**“Glen’s Parallax Perspectives”** is a series of TV programs offering fresh ways for people to see issues such as foreign policy, social and economic justice, governmental functioning, the environment, and so forth. We provide voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

**Mainstream media, politicians, and culture see the world in conventional ways. Therefore, in order to solve problems, we need to see things in fresh ways.** Glen Anderson created this TV series to help people see things differently so we can solve problems at all levels from the local to the global.

This series title refers to “***parallax***,” which is the view you get by looking from a different perspective. For example, put one finger in front of your nose and another finger farther away. Close one eye. Then open that eye and close the other. Your fingers will seem to move. This is called a “parallax” view. **This TV series invites you to look at issues from fresh perspectives.**

Each program airs three times a week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for cable TV subscribers in Thurston County, Washington. TCTV is part of Thurston County Media. You can see their schedule at [**www.tcmedia.org**](http://www.tcmedia.org)

**You can also watch the program described below through your computer** at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). All episodes of “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” are posted on this blog’s “TV Programs” part and also in one or more of the categories listed in the right side of the blog home page. Also, see information about various issues at the category headings at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

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**🡪 I saved this document in Word format with live links.** If this document does not load or print properly for you, please e-mail me at [**glenanderson@integra.net**](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net) and I’ll promptly send you the links you request.

**🡪 Please invite other people to watch this video and/or read this thorough summary through these parts of my blog,** [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)**: “TV Programs” and “Democracy” and “Political Parties and Elections.”**

“Big Money in Elections Corrupts Our Government”

Glen’s Parallax Perspectives TV Series

June 2022

**Glen introduced our topic and our guest, Beth Rotman:**

While this TV series – “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” – deals with a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and so forth, the June 2022 interview focuses on a strategically smart way to help us **SOLVE ANY** public policy problem you care about.

This month’s interview shows how we could solve big problems if we would **get Big Money out of politics!** Huge amounts of money **corrupt** election campaigns. Huge amounts of money **corrupt** all levels of government – our nation, states, and local governments – and **prevent** them from solving problems.

Certainly, an honest democracy needs more people to vote – and votes to be counted honestly. **Besides** better voting procedures, we **also** need to **fund elections honestly**.

Recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions have been allowing **LEGALIZED BRIBERY** in funding elections.

During this hour you will learn about the problems and some solutions.

Glen welcomed our expert guest, Beth Rotman, who works for Common Cause, an excellent organization that Glen joined soon after it was founded in 1970. Common Cause works very hard – and skillfully – to reform governmental functioning so it will serve the public interest honestly and effectively.

Beth Rotman started working for Common Cause as the director of their **Money in Politics & Ethics Program** in June 2019. She is an attorney with an excellent background in working for election reform even before she joined Common Cause’s staff.

As Common Cause’s National Director of Money in Politics & Ethics, Beth advocates for pro-democracy reforms that break down barriers to participation and make our government more worthy of our trust. Before joining Common Cause’s staff, she had helped the State of Connecticut start practicing the most sweeping electoral democracy reform program in the U.S., which included reforming campaign financing. She also held an important legal position for the New York City Campaign Finance Board.

Beth strongly believes that – as she says -- **“the many can overcome the money.”**

This interview explored interesting and practical ways to solve problems nationwide and also at state and local levels, so we can **shift the balance of power back to the people**.

**Voters want honest democracy and honest elections that serve the public:**

Glen said that an overwhelming majority of the public knows that government has been corrupted by big business corporations and extremely rich people. When people don’t trust government, they don’t vote. That undermines democracy and makes the problems even worse.

He said everybody watching this TV interview knows something about the problems. Our interview informs people better about the problems – and also proposes some necessary solutions, especially ways to stop the corruption in how election campaigns are funded.

**PROBLEMS:**

**Beyond what we used to experience, how has the reality changed lately?**

Glen said that powerful economic forces have corrupted governments for a very long time, so this is like the wallpaper that people keep seeing all the time on their wall, so they have stopped noticing the pattern.

Before we discussed some recent cases at the U.S. Supreme Court, he invited Beth to summarize some recent trends and realities.

Beth said our political system costs a lot of money, and runaway campaign spending has prevented governments from solving problems. She said big spending is linked to the laws and policies that are [or are not] adopted. Candidates seek support from rich people and big businesses. The financial support for their campaigns comes with strings attached that directly affect the laws and policies that the candidates produce after they are elected and serving in office. As a result, she said ordinary Americans keep losing out.

She added that there are some common-sense solutions, and she believes that “the many can overcome the money.” Across the country some local and state governments have been achieving good solutions. She said we need to always pay attention and always keep fighting for the solutions.

She thanked Glen for creating this opportunity to help the public understand the problems and solutions.

Glen said that Beth had referred to campaign donations as “investments.” He said rich donors and big businesses insist on getting “a return on their investments.” He said he has read things that big donors and politicians have said (not knowing they would be quoted) referring to getting “a return on their investments.” This is what campaign funding really comes down to.

**1976: *Buckley v. Valeo*:**

Glen said he has paid attention to these matters for a long time and joined Common Cause in 1970. He said he remembers 1976, when a major U.S. Supreme Court decision escalated the political corruption that had already been occurring. In 1976 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the *Buckley v. Valeo* case that limiting how much could be spent on an election campaign violates the Constitution. In *Buckley v. Valeo*, the Court ruled that spending money is a kind of “speech,” so regulating campaign spending would violate the First Amendment’s protection for freedom of speech. The Supreme Court figured that the First Amendment’s protections for individuals’ freedom of speech does also pertain to big corporations and rich individuals who could afford to exert a tremendous amount of monetary “speech” for election campaigns.

He said he was already a member of Common Cause then, so he was delighted that Common Cause criticized this.

He invited Beth to explain U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in 1976’s *Buckley v. Valeo* case – and why it matters.

Beth said a common-sense solution could have been to limit the overall campaign spending. However, the court struck that down in this case. It said that the First Amendment protects free speech, and it said spending money in election campaigns is a form of “speech,” so unlimited “speech” in the form of unlimited campaign spending must be allowed. The Court said limiting total campaign spending would violate the Constitution.

She said that this decision required people to figure out other ways to protect honest elections and the power of “the many over the money.”

