of volunteers went face to face with voters, warning that billionaire and corporate money was buying U.S. elections. With ballot Initiative-735, they won a 63% majority vote against Citizens United and issued a popular call for Congress to restore limits on campaign spending.

Context: By unleashing what dissenting Justice John Paul Stevens called “the floodgates” of corporate money into political campaigns, the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision in 2010 has become the target of critics alarmed by the tidal wave of money in political campaigns. Reversing a Supreme Court decision like Citizens United requires an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Legislation to start that process has been blocked in Congress. So reformers have turned to the states to put pressure on Congress to act. By the end of 2018, 19 states and more than 700 cities had gone on record against Citizens United and called for amending the Constitution. This campaign has won huge super-majorities in popular referendums in places like Washington State, Colorado, Montana and Massachusetts where most voters reject the idea that campaign money is free speech and that in politics, corporations are equivalent to people.

Questions:

1. How did the Supreme Court’s Citizen United decision change the rules of American political campaigns and what impact did it have?
2. Why are reformers who oppose Citizens United campaigning in the states?
3. How can political volunteers and amateurs win against corporate money?
4. How did Cindy Black argue against the claim that the First Amendment gives corporations the right to free speech and unlimited campaign spending?
Story: In 2008, a potent vote by African Americans helped Barack Obama carry North Carolina in the presidential election. But by 2013, African Americans in North Carolina faced a tough voter photo ID law that knocked 300,000 previous voters off the rolls and that Republican leaders said was needed to prevent vote fraud. Attacking the ID law as vote suppression, Rev. William Barber, an activist preacher in the mold of Martin Luther King Jr, mobilized a statewide Moral Monday movement to stage mass protests on Mondays at the state legislature. Barber and the state NAACP filed a lawsuit and won a federal court decision that North Carolina’s photo ID law was unconstitutional because it targeted black voters “with almost surgical precision.” In 2018, Republican leaders won a popular vote for an amendment to the state constitution requiring photo ID and then enacted a new voter ID law. But the fight goes on. “We will never stop battling,” declares Rev. Barber. “And when we are willing to put our bodies on the line, when we are willing to dust off the constitution and go into the courts, we can win.”

Context: African Americans thought they had won solid protections of their right to vote after the famous Selma, Alabama demonstrations in the 1960s led by John Lewis and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But in 2013, the Supreme Court struck down a core provision of the 1965 law that mandated federal pre-approval of state election laws in the Deep South and elsewhere. Very quickly 16 states enacted photo ID laws that, according to court rulings, fell hard on black, Latino and Native Americans, as well as university students and seniors. Several of these laws have been invalidated or modified by federal courts. Other states have sought to make voting and registration easier through Election Day registration and automatic registration when residents renew their drivers licenses. But in a dozen states, photo ID laws and periodic purging of voter rolls remain hotly contested issues.

Questions:
1. Why have voting rights become so sharply contentious in recent years?
2. How have the photo ID laws in states like North Carolina restricted access to voting by black citizens and other minorities?
3. How have the techniques of the 1960s civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. been revived in modern reform movements?
4. What role have court decisions played in the battle over voting rights?
Story: A mysterious $11 million campaign donation - the largest anonymous campaign donation in California history - rang alarm bells for Common Cause activist Derek Cressman who alerted the state's election watchdog, the Fair Political Practices Commission. Commission Chair Ann Ravel, ordered a crash investigation. Problem was the $11 million came from a tiny Arizona group with a vague, reveal-nothing name - Americans for Responsible Leadership. Investigator Gary Winuk applied an audit squeeze and uncovered a covert money-laundering political network led by Kansas City billionaires Charles and David Koch. A year later the real dark money donors were unmasked - super-rich Californians like Mega-investor Charles Schwab, philanthropist Eli Broad, and GAP CEO Bob Fisher. California went on to make its campaign disclosure laws even tougher so that anyone spending $50,000 in a state campaign was named and probably wound up on a Top-Ten donor list on a state website.

Context: With total campaign spending hitting $7 billion in 2016 and with corporations and their CEOs able to spend freely but wanting to hide their political tracks, secret donations have become a hot issue in modern U.S. politics. Mega-donors keep their donations secret by making them to non-profit groups that qualify for IRS tax exemptions by claiming to be do-good “social welfare” organizations like hospitals and the Girl Scouts. Their political spending is supposed to be less than half their income. But federal enforcement of that rule is weak. So it’s almost impossible to track money from donor to candidate, usually because the money moves from one nonprofit to another and finally to Super-PACs (Political Action Committees) linked to a big-name candidates. Voters are left in the dark about who is pulling the financial strings. Hence, the name, “Dark Money.” To combat the menace of dark money, California now mandates that all non-profits, along with everyone else, must reveal their original donors once they spend $50,000 or more in a California election.

