

Choose the Real Alternative of Positive Change

Acceptance by Ross C. "Rocky" Anderson
Of Nomination by the Justice Party for Candidacy for
President of the United States
Salt Lake City, Utah
January 13, 2012

I am proud to accept the nomination of the Justice Party to run as its candidate for President of the United States.

This is not *my* campaign. This is a campaign of, for, and by the people. We join together in this endeavor for the sake of justice – social justice, environmental justice, and economic justice. We pledge to organize and act, tenaciously and over the long haul, for the sake of the public interest, to enhance and protect freedom for all, and to vindicate the sacred promise of justice for all.

Those who understand that our great nation and its people have been harmed severely, and are at tremendous risk for even greater damage in the future, can be powerful agents of positive change. We need not settle for governance by the Republican and Democratic parties, which thrive on the corrupt money machine, nor do we have to confine ourselves to voting for the lesser of two evils, if indeed there is a lesser evil among the common choices.

If we have the vision, the courage, and the will, we can, together, forge a very different way – a way that will lead to a future of fiscal responsibility and respectful regard for the economic burdens we leave for later generations; secure jobs and fair compensation; decency and rationality in our cruel, self-destructive criminal justice system that is largely based on an irrational rage to punish; an investment in our nation's infrastructure, education, and innovation that is as substantial as our need to re-gain our global competitive edge; compassionate and rational immigration reform; respect for fundamental human and civil rights; victory over the stranglehold of the military-industrial-congressional complex; protection of our air, water, and wild lands; essential health care for all, as in every other nation in the

industrialized world; protection against and condemnation of illegal wars of aggression, pursuant to the United Nations Charter and the Kellogg-Briand Pact; international leadership on the urgent challenge of climate change; and restoration of the rule of law, including full accountability for crimes, regardless of the wealth or status of the perpetrators.

Men, women, and children across the United States, and throughout the world, are suffering horrendously because of the corruption of our government, the timidity of much of the public, and criminality that is rewarded rather than rectified. Lives have been taken, lifetime injuries inflicted, life savings decimated, essential health care rendered more elusive for millions of people, jobs lost, and the damage inflicted by our nation's debt increased exponentially -- all because of crimes committed with impunity, public policy guided by bribery, and a crooked two-tiered economic and justice system that rewards a narrow class of rich and powerful people while devastating the rest.

The root of this disaster is systemic corruption fed by money from the few who have benefited. The public's interest in catching up with the rest of the industrialized world and providing essential health care to every man, woman, and child has been undermined by the corrupting influence of money flowing from the medical and insurance industries.

The public's interest in reducing the outrageous cost of prescription drugs has been frustrated by the corrupting influence of money flowing from the pharmaceutical industry.

The public's interest in reducing our deficits and the crushing burden of our accumulated debt, as well as reprioritizing the ways in which our government spends our money, has been frustrated by the corrupting influence of money flowing from military contractors, the beneficiaries of the military-industrial complex about which President Eisenhower warned our nation in his last presidential address.

Perhaps most outrageous and tragic over the long-term, the public's interest in energy independence and the avoidance of the most catastrophic impacts of climate disruption has been frustrated by the corrupting influence of money flowing from the fossil fuel industry -- the coal, oil, and gas companies.

Whether these calamities continue is our choice. Bringing integrity and competence to our government *is* within our power. That's why people across the nation are supporting our campaign, which limits contributions to \$100 per person and engages in grassroots strategies rather than billion dollar television campaigns financed by the wealthy.

The American people can ensure that the public interest, not simply the interests of politicians and campaign contributors, is protected. We the people are powerful enough to end the perverse government-to-the-highest-bidder system sustaining, and sustained by, the two dominant parties.

With the complicity of Republicans and Democrats in Congress, the Bush administration marched our nation off a cliff -- morally, legally, and economically -- by perpetrating a disastrous war of aggression against Iraq. President Obama, for his political advantage, simply shrugged off war crimes committed in conjunction with that war, with the excuse that we "need to look forward not backward." It is a trademark reminder -- in the spirit of President Ford's ignominious pardon of Richard M. Nixon -- that, in our two-tiered system of injustice, the rich and powerful are above the law, which is applied, often with a crushing vengeance, against the rest of us.

Wall Street criminals have raked in billions of dollars while eviscerating the U.S economy through their fraudulent schemes. Goldman Sachs sold clients on perverse investments while secretly betting billions of dollars against them. Several Wall Street firms bundled toxic mortgages and fraudulently sold them as top-rated investments, ultimately devastating the U.S. economy, including the housing market and the retirement plans of millions of men and women throughout the U.S. This was all aided and abetted by occupants of the White House and by a de-regulating Congress that have acted as if they are on retainer by Wall Street banks. Just recently, President Obama appointed a new Chief of Staff who was COO at CitiGroup and who oversaw investments in a hedge fund that bet on the housing market collapse. We need a president who will surround himself not by the Goldman Sachs crowd, but by those who have a record of caring about, and acting to protect, the public interest.

Remarkably, some pundits are still puzzled about what the nation's Occupiers – and now the international Occupiers – are angry about. The appropriate inquiry is "Why have we put up with this for so long?"