**2010: *Citizens United v. FEC*:**

Glen said *Buckley* was a pivotal case, and we have suffered additional bad decisions since then. More than a decade ago – in 2010 – the U.S. Supreme Court decided a crucially important case by a narrow 5-4 majority. That is known as *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*.

Beth said until *Citizens United*, it was always clear that business corporations, labor unions, and other entities could not donate to election campaigns from their own treasuries. She said that the Court’s decision in this case said corporations can donate directly from their own treasuries, provided that their donations were “independent” from the candidates’ campaigns.

She said the Court mistakenly assumed that we have a lot of transparency regarding political campaign donations, so – of course – the voting public would know who is donating how much to whom. **The Court’s decision assumed transparency and disclosures that do not really exist.** The Court used that mistaken assumption to justify its decision in *Citizens United*. She said this decision “opened the floodgates of money.”

Glen said we would discuss the lack of transparency later in this interview. The Court’s assumption about transparency was actually not valid.

He said that people who have tracked the consequences of the *Citizens United* decision have found an enormous flood of money flowing into election campaigns during the subsequent decade, and this has been disastrous for honest democracy.

He added that when he posts this interview video to his blog -- [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) -- he will also post a thorough summary of what we said during this interview. [*You are reading it now*.] This thorough summary includes links to more information than we had time to say during the interview. This will include additional information about the court cases Beth is telling us about during this interview – and what has happened since those decisions came out.

**We did not have time to mention these facts during the interview:**

2010: On January 23, 2020, 10 years after the *Citizens United* decision, a non-profit organization promoting honest government, [**www.opensecrets.org**](http://www.opensecrets.org), announced this:

**Wall Street donor influence shows unprecedented growth 10 years after Citizens United:**

The 2010 landmark ruling in Citizens United amplified the influence of deep-pocketed Wall Street stockbrokers and private investors in federal politics and rewarded them with greater political purchasing power. The securities and investment industry gave more to outside spending groups than any other industry in each of the last four full election cycles. As big money continues to take advantage of current campaign finance regulations, the financial industry remains at the top as the 2020 election gets underway. Since 2012, the industry has contributed at least $80 million to outside groups in every cycle, more than half of that coming from a small group of individuals. Before the Supreme Court decision, the industry never spent more than $17.8 million in any election cycle.

*The rest of the Open Secrets article is at this link:* [**https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/01/wall-street-donor-influence-growth-10-years-citizens-united/**](https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/01/wall-street-donor-influence-growth-10-years-citizens-united/)

Five important changes occurred in the ten years since the *Citizens United* decision: [**https://thefulcrum.us/campaign-finance/citizens-united-anniversary**](https://thefulcrum.us/campaign-finance/citizens-united-anniversary)

We should not lose hope just because of *Citizens United*. We can take actions to solve those problems. Common Cause and other organizations are working to solve them.

See Common Cause’s information about the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in the *Citizens United v. FEC* case here: [**https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/money-influence/campaign-finance/citizens-united-amending-the-u-s-constitution**/](https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/money-influence/campaign-finance/citizens-united-amending-the-u-s-constitution/)

**2014: *McCutchen v. FEC*:**

Glen said that just a few years after the extremely disastrous 2010 *Citizens United* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court made the problem even worse in its 2014 *McCutcheon v. FEC* decision. Beth told us about the *McCutcheon* decision was – and what it means.

Beth said that before *McCutcheon* we had **cumulative** limits – limits on how much a donor could give in total to **all** candidates to whom someone wants to give. So if you give a lot of money to one candidate, you had to limit the amounts you gave to other candidates because there was an aggregate total of how much was allowed.

*McCutcheon* eliminated cumulative limits, so now an extremely rich person could give a lot of money to a lot of candidates. This significantly changed the game by allowing extremely rich people to escalate their influence over many political candidates. While ordinary people could not afford to donate much, extremely rich people were unleashed to give as much as they want to a lot of candidates.

**We did not have time to mention these facts during the interview:**

The 2014 decision in *McCutcheon v. FEC* was a narrow 5-4 majority, but it was enough to strike down the aggregate limits on how much money any individual may contribute during a two-year period to all federal candidates, parties and political action committees combined.

Glen encourages everyone to watch a 2-minute video from April 2014. It is short and funny, as well as informative. It summarizes the US Supreme Court’s McCutcheon decision allowing more campaign contributions from extremely rich persons: [**http://www.upworthy.com/lol-he-made-an-app-to-change-the-world-2-minutes-later-he-totally-regretted-it?c=upw1**](http://www.upworthy.com/lol-he-made-an-app-to-change-the-world-2-minutes-later-he-totally-regretted-it?c=upw1)

**Corporate personhood:**

Glen said that one of the crucial problems in these Supreme Court cases – and in other areas of law – is the mistaken notion that the U.S. Constitution gives to corporations the constitutional rights that our nation’s founders intended to give **ONLY to human beings**. The Constitution says “we the people” have free speech, and “we the people” have religious rights, and so forth. However, the Supreme Court mistakenly extends those human rights to corporations through the concept of **“corporate personhood.”** Although corporations are allowed to sign contracts – as if they were “persons” – the Supreme Court has extended that concept of “personhood” to include the First Amendment rights that our nation’s founders intended **ONLY for human beings**.

Beth agreed that it was a mistake to let corporations exercise rights that were intended only for human beings. People may exercise free speech, make political donations, etc., but corporations should not be allowed those powers. She said corporations are “legal fictions” that are created to perform certain functions in our society, but they are not real people, so they should not have the kinds of human rights that our nation’s founders intended only for human beings. The myth of “corporate personhood” has perverted some of the ways in which democracy was supposed to work.

Glen added the hard reality that big businesses have so much more economic power – and therefore so much more political power – than human beings have, so this further skews our nation in ways that undermine honest democracy.

**We did not have time to mention these facts during the interview:**

Now corporate “persons” are actively discriminating against LGBTQ persons because these corporations claim to have religious rights under the First Amendment, and the Supreme Court agrees with that mistaken notion.

