Peer Learning Session – January 2019

thechisel.com

Don’t just vote, chisel!
Agenda

Who are YOU?

What do you want to change?

How do you go from passion to policy to engagement?

- Who’s using TheChisel
- How does it work?
- How can it help your initiative succeed?
- Best practices
Starting Point: My dad Johnnie Dee

“Stop complaining. Solve the problem.”
His brother: my Uncle Sam

Korea, near Incheon, 1952

“Is it worth fighting for?”
The patron saint: Ben Franklin, and Philly

Master of fusing public and private ideals
44 years running July 4th picnics

“Community service: All shapes and sizes.”
What is TheChisel.com?

The first and only civic engagement platform created to help people and institutions with opposing views find common ground and reach agreement.

TheChisel builds fact-based, consensus-driven solutions across multiple stakeholder groups to benefit all.
TheChisel Theory of Change

Three Steps to Building Trust and Legitimacy

1. Explore Shared Values
2. Establish Common-Ground Facts
3. Design Tactical Solutions

through Civic Engagement
The new pedagogy for changing public policy

Ways to engage

You get straight-up bipartisan facts and proposals and fun graphics. No bias. No jargon. Content is developed with recognized experts from both sides of the aisle working together. Voice your thoughts, engage with experts, and give your feedback to TheChisel community to realize the aspirations of America. Our forefathers had the quill. You have TheChisel. So don’t just vote, chisel!

- CHISELBITS
  Get smart fast on issues important to you

- PROPOSALS
  Give your feedback to improve proposals

- SURVEY
  How does your American Dream compare to others?

- IDEALS
  Take a refresher on American Ideals
Our Founding Fathers had the quill.

You have the chisel.

Intro video:  https://thechisel.com/explore-proposals
Coalitions of like-minded are important, but they are not enough to defend democracy. The most effective coalitions are those that bring together dissimilar—even opposing—views on many issues. They are built not among friends but among adversaries.

—Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, Harvard University, *How Democracies Die*, 2018
Who’s using TheChisel?

POLICY PROPOSALS

Corporate Income Tax

Farm Subsidies

Campaign Finance

ISSUE BACKGROUNDERS (“CHISELBITS”)

Guns

Family Leave
Who else is using TheChisel to build coalitions and engage communities?

COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, AND HIGH SCHOOLS like . . .

Avonworth School District

Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

School of Journalism
University of Missouri

University of San Diego

Williams

Iowa City West High School

THINK TANKS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COUNTRIES like . . .

AMERICANS for Participatory Presidential Primaries

BCG BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

PHILANTHROPYworx

QUILL & SCROLL

R Street

Republic of Armenia
Adaptable, scalable, and iterative—saving time, money, and aggravation

YOUR DRAFT PLAN

THE ISSUE

PROPOSED SOLUTION

THE CONVERSATION

THE VOTE

NAY

YEA

YOUR PLAN OPTIMIZED AND CONSENSUS ACHIEVED

YES. WE AGREE!
Proposal: Counter Big Donor Influence with Small Donor Tax Credits

Our campaign finance system makes fundraising skills and connections to Big Donors – not good policy ideas, desire for public service, or strong connections to constituents – the most important qualification for being elected. If you think that’s bad for American democracy, then explore one way to help solve the problem.
The new pedagogy for changing public policy

THE ISSUE

PROBLEM DEFINED

Our campaign finance system skews public policy outcomes by serving Big Donors at the expense of regular citizens.

Increasing campaign costs cause members of Congress to spend more time fundraising than serving the interests of their constituents and to focus their fundraising on a tiny slice of voters. Many people don't get involved with political campaigns because they feel they can't make an impact – 42% of eligible Americans voted in a Congressional election in 2014, but only 13% contributed to political campaigns. * The current system also discourages qualified candidates who lack access to Big Donors from running.

* Sources: US Census Data, Pew Research Center

BACKGROUND

1. Fewer than 0.5% of eligible voters accounted for 65% of individual campaign contributions in 2014

0.5% of eligible voters made 65% of individual campaign contributions in 2014
THE ISSUE
Organization and experts

EXPERT AUTHORS

US PIRG (PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP) protects American consumers by standing up to powerful interest groups when they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to participate fully in our democratic society. Since 1971, PIRG has worked to counter the influence of big banks, insurers, chemical manufacturers and other powerful special interests. PIRG’s researchers uncover the facts; their staff brings the findings to the public; and their advocates bring the voice of the public to the halls of power.

TAKE BACK OUR REPUBLIC believes that individual participation in the American political system is the best way to preserve and strengthen our liberty. They engage in research, education, and advocacy about returning political power to individuals and ending the system of escalating campaign contributions by corporations, labor unions and special interests that fuels government spending. Take Back believes politicians should be responsive to the people, not to money, special interests seeking government subsidies and special treatment at taxpayers’ expense.

Andre Delatte
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - US PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
A resident of Chicago, Andre Delatte has served as Executive Director of US PIRG since 2007; he also heads the US PIRG Education Fund and is the National Campus Director for the Student PIRGs.