Questions:

1. Why has dark money become such a huge problem in modern elections?
2. How do corporations and billionaire donors hide their political donations?
3. When the media talks about a dark-money-laundering operation like the Koch Brothers network, how does it work?
4. How has California found a way to force political dark money out into the open?
South Dakota- Uprising on the Prairie (8:42 min)

**Story:** In South Dakota, a pair of prairie populists flying under the banner of Takeitback.org challenged the state’s entrenched power brokers and the Koch political network in 2016 and won a surprise victory for anti-corruption reforms. Rick Weiland and Drey Samuelson saw their chance when their state government was hit by corruption scandals. Weiland, an unsuccessful candidate for US Senate, and Samuelson, a long-time Democratic Congressional staffer, built a coalition of small farmers, seniors, League of Women Voters and political independents. Even in this deep red state where conservatives have an iron grip on power, the rebels won a 52% majority for cleaner elections, limits on campaign funding, and democracy vouchers for ordinary voters to donate to candidates. Blatantly overriding the will of the people, the state legislature nullified the popular vote. But the rebels came back in 2018 with new proposals. They fell just short, but they refuse to give up. “It’s the system that’s the problem,” Samuelson declares. “It’s not the people. We have to change the system.”

**Context:** In some states, a single political party often dominates state government and its majority in the state legislature blocks challenges to the in-party’s monopoly power. To enable voters to get around this power-lock, South Dakota became the first state in the union in 1898 to grant citizens the power to write their own laws and pass reforms through ballot initiatives and popular vote referendums. Today, 26 states - mostly in the West - allow citizen groups to initiate legislation and amendments to the state constitution. Ballot initiatives have become important vehicles for raising the minimum wage, adopting health care programs or political reforms like motor voter registration, gerrymander reform, rejecting Citizens United or setting up political watchdogs like ethics commissions and California’s Fair Political Practices Commission. As South Dakota reform activist Rick Weiland puts it, “Ballot measures are about opening-up our democracy and letting people have a voice again, feeling like it matters again.”

**Questions:**

1. Why are ballot initiatives an important vehicle for systemic political reforms?
2. Give some examples of the kinds of reforms and other measures that can be achieved through ballot measures and popular referendums.
3. Do all states allow ballot initiatives or do some states restrict that right?
4. What’s the purpose of the democracy vouchers that reformers advocated in South Dakota? Whom do democracy vouchers empower?
Story: A decade ago, public pressure from a coalition of fifty civic groups pushed a Republican governor and Democratic legislative leaders in Connecticut to adopt public funding of state political campaigns and that reform has transformed the state's political culture. Without public funding, running for office was unthinkable for inner-city black and Hispanic middle class professionals like Gary Winfield of New Haven, Marilyn Moore of Bridgeport and Hilda Santiago of Meriden. But with public funding, they ran and got elected. Today, 80% of candidates in both parties for the legislature and state offices use public funding. The political impact is palpable. Special interest lobbyists have less clout. Small donors have more access. Campaigns are more issue-oriented. The face of the legislature has changed (more women, more minorities, and more middle-income lawmakers and surprisingly, more Republicans) and that has transformed the policy agenda. With the power of Big Money lobbies reduced, Connecticut has passed laws that were previously impossible – tough gun control, family leave, healthier school lunches, action against the death penalty, and much more.

Context: With several U.S. Supreme Court decisions removing limits on campaign donations and spending, reform groups see public funding of election campaigns as a way to empower average voters and offset the dominance of super-rich donors. From 1976 to 1996, the U.S. used public funding in six presidential elections. To qualify, candidates had to accept limits on their campaign spending. Funds came from $3 taxpayer donations on tax returns. But the system broke down when campaigns got too expensive and not enough taxpayers contributed. Today, 20 states have some form of public funding, mostly for judicial candidates. Six offer voluntary public funding to candidates for governor and state offices. Four states - Arizona, Connecticut, Maine and Minnesota - have robust programs that fund candidates for state offices and the legislature. The plans vary: Connecticut gives fixed subsidies, scaled to each office; cities like New York, Los Angeles and Portland, Oregon, give a 6-1 or 8-1 public fund match for small donors; Seattle gives voters democracy vouchers to donate to candidates of their choice. One way or another, public funding is catching on again.