In March 2021 the Supreme Court heard arguments in the Cedar Point Nursery v. Hassid case, in which two agricultural corporations are challenging a California regulation that allows labor unions to talk to workers on the property (during very limited, non-work hours). The businesses’ goal is total defiance to any state law affirming any union organizing rights on corporate property. And what are they invoking? You guessed it -- their constitutional rights. Specifically, the Takings Clause of the 5th Amendment, which states that private property shall not “be taken for public use, without just compensation.”

My March 2011 TV interview explained the concept of “corporate personhood. I titled this TV episode, “Real Democracy, Not Corporate Personhood.” You can watch the interview and/or read about it at this link: [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-real-democracy-not-corporate-personhood**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-real-democracy-not-corporate-personhood)

This next link takes you to a long, thoughtful article from January 21, 2012, about *Citizens United*, Corporate Personhood, etc.: [**http://www.alternet.org/story/153814/the\_uphill\_battle\_against\_citizens\_united%3A\_tricky\_legal\_terrain\_and\_no\_easy\_fixes?page=entire**](http://www.alternet.org/story/153814/the_uphill_battle_against_citizens_united%3A_tricky_legal_terrain_and_no_easy_fixes?page=entire)

An article by preeminent constitutional law professor supports our perspective. Daniel JH Greenwood is professor of law at Hofstra University and an internationally-recognized scholar on corporations and democracy. His article urges ending all corporate constitutional rights. Professor Greenwood states: “*Corporations are created by ordinary statutes, not constitutions. Ordinary law should also direct, restrain, and reform them. If the Court won’t allow this, we should amend the Constitution, as suggested by groups like Move to Amend, to reclaim the power of Congress and state legislatures to set corporate rights and responsibilities."* The article was posted on July 5, 2021, and is titled, “Independence Day and the Imperial CEO.” Here is the link to Greenwood’s article: [**https://www.movetoamend.org/independence\_day\_and\_the\_imperial\_ceo**](https://www.movetoamend.org/independence_day_and_the_imperial_ceo?e=7cccb5b9fe580025b7c7973ac2289373&utm_source=movetoamend&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=greenwood_oped&n=2)

**Increasingly, election campaigns are funded by a very tiny number of rich people (and big businesses and secret sources):**

Before asking Beth to further discuss what these hard realities mean for elections and governmental functioning, Glen said that election campaigns are increasingly funded by a very tiny number of rich people (and big businesses and secret sources).

On December 8, 2019, Robert Reich (former Secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Labor) reported: “By the 2016 election, **the richest 100th of 1% of Americans** – 24,949 very wealthy people – accounted for a record-breaking **40% of all campaign contributions**.” [*emphasis added*] In the same article he reported: “The so-called ‘free market’ has been taken over by crony capitalism, corporate bailouts and corporate welfare. Meanwhile, confidence in political institutions has plummeted. In 1964, just 29% of Americans believed government was ‘run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.’ By 2013, 79% believed it.” Glen said this was a huge jump from 29% to 79% in those recent years.

A few years ago this article summarized 19 things we learned about money in politics in 2019: [**https://www.nationofchange.org/2020/01/01/19-things-we-learned-about-money-in-politics-in-2019/**](https://www.nationofchange.org/2020/01/01/19-things-we-learned-about-money-in-politics-in-2019/)

The image in the next column shows some information about the 2018 congressional elections. It shows that **1/1,000th of 1% of the adult population gave 38% of contributions** to the 2018 congressional election campaigns:



Glen said the system is ADDICTED to big money.

This is a SYSTEMIC problem.

We urgently need BOLD, SYSTEMIC solutions!

**Big money corrupts – and perverts – the decisions made by Congress (and other parts of  
federal, state and local governments) – and ballot issues too. Therefore, big money prevents governments from solving problems – and also makes current problems even worse.**

Glen said he believes that Big Money is **corrupting** – and **perverting** – the decisions made by Congress (and other parts of federal, state and local governments). Big Money **prevents** governments from solving problems. It also makes our current problems even worse.

Likewise, many ballot issues are hugely funded – pro or con – by Big Money. He invited Beth to share her insights into how Big Money affects election campaigns – and how our governments actually function.

Beth said, “Big money skews our elections and our democracy to the will of the special interests.” They are happy to pay for election campaigns and win big returns on their investments. The special interests know very well there is a *quid pro quo* related to their funding for election campaigns and for lobbyists. Some big, rich industries spend millions – and even billions – of dollars to buy what they want from government. They pay for their issues and their concerns to get onto the top of the pile of what governments listen to. Their extreme amounts of money drown out the voices of ordinary people who have valid concerns that our governments should be focusing on but keeps neglecting. But this is not how it’s supposed to work.

Beyond the huge amounts of money, a huge amount of secrecy prevents the public from knowing who is funding the campaigns and how much money they’re giving. We need transparency. A lot of the election campaign spending has gone underground, and much of this hidden money is funneled through groups that purport to be “social welfare” organizations but are really gimmicks for funding campaigns.

Glen said we would talk about this lack of transparency and this kind of abuse in just a few minutes. Beth said we often don’t know who is really doing the speaking, because the rich lobbies speak through the politicians but without transparency.

Glen said that on January 6, 2021, Trump organized his supporters to try to violently prevent Congress from performing its constitutional duty to certify the November 2020 presidential election. He said the House impeached Trump for that serious crime – after the House had already impeached Trump before that for other serious crimes – but some of the Senators who would be making the decision about whether to remove Trump for his crimes had received campaign donations from some of Trump’s lawyers during a recent election cycle. This had been reported on January 30, 2020, related to Trump’s first impeachment trial in the Senate. Those Senators should have been able to be impartial in deciding whether to uphold the Constitution and the rule of law, but – instead – some of them had already been bribed in advance by Trump’s lawyers.

**We did not have time to mention these facts during the interview:**

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez exposed corruption by playing a game during a House committee hearing. See this article: [**https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-campaign-finance\_us\_5c5d246be4b03afe8d6637ff?utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=\_\_Politics\_\_020819&utm\_content=\_\_Politics\_\_020819+Version+B+CID\_da435f9ca8d5d437930a17b915a2863c&utm\_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm\_term=READ%20MORE&ncid=newsltushpmgnews\_\_Politics\_\_020819**](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-campaign-finance_us_5c5d246be4b03afe8d6637ff?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=__Politics__020819&utm_content=__Politics__020819+Version+B+CID_da435f9ca8d5d437930a17b915a2863c&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=READ%20MORE&ncid=newsltushpmgnews__Politics__020819)

Her viral video shows how U.S. democracy is “fundamentally broken.” [**https://www.alternet.org/2019/02/viral-video-of-ocasio-cortez-explaining-fundamentally-broken-us-democracy-breaks-the-internet/**](https://www.alternet.org/2019/02/viral-video-of-ocasio-cortez-explaining-fundamentally-broken-us-democracy-breaks-the-internet/)

Immediately after the January 6, 2021, insurrection, some big companies said they would stop giving to the Congress members who had actively supported the insurrection. But after a short time they started donating again to them.

