



Financial FAQs

The Dumbing Down of Government

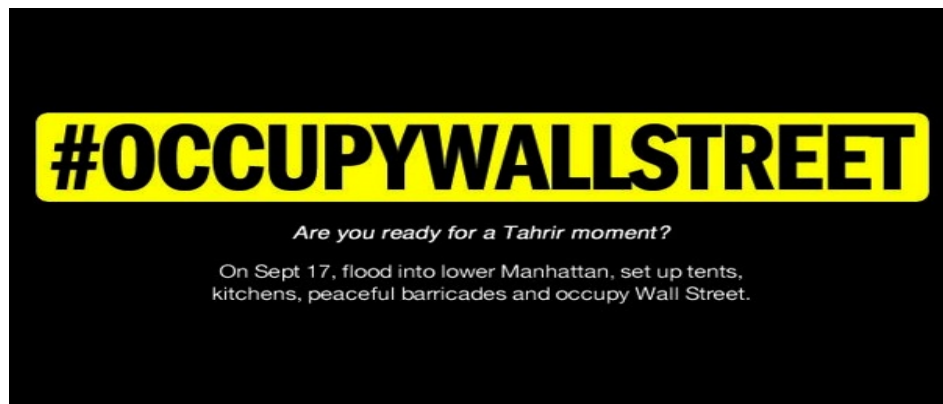
Should it surprise us that we, the people, are smarter than the politicians we've elected? Maybe the money machine it takes to get elected these days has discouraged more Mr. Smith's from going to Washington. Or, maybe the Facebook revolution that is connecting the youth and students worldwide has enabled us to circumvent the corporate-owned mass media that controlled the 'message' the moneyed interests wanted us to hear.

In fact, it looks like educated citizens, at least, are way ahead of the politicians in knowing what to change to insure a future for US. It is our government that has been dumbed down, and Main Street has outdistanced the pols because 99 percent or so of US see a decent future slipping away.

So it is no wonder that the so many are staging protests all over the world, as in [#OccupyWallStreet](#). They see politicians who are blatantly ignorant of the most basic science—who ignore global warming and evolution, for instance. Or of basic accounting rules, or a working health care system. It doesn't take a graduate degree to know how to pay down our record debt that is holding back a recovery, or bring down health care costs, yet politicians can't seem to figure it out.

The dumbing down is non-partisan. Even some Democrats are opposing Obama's new American Jobs Bill that would create 1.9 million jobs and grow economic growth an additional 1 percent, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

And [#OccupyWallStreet is nonpartisan](#). Interviewees have stated on NPR and other venues that they didn't want to be labeled Democrat or Republican. Why? Because the winner-take-all American political system needs at least a third party to get around the sclerosis of a two-party system that is locked into their respective ideologies.



How did it start? Back in July, an idea by Kalle Lasn and his colleagues at Adbusters, a nonprofit magazine run by social activists, had started to come together, [said a Washington Post Blog article](#). It was to bring about our own Egyptian Tahrir Square

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protest via the Internet that has been spreading to other cities and other countries. Why has it caught fire?

“They look at the future and see just one big black hole,” said Kalle Lasn, in the Post interview. “They look at a world with climate change that will be much hotter when they get older, at a political crisis and corruption in Washington, at the American democracy not working any more at a time when America is in decline, and at a financial crisis in which the Dow Jones could plummet tomorrow. If we don’t stand up and fight for a different kind of future, they realize, we won’t get one.”

[The list of demands is familiar](#), per CoupMedia.org:

- Restore the Glass Steagall Act repealed in 1999 that separated banks from investment banks that made risky bets.
- Punish the Wall Street wrongdoers who caused the financial markets to crash.
- Give some mortgage relief to the 11 million homeowners with underwater mortgages from the unused \$billions that were set aside for mortgage modification but never used.
- Congress should enact legislation to protect our Democracy by reversing the effects of the Citizens United Supreme Court Decision which essentially said corporations can spend as much as they want on elections.
- Congress should pass the Buffett Rule on fair taxation so the rich and corporations pay their fair share & close corporate tax loop holes and enact a prohibition on hiding funds off shore

The list of demands goes on and on, from Universal Health Care to greater environmental protection, but the intent of #OccupyWallStreet protesters is clear. Bring back the democracy that has been lost to the moneyed special interests. We are seeing a public consciousness that is rising above those private interests that have tried to stamp out the public sector’s interest in a responsive government, and sustainable future growth.

Alas, much of the dumbing down we see is intentional. It is an anti-intellectualism of the far right including the Republican leadership that hopes their electorate, at least, will not notice the world crumbling around them. [Paul Krugman](#), for one, calls it terrifying should one of the anti-intellectuals succeed to the White House.

“It’s a terrible thing when an individual loses his or her grip on reality,” he said. “But it’s much worse when the same thing happens to a whole political party, one that already has the power to block anything the president proposes — and which may soon control the whole government.”

But that doesn’t have to happen. Intelligence will win in the end, if we are to preserve the real world. The dumbing down of government will be reversed when it represents our common intelligence. For what else can bring back hope in any future, but citizens taking back their power?

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