Questions:

1. How has public funding been used in national political campaigns in the past?
2. How does public funding of candidates offset the influence of super-rich donors?
3. How has public funding of campaigns in Connecticut affected who can run for office and who now sits in the state legislature?
4. How has public funding in Connecticut affected the way campaigns are conducted and the way the legislature operates?
Florida - How to Unrig Elections: (10:53 min)

Story: Even though Tea Party and conservative Republicans won sweeping victories in Florida 2010 elections, there was one stunning surprise - a 62.9% super-majority voted to stop Florida Republicans from rigging elections by manipulating district maps. A smart, campaign-tested attorney named Ellen Freidin had stitched together Fair Districts Florida, a coalition of blacks, Latinos, Republicans and Democrats. It won media support and a ballot victory for a measure to outlaw redistricting with the "intent to favor one party over the other." And when the Republican-led legislature tried a secret gerrymander in defiance of the voters and the new law, Fair Districts Florida and the League of Women Voters took them to court. Reform attorneys exposed an unconstitutional conspiracy using hired-gun GOP consultants. In 2015, the Florida Supreme Court struck down the GOP trickery and ordered eight congressional districts redrawn. And with more competitive districts in the 2016 and 2018 elections, political newcomers upset previous shoo-ins and Republicans lost six Congressional seats.

Context: Gerrymandering works through what politicians call ‘packing and cracking’ - our party packing the opponents’ voters into one district so they win large 80% majorities and waste votes, or cracking apart the opponents’ strongholds into useless pieces. The idea is: Let the other side win a few big victories while our side wins many more narrow victories. Both parties have done this for decades, but modern computer software makes more precise and lethal. Republicans were the first to take it nationwide in 2010. They won control of so many state legislatures that in 2011 they could draw most of the election maps for Congress and in 2012, even though Republicans lost the nationwide popular vote for the House, they still got a 33-seat House majority. The backlash came when Democrats woke up and average voters saw that when district maps are stacked by one party, voters have no real choice in elections. Hence the modern push for reforms to level the playing field by having independent bipartisan commissions draw election district maps - a reform idea adopted by voters in Colorado, Michigan, Missouri and Utah in 2018. Today, 15 states use neutral or bipartisan redistricting, and more states are seeking reform.

Questions:

1. What’s the political purpose of gerrymandering election districts?
2. Why should voters distrust partisan gerrymandering and seek reforms?
3. What makes modern gerrymandering so much more dangerous than previously?
4. How does Florida’s gerrymander reform compare with the reforms adopted by other states such as Michigan and Colorado in 2018?
5. Using Florida as a case study, can reformers claim victory after winning an election victory or do they have to be ready to do more?
Ellen Freidin / Florida

Ellen Freidin never intended to get deeply involved with a statewide gerrymander reform campaign in Florida, let alone run it. A politically-savvy attorney with statewide campaign experience, Frieden was asked by the League of Women Voter and other reform advocates to draft language for a ballot initiative. But she found that redrafting ballot language was more than wordsmithing. It meant listening to constituent groups: “You have to give them a voice so they have ownership.” Freidin engaged black and Latino leaders, then Republicans, Democrats and independents. Before she knew it, Freidin had been drawn into creating Fair Districts Florida and running a $9 million reform effort that would collect 1.7 million signatures. She mounted a sophisticated media campaign with TV ads lampooning politicians drawing their own district lines as foxes guarding hen houses. She went toe-to-toe with legislators, worked 80 hours a week as a volunteer, won a statewide popular vote supermajority and then a four-year legal battle. Today, the reform she designed is a model for the rest of the country.

Ann Ravel / California

Anne Ravel was a new kind of sheriff. When Governor Jerry Brown picked her to chair the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) it was a watchdog agency with no bite. It had been set up by a popular referendum in 1975 to watch over the money and ethics in California political campaigns, but historically, it was slow and bureaucratic. Ravel and her chief investigator Gary Winuk decided to change that. They got their chance in the homestretch of the 2012 campaign with the bombshell of an $11 million anonymous out-of-state campaign contribution. In a dramatic, cliff-hanger investigation, Ravel’s agency exposed a
money laundering operation that led both to the network of Kansas billionaires Charles and David Koch and, ultimately, to super-rich Californians like Charles Schwab and Gap CEO Bob Fisher. Gov. Jerry Brown turned the tide on two big ballot issues by highlighting the out-of-state dark money. Two years later, California enacted a blanket disclosure law on political nonprofits – a model law for other states.