Also, former independent counsels Ken Starr and Robert Ray, who had investigated then-President Bill Clinton around the time of Clinton’s impeachment, each made large campaign contributions to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) shortly before joining Trump’s legal team. Starr opposed the impeachment of Trump and lambasted what he called the “age of impeachment” before the Senate, gave $2,800 to McConnell in July 2019. Just after House Democrats launched an impeachment inquiry in September, Ray gave McConnell $5,600, the maximum allowed for the primary and general elections.

The news source Open Secrets ([**www.opensecrets.org**](http://www.opensecrets.org)) has researched and reported on “Dark Money.” They posted this article about the senators who received suspicious donations: [**https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/01/senators-overseeing-impeachment-got-campaign-cash-from-trump-team/?utm\_source=Website+Newsletter+Sign-Ups&utm\_campaign=82797ece49-EMAIL\_CAMPAIGN\_2020\_01\_23\_02\_14\_COPY\_01&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_6de008214b-82797ece49-212255453**](https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/01/senators-overseeing-impeachment-got-campaign-cash-from-trump-team/?utm_source=Website+Newsletter+Sign-Ups&utm_campaign=82797ece49-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_01_23_02_14_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6de008214b-82797ece49-212255453)

Most Americans want the government (Executive Branch decisions and Congressional actions) to reduce the prices of pharmaceuticals. But “Big Money” donations to Congress are interfering with that. The progressive organization at [**www.thepeopleunited.org**](http://www.thepeopleunited.org) reported this:

“The most popular provision on Joe Biden’s Build Back Better agenda was allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices. Democrats ran in on it in 2018 and 2020, but now that they have the chance to enact it, a few corporate Democrats have demanded they drop it. **Why? Because of the corporate cash that floods our elections and distorts our democracy. When 90%+ Americans want a policy, corporate donors shouldn’t get a veto.** The organization urges people to tell Congress to end corporate “Dark Money” and preserve our democracy.

**People say the system is “broken,” but maybe the system is actually functioning in exactly the way powerful people want it to be:**

Glen said that on issue after issue, mainstream media and the general public say our systems are “broken.” That might be misleading. Perhaps the systems are NOT “broken.”

If you look at how the electoral systems are actually functioning — WHAT THEY ACTUALLY DO (and what they prevent) — and WHO HAS THE POWER and WHO BENEFITS from the status quo — you’ll see that these systems are NOT really “broken.”

Electoral systems are serving the rich and the powerful. They are preventing the changes that ordinary people want and need. Perhaps powerful people (and big businesses) arranged for CORRUPTION TO BE DELIBERATELY BUILT INTO the systems, so the corrupt systems actually are working as intended on behalf of extremely rich people and big businesses!

For example, a huge majority of the population wants to protect the environment, protect the climate, reduce pharmaceutical prices, protect workers’ rights, protect all kinds of people’s human rights, and so forth.

But rich people and big businesses prevent governments from doing what the public wants and needs.

**Secrecy in donations – and secrecy in spending make the corruption even worse.**

**We need openness and transparency.**

A few minutes before this, Beth had mentioned the need for transparency. The **amounts** of donations are a serious problem – and besides the **amounts**, another problem is the **secrecy** of many donations. Honest democracy requires **openness and transparency**.

Now Beth explained how some major donors keep their big donations secret – and she explained some good solutions that Common Cause and other good organizations recommending.

She said that in every state – and at the federal level – if you’re spending even a thousand dollars, your spending goes through a political committee. However, people have devised some less transparent methods to donate. At the federal level, the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) is responsible for enforcing federal rules. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) also can enforce some rules strongly.

She said that a very big area of abuse is that some people and entities get around those rules by setting up what are known as “social welfare non-profit” organizations that purport to be interest groups that just happen to donate to political campaigns. These register with the IRS as non-profit 501(c)(4) organizations, so they can do a lot of political activities.

The IRS has not been requiring these organizations to disclose their donors, but that was not what Congress intended when this kind of organization was allowed, so recently people urged a Senate committee to call upon the IRS to enforce this part of the law as it was intended. She said they should be filing under IRS’s section 527, which does require disclosure, because that kind of organization is created primarily to deal with donations related to candidates for public office. Or, she said, they should file honestly as the kind of political committee that is specifically focused on financing electoral campaigns.

She urged both the IRS and the FEC to pay close attention and stop the rampant abuses.

She mentioned again that the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United* assumed that transparency existed, when actually a great many huge donations are hidden from the public. She said that was a huge error. The Court assumed that people could hold donors accountable, but that is not possible when the government allows donors to give secretly. This is a very serious abuse. She said transparency and accountability are absolutely necessary.

Glen agreed that when the Court assumed transparency that does not really exist, their whole argument for ruling against the FEC in the *Citizens United* case falls apart.

Beth said she had a background of enforcing campaign finance laws for the State of Connecticut and the City of New York. She is continuing that kind of work for Common Cause, which works nationwide for honest elections.

Glen said we would talk again about the Federal Elections Commission in about ten minutes – what they are doing and what else they should be doing.

**Solving these problems must share #1 priority with the other issues we care about:**

Glen said that over the years, several of his TV programs have focused on the problems we are discussing today. He said that more than a decade ago, one of his guests emphasized that point that – regardless of what issue is our #1 priority for Congress to deal with (peace, environment, or whatever) – “Big Money” is PREVENTING Congress from dealing with your hot issue, so stopping the corruption of “Big Money” must SHARE #1 PRIORITY with whatever our other top issue is. Glen said he agreed with his guest then, and he has been sharing his insight for more than a decade. He believes we **ABSOLUTELY MUST** get “Big Money” out of election campaigns in order to solve **any** of our other problems.

