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Listening to the congressional debates over pending legislation is almost surreal in its mind-numbing hypocrisy. Both Republicans and Democrats, whether in the Senate or the House, have the supreme audacity to stand at the podium, one after another, and blame each other for a host of earmarks, excessive spending, and lack of oversight, while simultaneously enacting legislation that has countless earmarks, unprecedented excessive spending, and a complete lack of oversight because any regulatory language has no remedy attached.

Meanwhile, one by one, these unredeemables continue to blame each other, and then proceed with what is in their own interest at our expense. There is still shocking misrepresentation of taxpayers in the current 111th Congress, as there was in the previous 110th, 109th, 108th, and, unfortunately, well before that.

The exhaustive pontificating and blaming of the other party is a deliberate distraction to keep American eyes off the ball, while invasive and destructive legislation continues to be hatched behind closed doors. The public continues to stomach posturing disguised as debate for precious few hours prior to actual voting on too many of these laws. The more important the legislation, the shorter the debate time on the floor. This failure to even pretend to do the job of representative of the people can no longer be tolerated if America is to survive.

It is time to admit the truth and accept responsibility for our current abysmal political condition by assigning the proper weight to American voters! We are the ones ultimately responsible for perpetuating the abusive excesses by politicians and industry executives by continuing to re-elect the congressmen responsible. At the end of the day it is the voters who have consistently given these greedy interlopers a pass to behave with arguably the most destructive conduct in American history by electing them into office, whether by re-election or accepting without question the party's ordained.

There is no denying this. It is voter apathy and inaction, especially throughout the past decade, that, by proxy, condones the excesses, and is as abhorrent as the excesses themselves. Each new administration and Congress draws a line in the sand for the public, and we continue to step over it. Now a new line has been drawn. Are we going to step over this one, too?

Do not tell yourself that there is nothing you can do. That is a complete abdication of your inherent patriotic duty. There is plenty you can do; you just have to get serious about doing it.

Get informed. Be skeptical (especially of mainstream news sources). Don't assume the truth. Investigate both sides of controversies. Read literature and research on the Internet. *Find sources of information that you trust.*
While initially daunting, once you synthesize information and connect the dots for yourself, you'll experience a renewed sense of purpose and a rebirth of patriotism that is totally empowering. You'll also learn that you are not alone. There are many others who are waking to their own profound love of country.

Corruption and excesses are the natural results of a populace submerged in apathy and inaction. At a minimum, you can write your congressmen or, better yet, e-mail each of them. You can also make phone calls to each. You can engage your neighbors and/or peers in some group effort(s) to express your views. You can hold or help hold petition drives to collect signatures on issues, directing your representatives to vote according to your wishes or risk losing the seat. All the contact information for every legislator can be found at Iowa.gov and Illinois.gov. Another invaluable source is Vote-Smart.org.

Once you've done one or all of these things, do it again! Governance is as much the responsibility of individual citizens as it is of those elected to represent us. Consider that at the federal level, we have only to replace 535 men and women with individuals willing to represent we the people, instead of big business and big government. To believe that because Democrats now control both the executive and legislative branches we will enjoy better representation is thoroughly misguided, because so many of the same culprits are still seated, regardless of party.

Face it: Big business *is* big government. These once-opposing factions have morphed into the same entity with the same agenda. The evidence for this abounds, especially as none of the scurrilous failures within the finance industry could ever have occurred without full complicity by our government. The coliseum mentality that pits Democrats against Republicans is purposely designed to keep voters distracted so that we stay in the dark relative to the entrenched, ever-strengthening partnership that exists between big business and big government. Citizens must accept this reality (the merging interests of big business with big government) if we ever hope to change American governance for the better. As one wise person recently observed, "Republicans and Democrats spend all their time trying to beat the other team, instead of changing the game."

The only difference between the Bush administration and the Obama administration is the

difference between corporate welfare (taxpayers' subsidy of big business) and social welfare (taxpayers' subsidy of big government). The lion's share of Bush's bailout of $825 billion went to banks and financial institutions. The lion's share of the Obama's stimulus of $787 billion is going to enlarging government programs and facilities. Each bill funds the interests of a narrow cabal of elite globalists who would see America under its control in the same way as Europe and much of Asia. It is disgraceful that both bills contain billions in earmarks, and that, of course, is where the attention is hypocritically focused at the moment. And all the posturing about transparency and due diligence was egregiously ignored with both bills, with no real consequences for many of the politicians responsible, including the current president.