**Rick Weiland / South Dakota**

When Democrat Rick Weiland ran for the U.S. Senate in the solid red state of South Dakota, he lost in 2014 but in defeat he saw an opportunity for political reforms when South Dakota voters passed a ballot measure to increase the state’s minimum wage. To Weiland, that vote showed how people power could beat the state’s power brokers by using ballot measures to initiate reforms. Back in 1898, South Dakota became the first state to empower citizens to propose and pass laws through popular referendums. In 2016, Weiland sensed “a tailwind for reform” because “scandals and talk about state corruption (we)re changing the mood of voters.” So Weiland and his friend Drey Samuelson formed TakeItBack.org, collected 100,000 signatures and put three reform measures on the ballot. To everyone’s surprise, TakeItback.org beat the Republican establishment and the Koch network with a proposal for a state ethics commission, campaign reforms and public funding. State legislative leaders, outfoxed by the reformers, lashed back by voting to cancel the reform and nullify the will of the voters. In 2018, the two sides clashed again with rival measures but neither side scored a knockout victory, so Weiland vows to fight on. “This legislature, with 85% of Republicans, wants to make it more difficult” for reform, he says, “That’s just wrong, and we’re going to fight it tooth and nail.”
Reverend William Barber / North Carolina
The Rev. William Barber is a modern-day Martin Luther King and the voice of reform in North Carolina. Barber is a riveting speaker, a towering mountain of a man, an elemental force – and a passionate advocate for black voting rights. When in 2013 North Carolina joined 15 other states in enacting a strict voter photo ID law, Barber went on the warpath. He worked a two-pronged strategy – on the streets and in the courts. With Moral Mondays, he launched a crusade of church-organized protests on the steps of the legislature. And under his leadership, the state NAACP filed suit against the governor and legislature and eventually in 2017 won an appeals court decision striking down what it said were racially biased voter laws. Fighting back, hard-line legislative leaders put the issue of a Photo ID mandate before voters in 2018 and won a victory. Once again Barber and reform advocates have filed a lawsuit against the new voter ID and vowed to fight on for voters’ right.

Cindy Black / Washington State
Fear that mega money is corrupting our democracy has alarmed average Americans like Cindy Black and made them reform activists. Coming out of high school, she served as a tech crew chief in the US Air Force, then went to college and became a marriage and family therapist, and finally ended up running her own business. As a political amateur, Black began as a volunteer on ballot campaigns. Rising through the ranks, she led the fight in Washington State in 2016 to overturn Citizens United. Says Black: “I definitely think the Supreme Court decision of Citizens United has unleashed so much money in our system that it’s ceased being a democracy and now we’ve turned into an oligarchy.” Her goal was “to get our citizens on record stating that we do not believe that
corporations are people, we do not believe that money is speech and that we think that political contributions should be regulated and made public.” Mobilizing an army volunteers from the Idaho border to the Pacific Coast, Black won a smashing victory.

**Gary Winfield / Connecticut**

Gary Winfield is a champion of Connecticut’s public funding of political campaigns. He would not be a State Senator without it. After serving in the Navy, he became a union organizer for the American Association of University professors. Today he’s in his fifth term as a legislator, representing inner city New Haven. To Winfield, the most important feature of Connecticut’s public funding program is that it forces candidates to connect with average voters by requiring them to raise 300 small donations (under $100) from their home district, in order to qualify for public campaign funds. “I have to talk to the little old lady who can only afford $5,” Winfield explains. Like others, Winfield contends that public funding has changed the nature of political campaigns, changed who gets elected and changed how the legislature works. Over the past decade, Winfield says, it has reduced the power of Big Money special interests, opened up politics to average people, and given more voice to ordinary voters.

**HEDRICK SMITH, CORRESPONDENT + EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

Perhaps more than any other journalist of his generation, Hedrick Smith has reported from the front lines of history, helping to shape the public’s understanding of the most challenging issues of our times. In 26 years with The New York Times, Smith covered Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights struggle, the Vietnam War from Saigon, the Middle East conflict from Cairo, the Cold War from both Moscow and Washington, and six U.S. Presidents. In 1971, he was a member of the Pulitzer Prize-winning team that produced the Pentagon Papers series. In 1974, he won the Pulitzer Prize for
International Reporting from Russia and Eastern Europe.