Beth agreed. She said yesterday in her office she saw a pin that says, “A greener earth starts with clean elections.”

She said this is absolutely the case. She has researched the changes that have occurred in states and local jurisdictions that have taken strong steps for clean elections (small donor support, etc.). She wrote a substantive report about this. These reforms make very huge differences in the kinds of political discussions that occur, and in the kinds of people who can run for office, and in the kinds of policies that can be considered – and passed.

These reforms also change how seriously elected officials consider what the lobbyists tell them to do. Lobbyists can’t simply buy the politicians. Instead, they have to present sensible proposals and wait for the elected officials to make reasonable decisions.

She said all of the reforms to clean up elections improve the quality of democracy instead of the corrupt *quid pro quo* “dollarocracy” system that is far too dominant.

Glen said this principle is relevant for all kinds of issues. He said the gun lobby gives legal bribery to many members of Congress, so the gun lobby prevents governments from passing laws to reduce gun violence, even though an enormous majority of the public wants strong laws.

He said he cares about a great many issues – and for ALL of the issues he works on, he urges people to develop strategically savvy nonviolent grassroots movements. He believes that solving any big problem requires **organizing a grassroots movement** with **lots of “people-power”** and **smart strategies**. He conducts free online workshops to help people develop the skills and strategies for solving this problem – and other problems they want to solve. He invites people to contact him find out about the next opportunity to take these workshops.

**Both political parties have been corrupted by Big Money:**

Glen said the problem of “Big Money” corrupting elections and corrupting government is truly a SYSTEMIC problem. It is also BI-PARTISAN with politicians in both of the big political parties corrupted by Big Money. He said a lot of public attention and criticism focus on Republicans because they receive such huge amounts of Big Money, but many Democrats also are corrupted. He emphasized that we must change the system and stop the addiction to Big Money. Instead of making this simply a partisan debate, our nation needs to discuss how to change the SYSTEM so we can clean it up and have a fair, workable democracy.

**We did not have time to mention these facts during the interview:**

Neither party wants to unilaterally disarm. Voters need to push on their own respective parties. The public must get serious about solving this problem and not assume that the politicians who currently profit from the abuses will change the system that has been benefiting them.

Regarding the bi-partisan nature of the problem, Glen saw an article in April 2019 that reported that as soon as Joe Biden declared he was running for President, he went to a BIG-MONEY fundraising event with BIG BUSINESS cronies. Click this link to read the article:

[**https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/04/25/hours-after-entering-2020-race-biden-attend-big-money-fundraiser-hosted-comcast-blue?cd-origin=rss&utm\_term=Hours%20After%20Entering%202020%20Race%2C%20Biden%20to%20Attend%20Big-Money%20Fundraiser%20Hosted%20by%20Comcast%2C%20Blue%20Cross%20Execs&utm\_campaign=Daily%20Newsletter%20-%20During%20Fundraiser%20-%20WITH%20Fundraising%20Message&utm\_content=email&utm\_source=Act-On+Software&utm\_medium=email&cm\_mmc=Act-On%20Software-\_-email-\_-US%20Sanctions%20Against%20Venezuela%20%27A%20Death%20Sentence%20for%20Tens%20of%20Thousands%20of%20People%27%20%7C%20News%20%2526%20Views-\_-Hours%20After%20Entering%202020%20Race%2C%20Biden%20to%20Attend%20Big-Money%20Fundraiser%20Hosted%20by%20Comcast%2C%20Blue%20Cross%20Execs**](https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/04/25/hours-after-entering-2020-race-biden-attend-big-money-fundraiser-hosted-comcast-blue?cd-origin=rss&utm_term=Hours%20After%20Entering%202020%20Race%2C%20Biden%20to%20Attend%20Big-Money%20Fundraiser%20Hosted%20by%20Comcast%2C%20Blue%20Cross%20Execs&utm_campaign=Daily%20Newsletter%20-%20During%20Fundraiser%20-%20WITH%20Fundraising%20Message&utm_content=email&utm_source=Act-On+Software&utm_medium=email&cm_mmc=Act-On%20Software-_-email-_-US%20Sanctions%20Against%20Venezuela%20%27A%20Death%20Sentence%20for%20Tens%20of%20Thousands%20of%20People%27%20%7C%20News%20%2526%20Views-_-Hours%20After%20Entering%202020%20Race%2C%20Biden%20to%20Attend%20Big-Money%20Fundraiser%20Hosted%20by%20Comcast%2C%20Blue%20Cross%20Execs)

In December 2021, Robert Reich (former U.S. Secretary of the Dept. of Labor) wrote that big money has corrupted two Democratic U.S. Senators – Sinema and Manchin – so now they oppose solving the climate crisis and reducing the cost of overpriced pharmaceuticals. Glen read that Sinema used to support reducing drug prices until she received a truly gigantic amount of money from big pharmaceutical companies and promptly flipped on the issue. Robert Reich wrote that Senator Manchin has obstructed President Biden’s “Build Back Better” legislation because of Manchin’s campaign donors (in addition to his own coal company investments). “According to campaign-finance tracking by [**www.Accountable.US**](http://www.Accountable.US), as of September Manchin had received more than $1.5 million from corporations that are opposed to the Build Back Better bill (Sinema got nearly $1 million).”

Another very knowledgeable source reported in late 2021, “Senator Manchin staunchly opposes the climate change and clean energy aspects of the plan. He is receiving the largest contributions from oil and gas companies this election cycle.”

We have explained the **problems**. Now let’s talk about **solutions**.

**SOLUTIONS:**

**The public is already on our side. Now let’s build a strategically savvy grassroots movement.**

**Glen said that actually, the public is already on our side!** He said the general public wants to have an honest democracy. He said the problems are serious, but he believes we can solve the problems if we reach out to the general public and build a broad-based grassroots movement with smart strategies. He said we must reach out and connect people with Common Cause and many other organizations that are working to solve the problems. We need to build a strategically savvy grassroots movement to restore honest democracy.

Beth agreed and said, “we are at a time in our democracy when the public wants and needs to have hope about the opportunities to change.” She said we should not fall into cynicism. There is reason for optimism.