Most Americans are far less financially secure – some are wiped out and many have lost their homes – because of these crimes. The plutocracy is now fully exposed. While drug offenders are being incarcerated for decades under contemptible minimum-mandatory sentences, not one day has been served in prison by the perpetrators, who, along with their Wall Street colleagues, gave unprecedented contributions to President Obama's last campaign. Goldman Sachs's political action committee and individual contributors employed by Goldman Sachs donated over \$1 million to Obama's last election. They've enjoyed an enormous return on their investment, to the enormous detriment of the rest of us.

Please thoughtfully consider this fact, then be appropriately outraged: 22% of children are now living in poverty in the United States. The skids toward the economic disaster, including the resulting loss of jobs and skyrocketing poverty, were greased by the unconscionable deregulation of the financial industry, made possible through the collusion of Republicans and Democrats. Again, that deregulation came about not because of the promotion of the public interest, but because of the corrupting influence of multi-national corporations that took us to the cleaners, then received bail-outs because they were considered by our economic policy-makers – themselves part of the corrupt financial class – as “too big to fail.” The Republican Party pursues deregulation as a priority in its increasingly bizarre ideology, even when it puts most Americans at tremendous risk, while President Obama and most of Congress gorge themselves at the trough of special interest money, then act accordingly.

We will fight to make certain that, in the future, no banks will be “too large to fail” and that the only thing we will consider to be “too large to fail” is the interests of the American people.

We must set aside our fear-based notion that a candidate other than a Republican or Democrat can be a “spoiler” for the lesser of two evils and, instead, help make real change happen, for our good, for the good of our country, and for the good of our children and later generations. We can be responsible, ethical stewards for the future by drawing the line now and committing to “no more” of what the two dominant parties have done to our nation.

Win or lose, we can, through this campaign, make a tremendous positive difference in our nation and our world.

Thomas Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum, in their remarkable book *That Used to Be Us*, make the argument about the vast difference a third party or independent candidacy can make for our nation. Here is what they say:

Now [the Democrats] have become the most conservative force in American politics. . . . Now the [Republicans] are the party of fiscal radicalism and recklessness, cutting taxes without reducing spending and thereby pushing the United States ever deeper into debt. The two parties are, however, united on two things – unfortunately. Neither has the courage to take the necessary serious steps to address the dangerously high budget deficit . . . : And neither has the courage to reduce America's, and therefore the world's, ruinous dependence on oil by raising the price of gasoline. . . .

Business as usual in American politics is a recipe for national decline. . .

The American political system does not need blowing up, but it does need shaking up. . . . It needs political shock therapy. . . .

We hope that [such a shock] will come from within – from a combination of grassroots and high politics. We mean by this a serious independent presidential candidate. . . .

The only way around all these ideological and structural obstacles is a third-party or independent candidate, who can not only articulate a hybrid politics that addresses our major challenges and restores our formula for success but . . . does this in a way that enough Americans find so compelling that they are willing to leave their respective Democratic and Republican camps . . . Only that could change a political system that rewards our politicians for postponing hard decisions and blaming the other party rather than making those decisions.

Because third parties do not win elections, voters expect them not to win and thus do not vote for them so as not to waste their votes. This calculation, a major reason for the weakness of third parties (and thus the strength of the Republicans and Democrats), can, however, be

*seriously mistaken. A vote for a third-party presidential candidate can be an effective way to change the direction of American national policy – and that is the strategy we are advocating.*¹

Friedman and Mandelbaum then describe recent polls, reflecting that people in the United States will support a third-party candidate: A Pew poll finding that more voters identify themselves as independents than as Democrats or Republicans; another Pew survey finding that 72 percent of respondents are dissatisfied with the condition of our country; a *Washington Post-ABC News* poll reporting in 2010 that only 34 percent of the respondents believed that Democratic candidates deserved reelection, and only 31 percent believed that Republicans deserved reelection; and an Ipsos Public Affairs 2010 poll in which 71 percent of respondents said they would like to see more than just the Democratic and Republican Parties on the presidential ballot.²

Friedman and Mandelbaum continue as follows:

An independent presidential candidate who did all these things – describing, more vividly and accurately than the two major parties have yet done, the world in which its citizens are living and are destined to live in this century; prescribing the policies that will make it possible for Americans to thrive in that world and for America to exercise global influence in this century, as they did in the last one; and galvanizing the country to adopt these policies – could provide the shock therapy we need.

*[I]t's the best shot we have. Sticking with the status quo, by contrast, is a sure thing – a sure pathway to decline.*³

As Friedman and Mandelbaum conclude, win or lose, “an independent presidential candidacy can change America – and therefore the world – for the better. . . [O]ver the long term it would probably have a greater impact

¹ Friedman and Mandelbaum, *That Used to Be Us*, pp. 329, 330, 331, 334, 335.

² *Id.* at 340.

³ *Id.* at 346.

on the course of American history than the person who [won the election].”⁴

Let us embrace this historic opportunity. For an end to the corruption and impunity for the privileged elite, and a fair shake for all Americans, we can reject the Republican/Democratic duopoly that has brought our nation to its current sad state. We now have the choice to support a party and a candidate offering genuine hope for a safer, healthier, more just world.

⁴ *Id.* at 347.