As a documentary correspondent and producer, Smith took on Wall Street and Wal-Mart. He went “Inside Gorbachev's USSR” to explore perestroika and “Inside the Terror Network” to track the 9/11 pilots for PBS FRONTLINE. Over two decades, he created more than 50 hours of long-form documentaries, winning multiple awards, including two Emmys for FRONTLINE for “The Wall Street Fix” and “Can You Afford to Retire?” Smith's trademark is being ahead of the pack. Smith is not only a relentless reporter, but a visionary with an uncanny sense of where the news will move next.

**SUSAN GRAY, PRODUCER**

Susan has garnered recognition for daring reporting and creative documentaries on race, industrial cover-ups, prisoner sentencing, and the corruption of the media. Her documentary expose on Prime Minister Berlusconi of Italy, “The Prime Minister and the Press,” exposed the threat to democracy posed by one man's enormous wealth, monopolistic control of the country's media and stifling of dissent. Her most recent film, Birth of a Movement, aired on PBS' Independent Lens last February and was nominated for an Outstanding Historical Documentary Emmy, and the NAACP Image Award. It tells the story of the country's first civil rights battle played out in the streets of Boston, as an African American newspaper editor took on America's first Hollywood blockbuster: Birth of a Nation, by D.W. Griffith. Through the lens of history, Susan takes on a hotly contested contemporary issue: race relations in America and control of the race narrative in Hollywood. Film Director Spike Lee, film producer/director Reginald Hudlin, and Henry Louis Gates Jr. appear in the film.
Steps and Timeline for hosting your screening

Your call to action will have the most impact if it’s directly connected to the issue that is currently most relevant to your area and connected with reform advocates who are working locally. Visit the following page to learn more about the issue that’s most important to your area and contact information for organizations working in that space: http://reclaimtheamericandream.org/#share-your-issue

Day of the screening
We recommend arriving at your venue at least an hour before the screening to test the projector, sound and lights and microphones for your speakers. Post updates from the event on Facebook and Twitter, be sure to include the handles of your speakers and any participating organizations.

After the event
Follow up with your audience. Thank them and remind them of action steps they can take to support democracy reform. Hand out questionnaires asking how the video material helped generate ideas and strategies for reform among your audience and in your community.

5-8 weeks in advance

The Democracy Rebellion on YouTube:

(If you are screening the film outside of your home, you will need explicit permission from the filmmakers. You can request that here: hedrick@reclaimtheamericandream.org)

Decide on a time and location for your screening
Ensure that the location can play and project from a streaming link
Optional: Secure a guest speaker or panelists
Screenings are often most powerful when accompanied by a guest speakers who has personal experience with the issue. **We encourage you to find either local democracy advocates or speakers from one of the national organizations that work on democracy reforms. To find a list of organizations, use this link, tap on the icon of your issue and click on the item that says “GET HELP.”**

http://reclaimtheamericandream.org/#share-your-issue

**2-4 weeks in advance**
Create invitations and publicize your event on social media platforms. Test your screening link at your venue to ensure audio and visual quality.

**1 week in advance**
Prepare your sample script and discussion questions (in this kit). Prepare your “ask” for the audience. After watching **The Democracy Rebellion**, your audience may want to know how they can help. Have a call to action ready -- something people can do that’s relevant to democracy reform initiatives in your city. Have at least one option to offer in the room the night of.
Your call to action will have the most impact if it’s directly connected to the issue that is currently most relevant to your area and connected with reform advocates who are working locally. Visit the following page to learn more about the issue that’s most important to your area and contact information for organizations working in that space:

http://reclaimtheamericandream.org/#share-your-issue
Contact us here:

**YouTube** - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AGtHN9_NV8&feature=youtu.be
Channel - **The Democracy Rebellion**
Here you can find the entire **56-minute** documentary, six video segments broken out individually as well as other short reform videos on states and reform campaigns not covered in the film. You can share links to these shorter videos on social media platforms to help you promote your event.

**Website** - http://www.reclaiamtheamericandream.org
You’ll find valuable information on reform issues such as dark money, voters’ rights, gerrymander reform, repealing “Citizens United,” and public funding of campaigns. Each topic has an issue briefing; a state-by-state progress report; a success story; a reading list, and a list of helpful organizations.

**Email**: hedrick@reclaiamtheamericandream.org
If you are interested in having Correspondent and Executive Producer Hedrick Smith or Producer Cusan Gray attend or speak at your event, please contact us at hedrick@reclaiamtheamericandream.org. Hedrick has been reporting on political reforms for more than three years and has given more than 200 speeches on these topics -- his bio can be found at the end of this guide. Susan has done many outreach presentations for her long series of documentaries.