She also said this is part of the reason why we need to pay attention to state and local efforts and successes.

Glen agreed with Beth. He said throughout our nation’s entire history, the best solutions have started at the local level and have been enacted at local and state levels. Then – only after these solutions have proven to work and be “politically safe” – will Congress finally feel safe to enact them nationwide.

Beth said this has worked – and can work further – for democracy reforms. She said “small donor” democracy (“citizen-funded elections”) are a good example of this.

She said she was the founding director of the Connecticut Citizen Election Program. She appreciates the election campaign voucher program that Seattle recently enacted. She said Common Cause is working with a coalition for a similar program for Oakland – and she is helping also in Maryland. These programs help to empower ordinary Americans to reclaim democracy.

She said a campaign voucher program can enable voters to use money from the government to provide grassroots support for good candidates. Glen said that in a few minutes we would mention how Seattle’s successful program works.

Glen said that because the kinds of reforms Beth is proposing would have broad support, we can **reach out to people working on all kinds of issues** – peace, environment, climate, universal single-payer health care, reducing gun violence, and so forth – **and bring them into this effort, because it would be good for all of their issues**. He said we can reach out to many kinds of people and bring them together to strengthen democracy so they can win on all of their issues.

**What laws do we need? What about a constitutional amendment?**

Glen said governments can solve problems by passing laws and adopting regulations. He said some people also have proposed a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to say that money is NOT “speech” and corporations do NOT have a constitutional right to Free Speech. He asked Beth what she thinks about such a constitutional amendment.

Beth said Common Cause has worked for a constitutional amendment to overturn the *Citizens United* decision, but not for one as broad as what Glen had mentioned. She said the Constitution is extremely difficult to amend, so she said other kinds of solutions are much more likely to be adopted much sooner than a constitutional amendment could be achieved.

**Here is some additional information about a possible 28th Amendment:**

People have proposed a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as a way to solve the problem. Here are four ways the 28th Amendment would reduce corruption: [**https://www.americanpromise.net/4-ways-the-28th-amendment-would-reduce-corruption/?utm\_source=American+Promise&utm\_campaign=6b39be9795-EMAIL\_CAMPAIGN\_2019\_04\_04&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_f12c7850d0-6b39be9795-22945547**](https://www.americanpromise.net/4-ways-the-28th-amendment-would-reduce-corruption/?utm_source=American+Promise&utm_campaign=6b39be9795-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_04_04&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f12c7850d0-6b39be9795-22945547) The organization at that link is working hard to end Big Money corruption of our politics. See information at [**https://americanpromise.net/**](https://americanpromise.net/)

The article at this link discusses strategy to ratify the 28th Amendment so people (not money) will run the government: [**http://www.americanpromise.net/how\_will\_we\_pass\_the\_28th\_amendment\_our\_strategy\_to\_ratify?utm\_source=American+Promise&utm\_campaign=f0e80fc489-EMAIL\_CAMPAIGN\_2019\_01\_03\_NEWSLETTER&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_f12c7850d0-f0e80fc489-22945547**](http://www.americanpromise.net/how_will_we_pass_the_28th_amendment_our_strategy_to_ratify?utm_source=American+Promise&utm_campaign=f0e80fc489-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_03_NEWSLETTER&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f12c7850d0-f0e80fc489-22945547)

**How could the Federal Elections Commission and other entities solve the problems?**

A few minutes ago, Beth had mentioned our national government’s Federal Elections Commission (FEC). Glen said the FEC seems to be powerless now because gridlock by FEC’s partisan members prevents the FEC from taking smart actions. He invited Beth to summarize what the Federal Elections Commission is supposed to do – and what its current problems are – and how to make it function effectively again so it could help to solve the problems.

Beth said she has experience at both a city-level and a state-level election fairness enforcement entities, where campaigns had to file information and enforcement occurred to make sure campaigns were functioning fairly. Enforcement is important in routine matters, besides in major matters. She said it’s important to enforce rules so every campaign is held accountable both for intentional and for unintentional errors.

She said at the federal level people did not want to be penalized, so they created the FEC as a system with equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats that would virtually prevent people from being penalized. She said once in a great while the FEC does act responsibly, but the overall pattern is designed to maintain bi-partisan gridlock, so the American people end up losing the accountability that we need.

She said several common-sense reforms have been proposed for fixing the FEC, and the House did pass the “For the People Act,” which would have reformed the FEC, but it has not passed the Senate. As a result, the FEC is not able to enforce the laws as it should be doing.

Glen added that Beth has already mentioned the need for better enforcement of existing laws and rules about campaign fundraising and spending. Even while we need new ones, an honest democracy requires better enforcement of the protections that already exist now. He said Beth mentioned that even the IRS has a role in this, along with other entities.

**We did not have time for Glen to say this:**

The FEC’s ineffectiveness comes directly from its design to allow two big political parties to prevent it from doing its job. It’s like a fox regulating a hen house. Instead, we need a truly independent non-partisan entity committed to fairness and democracy instead of partisan obstruction.

This is another example of how the system is not “broken” but was designed to prevent honest democracy, so the FEC’s partisan gridlock seems to be the intention: create the illusion of monitoring while actually allowing corruption.

**What successes have we seen?**

Glen said that although the problems are huge and long-standing, we’ve actually seen some successes over the years.

He said he has lived in Washington State all of his life, and he remembers the 1970s when Washington State’s voters used our statewide initiative process to create the Public Disclosure Commission, the PDC.

The PDC closely monitors political campaign fundraising and spending – and makes the data easily accessible to the public. Their website is [**www.pdc.wa.gov**](https://www.pdc.wa.gov/).

He said the PDC has been doing an excellent job for half a century, and people really do rely upon the PDC for necessary information so we can hold candidates and elected officials accountable.

He appreciates Beth’s work with Connecticut and New York City. We need more state-level and local-level efforts.

**Small-donor programs, such as Seattle’s Democracy Voucher Program:**

Glen agreed with Beth that instead of “Big Money,” elections should be funded by many small donations from real people.

He said that the City of Seattle created a Democracy Voucher Program in 2017, and it has worked very well. Briefly, here is how Seattle’s **Democracy Voucher Program** works: Nearly every Seattle resident age 18 years and older gets four $25 democracy vouchers by mail in February. Now they can give these vouchers to candidates for city office who pledge to rely on small-dollar donations and limit campaign spending. This has worked very well

Glen posted information about this to his blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) because this was part of a TV program he had produced and hosted. (The TV program dealt with fossil fuels and election reform.) See his blog’s **“TV Programs**” category or the **“Democracy”** category. The thorough summary of our interview he posted to his blog is at this link: [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-better-strategies-about-democracy-fossil-fuels-etc**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-better-strategies-about-democracy-fossil-fuels-etc) – and the information about Seattle’s Democracy Voucher Program is on page 4 of that document.

Here is more information about Seattle’s successful **Democracy Voucher Program:** [**https://www.sightline.org/2019/04/23/seattles-democracy-voucher-program-is-already-sparking-a-lively-election-season/**](https://www.sightline.org/2019/04/23/seattles-democracy-voucher-program-is-already-sparking-a-lively-election-season/)

He asked Beth about similar efforts elsewhere. Beth said Common Cause now is working with a coalition to pass this kind of remedy in Oakland, California. She said if Oakland passes it, other parts of California would likely replicate it.

She added that another benefit of Democracy Vouchers was proven in Seattle. People who had been unlikely to vote now became more likely to vote.

She also mentioned Connecticut’s program of strengthening democracy by promoting small donations. She co-authored an article titled, **“Connecticut’s Citizens’ Election Program Shifted the Balance of Power to the People.”** You can read it at this link: [**https://www.commoncause.org/resource/amplifying-small-dollar-donors-in-the-citizens-united-era-connecticut/**](https://www.commoncause.org/resource/amplifying-small-dollar-donors-in-the-citizens-united-era-connecticut/) The article begins with these two short paragraphs:

Politics costs money. Runaway campaign spending blocks better government policies because candidates turn to the wealthy and industry for support. The support comes with strings because big spenders are investing in policy outcomes.

Citizen-funded election programs step in to create space for policies that favor large swaths of every day Americans. Particularly when combined with restrictions on lobbyist and government contractor contributions, these reforms represent the best way to prevent government capture by the wealthy.

She said that Connecticut’s experience after ten years has proven that this kind of reform really does work. It really does empower more people to participate in democracy. It really does change legislators’ behavior to better represent the public. It really does solve problems that had long existed. She said this small-donor program really did improve public policy outcomes for Connecticut. She said legislators were freed from domination by the special interests so they could pass legislation that otherwise could not have passed.

For example, this electoral reform allowed Connecticut to become the first state to provide health care for front-line service workers during the pandemic, so it actually saved lives.

Here is more information about increasing the role and power of ordinary people’s small donations for elections: [**https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/money-influence/campaign-finance/citizen-funded-elections**/](https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/money-influence/campaign-finance/citizen-funded-elections/)

Glen said people tend to focus on the problems so much that we often neglect to celebrate our victories. We need to share the solutions from one geographic area to another so we can build a strong movement and replicate the solutions in more locations.

**What additional strategies and activities would be useful? Here are a few things Glen said during the TV interview, along with more information that we did not have to say on TV:**

Glen mentioned a recent example of big corporations funding bad electoral abuses. He said that when the January 6, 2021, insurrection – in which Trump loyalists physically attacked the Capitol Building and tried to prevent Congress from fulfilling its constitutional responsibility to certify the 2020 presidential election – some of the big business corporations that had been funding the members of Congress who had actively supported the insurrection were widely criticized for financially supporting them.

Several of those big business corporations publicly said they would stop funding them, but soon afterward they quietly started funding them again! See this news report from just a few days after the January 6 insurrection: [**https://popular.info/p/three-major-corporations-say-they?s=r**](https://popular.info/p/three-major-corporations-say-they?s=r) Also see [**https://popular.info/p/toyotas-second-u-turn**](https://popular.info/p/toyotas-second-u-turn)

Glen said some of the businesses that promptly started donating again to insurrectionists included AT&T, Walmart, Toyota, Boeing, and many others. Those big businesses and many more are aggressively funding Republican politicians who had vigorously tried to overthrow the U.S. Constitution. This is very dangerous for our nation!

He suggested that people who do business with any of the corporations that funded the insurrectionists could contact the businesses and sharply criticize them and say they will henceforth boycott them.

Tell AT&T why you are canceling your contract with them, and urge your friends to do that too. Tell the manager of your local Toyota dealership and your local Walmart store that you are urging your friends to join you in boycotting them. Hold demonstrations outside of those businesses all over the USA. Do this for other business corporations that are hurting our constitutional republic.

If enough people did that throughout the nation, those companies would feel the loss of customers, so they would stop their bad behavior. This grassroots action could make a big difference.

A few minutes before ago, Glen had said the public is already on our side regarding “Big Money” and “Dark Money” and the other abuses we discussed during this interview. He said he believes we can solve the problems if we would build a grassroots movement with smart strategies and bold, creative activities. Savvy and vigorous grassroots organizing is what we need for this issue and for the other issues we care about (peace, climate, human rights, etc.).

Besides working for national level reforms, we can accomplish good results by focusing more closely to the grassroots at local and state levels.

**COMMON CAUSE:**

**Glen expressed his long-time respect and support for Common Cause:**

He thanked Common Cause for conducting important, high-quality work for more than half a century, and for providing Beth Rotman to be our guest during this interview.

Besides having good values and a good heart, Common Cause also does very good work. Common Cause works hard – and skillfully – to reform governmental functioning so it will serve the public interest honestly and effectively.

Common Cause works on a variety of issues to improve governmental fairness by informing the public, working with Congress and state governments, promoting smart advocacy, and working through the courts. You can learn more through their website, [**www.commoncause.org**](http://www.commoncause.org)

Glen said he joined Common Cause very soon after it was founded in 1970, and he has enjoyed donating every year for more than half a century since then.

**Beth summarized Common Cause’s work on these issues:**

Beth has worked as the director of their Money in Politics & Ethics Program since June 2019. We had only a little time now for Beth to summarize Common Cause’s work related to campaign finance reform AND other issues to make elections and governments more fair. Their website, [**www.commoncause.org**](http://www.commoncause.org), provides much more information.

She said Common Cause is – in the best sense of the word – a “lobbyist for the people.” Unlike the common bad connotation for lobbyists, Common Cause practices those skills honestly and effectively for good purposes.

She said they have chapters in 35 states as well as their national office in Washington DC. She said they work hard “to return power to the people” by connecting with ordinary people and connecting them with ways they can help solve problems. She affirmed the kind of grassroots activism that Glen had mentioned, where ordinary people speak up and take actions to assert better values than what governments often practice. She emphasized the importance of voters speaking directly to lawmakers.

She said Common Cause’s staff and members advise lawmakers about what the laws should be – and also provide testimony for committees and other entities. Common Cause is active in coalitions and provides advice to strengthen coalitions’ effectiveness. She summarized their work as this: “to connect real people with their government to make sure it is working in the people’s interests – and not just for the wealthy special interests” who write big checks to buy influence.

Glen said Washington State used to have a state level chapter with an office in Olympia, but we could not sustain the volunteer power or the financial support to keep it going. When our state level Common Cause group existed, they did very good work through the state legislature.

**Glen recommended joining Common Cause, donating, and signing up to help:**

He said ordinary people can help by joining Common Cause as members, by donating financial support (as he has been doing every year for more than half a century), and volunteering in a variety of ways, including Common Cause’s easy-to-use online action alerts.

He encouraged people to visit Common Cause’s website, [**www.commoncause.org**](http://www.commoncause.org), to learn more about their work – and also to sign up to volunteer for various kinds of committees and activities. People can volunteer to help Common Cause do its work: [**https://actionnetwork.org/forms/join-the-common-cause-action-team-slack/**](https://actionnetwork.org/forms/join-the-common-cause-action-team-slack/)

Common Cause is part of a coalition working to overturn the *Citizens United* decision and to improve the fairness of elections and other governmental functioning in a variety of ways.

Common Cause’s website provides information about what they are doing about Big Money in election campaigns: [**https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/money-influence/campaign-finance/**](https://www.commoncause.org/our-work/money-influence/campaign-finance/)

**WRAPPPING UP**

**You can get more information from many other good sources too:**

Glen said a great many resources provide information and advocacy about the issues we’ve been discussing during this hour, but we did not have time to mention them.

The organizations and information sources working to remove big money from politics and reform electoral processes in other ways include:

[**www.wamend.org**](http://www.wamend.org)

[**www.opensecrets.org**](http://www.opensecrets.org)

[**www.movetoamend.org**](http://www.movetoamend.org)

**www.inequality.org**

[**www.freespeechforpeople.org**](http://www.freespeechforpeople.org)

[**www.fixdemocracyfirst.org**](http://www.fixdemocracyfirst.org)

[**www.fairvote.org**](http://www.fairvote.org)

[**www.demandprogress.org**](http://www.demandprogress.org)

[**www.citizen.org**](http://www.citizen.org)

[**www.americanpromise.net**](http://www.americanpromise.net)

[**www.aclu.org**](http://www.aclu.org)

To learn about amending the Constitution to abolish the concept that corporations have constitutional rights and to abolish the concept that money is “free speech,” visit [**www.movetoamend.org**](http://www.movetoamend.org). That organization is promoting these goals in a 28th Constitutional amendment called the “We the People Amendment.” House Joint Resolution 48 (re-introduced on May 20, 2021) would move us toward that goal. This link -- [**https://www.movetoamend.org/petition**](https://www.movetoamend.org/petition) -- takes you to a petition you can sign.

Glen’s blog -- [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) -- includes issue categories for “Democracy, Electoral Reforms and Voting Rights” ([**https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/democracy-electoral-reforms-voting-rights**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/democracy-electoral-reforms-voting-rights)) and for “Political Parties and Elections” ([**https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/political-parties-and-elections-also-see-democracy**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/political-parties-and-elections-also-see-democracy)) A few TV programs produced since January 2018 about these topics are posted to the “TV Programs” category ([**https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/tv-programs-parallax-perspectives-series**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/category/tv-programs-parallax-perspectives-series)) in addition to those two blog issue categories.

Please invite your friends to see the blog resources and/or to watch this TV interview program and/or read the thorough summary you are reading now. These are posted to the three specific categories I listed immediately above. Your friends click any of those links and scroll down to look for the title of this TV program, **“Big Money in Elections Corrupts Our Government.”**

**Another bad decision by the U.S. Supreme Court occurred after we taped our TV interview.**

**Beth wrote an article criticizing it:**

On May 17, 2022, Beth wrote an article about a new U.S. Supreme Court decision that further allowed financial corruption in election campaigns. The first paragraph of Beth’s article said this:

In *FEC v Ted Cruz for Senate*, the U.S. Supreme Court took another step in the wrong direction for campaign finance regulation holding that the law preventing repaying federal candidate loans over $250,000 with money raised after the election was unconstitutional. This flies in the face of American campaign finance laws designed to limit political giving that overly indebts officeholders to donors and results in political favors. Permitting candidates to solicit unlimited post-election contributions to repay their personal campaign loans and put the donor money in their own pockets gives an obvious opening for special interests to purchase official favors with personal gifts to candidates that rig the political system in their favor.

A paragraph near the end of Beth’s article included this (with her italicized emphasis):

*Secret money spending by outside groups since Citizens United has exceeded $1 billion dollars in federal elections and the spending race continues. Unfortunately for the American public, a lot has had to go wrong to make it possible for them to be so completely in the dark about so much political spending.*

**Glen’s closing encouragement:**

Glen thanked Beth Rotman for sharing her information, insights, and encouragement during this interview. He also thanked all of the people who have been watching this interview.

He said honest democracy has suffered many serious setbacks lately, but instead of losing hope, let’s recognize that most ordinary people really do want elections to be fair and honest.

We need to inform, inspire, and energize ordinary people to protect honest democracy, solve the problems, and create positive reforms.

We can indeed create grassroots movements grounded in principled nonviolence and empowered by smart strategies.

If we do that, we’ll have an honest democracy that will serve the broad public interest, instead of serving corrupt private interests that currently have too much political power.

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence through my blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)or by phoning me at   
(360) 491-9093 or e-mailing me at [**glenanderson@integra.net**](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)

Glen ends each TV program with this invitation to help make progress:

**We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.**

**We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.**

**The world needs whatever you can do to help!**