Previously, Mr. Delatte served as the National Campus Director for the Student PIRGs. During his tenure, the campus program grew in both scope and impact. Ninety staff currently work with more than 1,200 student interns and 12,500 volunteers on more than 100 campuses. Since 1997, the PIRGs have added chapters at nine campuses, increased funding for the program through student membership dues, and attracted grant support from such foundations as The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Open Society Institute.

Under Mr. Delatte’s leadership, PIRG campus chapters have also launched several new initiatives, including the New Voters Project, Make Textbooks Affordable campaign, the Affordable Higher Education campaign, and the Energy Service Corps. The New Voters Project alone has achieved enormous success, resulting in 3.4 million new young voters in 2008. Intensive follow-up studies confirm that the Project also helped boost young voter turnout.

Early in his career, Mr. Delatte served as organizing director for California PIRG (CALPIRG). From 1993 to 1997, he helped build the organization’s student membership to 38,600 people at seven schools, while overseeing CALPIRG’s many student programs and projects, including efforts on campaign finance reform, recycling, clean air and forest preservation.

Mr. Delatte is a 1989 graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. While attending the school, he volunteered with CALPIRG and was elected chair of CALPIRG’s student board of directors in 1986.

Richard Painter
PROFESSOR - UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA LAW SCHOOL
Richard W. Painter is a member of the board of directors of Take Back Our Republic.

He received his BA summa cum laude in history from Harvard University and his JD from Yale University, where he was an editor of the
THE ISSUE

Background ready for PR, journalist

PROBLEM DEFINED
Our campaign finance system skews public policy outcomes by serving Big Donors at the expense of regular citizens.

Increasing campaign costs cause members of Congress to spend more time fundraising than serving the interests of their constituents and to focus their fundraising on a tiny slice of voters. Many people don’t get involved with political campaigns because they feel they can't make an impact – 42% of eligible Americans voted in a Congressional election in 2014, but only 13% contributed to political campaigns. The current system also discourages qualified candidates with middle-class incomes from running.

* Source: Census Data, Pew Research Center

BACKGROUND
1. Fewer than 0.5% of eligible voters accounted for 65% of individual campaign contributions in 2014
2. Incumbents have a huge advantage over challengers in raising money
3. 90% of Congressional incumbents were re-elected in 2014 despite Congress' 14% approval rating
4. Fundraising is a barrier to entry for potentially great new candidates
5. Our campaign finance system results in skewed policy outcomes
6. There is federal and state precedent for giving tax credits for political contributions
7. Key campaign finance definitions and court rulings

GO DEEPER

Federal Election Commission Campaign Statistics
THE ISSUE

Share, engage

Incumbents outraise challengers 5:1 in the House and 7:1 in the Senate

Source: Federal Election Commission
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THE ISSUE

Build credibility with linked sources: articles, videos, studies, documents, websites

Federal Election Commission Campaign Statistics
Website details campaign finance data from 1975-2015.

The Money Chase: Moving from Big Money Dominance in the 2014 Midterms to a Small Donor Democracy
Adam Lioz, Karen Shanton, Emma Beeboor, Michael Russo and Dan Smith - PIRG Report (2016)
Analysis of the cost of running a competitive race in the 2014 Congressional elections and the source of these funds. Authors profile seemingly qualified candidates from both major parties who are not selling in DC today in part due to having been out-raised by their opponents.

Taxes and Political Contributions
Take Back Our Republic - Take Back Our Republic Educational Paper (2015)
http://takeback.org/educational-papers/#taxes
Recommends tax credits for political contributions as a way to encourage more people to become involved in the political process and at the same time remind candidates that the source of their power is the people.

Participation and Campaign Finance: The Case for a Federal Tax Credit
David H. Gans - Constitutional Accountability Center Issue Brief (2014)
https://theusconstitution.org/sites/default/files/briefs/Participation_and_Campaign_Finance-The_Case_for_a_Federal_Tax_Credit.pdf
This Issue Brief discusses one legislative reform that would encourage more people to donate to a candidate of choice: a federal tax credit of up to $200 for individuals contributing to a candidate or party.

Toward a Small Donor Democracy: The Past and Future of Incentives for Small Political Contributions
http://www.uspirg.org/sites/uspirg/files/reports/Toward_A_Small_Donor_Democracy_USPIRG.pdf
The report discusses money’s impact on elections and recommends providing public incentives for small political contributions to help average Americans play a more meaningful role in growing the pool of individuals with resources to get elected.

Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America
Martin Gilens - Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America (2013)
http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9836.html
Affluence and Influence, written by a professor of politics at Princeton, explores how political inequality in the United States has evolved over the last several decades and how this growing disparity has been shaped by interest groups, parties, and elections. The book won the 2013 Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award.
THE SOLUTION

Your proposed actions, results, budget

THE SOLUTION

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- Set up an online primary like a massive open tennis tournament
- "Seed" participants—both voters and candidates—based on their "political profiles"
- Choose candidates that appeal to your own political profile rather than a prepackaged party platform
- Phase 1: A practice period followed by preliminary rounds
- Phase 2: Round-robin debate toward a unifying center
- Mind the housekeeping and technical details

EXPECTED RESULTS

- By embracing technology purposefully we mitigate unintended technological disruption
  - As things stand, it appears that new technology has done more to hinder than help us in picking Presidential nominees that reflect our preferences. But that may be because we have reacted to technology more or less randomly and spasmodically. We haven’t embraced it intelligently and purposefully, much less attempted to exploit its best possibilities. If artfully deployed along the lines described above, there is good reason to believe that electronic media may not only help us fix traditional primaries. Media can help us gain something primaries never could: an intimate, two-way encounter between voter and candidate. Media, paradoxically, can help us choose Presidents in a way that is relatively immediate.
  - The system balances old and new forces
  - The birth of a nonpartisan party

BUDGET

According to one CTO recently consulted, the software for this online nomination platform may cost at least $1 million to engineer. But the larger operation, including staff and legal services, will need more and more funding to keep up with expansion, perhaps $5 million to finance a single presidential campaign season. The good news is that, as it expands, the system would be self-funding through entry fees and donations. To be ready for the 2020 Presidential election, there is no time to waste: assembling a competent software engineering team needs to happen at the earliest possible date.
JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Comments, filters, building community
JOIN THE CONVERSATION
Profile page, building community

TAX: Reform Corporate Income Tax - v2.0 10/17/16 update/PROPOSAL ARCHIVED March 15, 2018
Many thanks for your comment. Although there is no way to determine the precisely optimal tax rate, we believe that 15 percent strikes a reasonable balance between attracting investment to the United States while collecting some revenue from foreign investors. We would like to have a lower rate than other countries to affirmatively draw investment to the United States. The 15 percent rate also allows the plan to achieve revenue and distributional neutrality. The mechanism for changing the rate is set forth in the Constitution - Congress and the president can change it at any time through the legislative process.

TAX: Reform Corporate Income Tax - v2.0 10/17/16 update/PROPOSAL ARCHIVED March 15, 2018
Many thanks for your comment. The 15 percent tax would offer the advantage of neutrality between debt and equity holdings by non-profits. We expect the total tax burden on nonprofits to be roughly unchanged from current law, under which they bear a 35 percent (indirect) tax on equity holdings and no tax on debt holdings.
VOTE

Your voice has been heard.
Thank you for voting on this proposal.
You may change your vote or engage in this proposal's conversation any time before May 15, 2019

Your vote will not be visible to the public.
TheChisel Process

Adaptable, scalable, and iterative—saving time, money, and aggravation

YOUR DRAFT PLAN

THE ISSUE → PROPOSED SOLUTION → THE CONVERSATION → THE VOTE

NAY

YEA

YOUR PLAN OPTIMIZED AND CONSENSUS ACHIEVED

YES. WE AGREE!
Ready to create your own proposal?

Welcome to Chisellabs

Sound public policy is pragmatic, compassionate, and constitutional
If you can type and upload photos, you can create a proposal on TheChisel
How does TheChisel process strengthen your proposal and benefit your organization?

- Showcases your experts and branding
- Helps you develop and transform your proposal in a fun, engaging, substantive way
- Educates the community and decision-makers
- Tests your ideas and provides you feedback
- Manages for worst-case scenarios
- Improves your ideas and likelihood of success
- Generates buy-in

*Plus, it’s free to use!*
Want to generate understanding of, engagement with, and **broader and deeper support of your proposal**? Then promote your proposal by using or posting the graphics and your unique proposal URL through your:

**Communications**
- Social media programming
- E-newsletters
- Email lists and listservs
- Press releases
- Print publications
- Brochures
- Media interviews
- Conference presentations
- Website

**Meetings and Presentations**
- Members of Congress
- State legislatures and committees
  - City councils
  - Zoning boards
- Planning commissions
- School boards
- Fire and police departments
- Public utility boards
- . . . . and their aides
Best practices for creating effective proposals

1. Be concise
2. Stick to the facts
3. Use primary sources
4. Quantify the variables
5. Add visuals
6. Consider multiple perspectives
7. Dissect the possibilities
8. Welcome feedback and engage with your readers
9. Be respectful of others
10. Have fun!
What are commonalities in the liberal and conservative media’s priorities and concerns?

Example: The growing US opioid epidemic

LIBERAL

The New York Times - “Addressing America’s Opioid Epidemic” Sep. 21, 2017


Think Progress - “Sessions opioid speech keeps focus squarely on users and doctors, lets drugmakers off easy” Sep. 22, 2017

Vox - “The opioid epidemic, explained” Aug. 10, 2017

Washington Post - “America’s opioid problem is so bad it’s cutting into U.S. life expectancy” Sep. 20, 2017

CONSERVATIVE

National Review - “The Opioid Crisis Can’t Be Blamed on Big Pharma Alone” Sep 20, 2017

Fox News - “Solving the opioid crisis must start in the doctor’s office” Sep. 20, 2017

Newsmax - “Is Obamacare Fueling the Opioid Epidemic?” Sep. 1, 2017

Breitbart - “Luther Strange Backed by Members of Big Pharma Group Pushing Prescription Opioids Amid Epidemic in Alabama” Sep. 24, 2017

Washington Times - “D.C. attorney general leads multi-state investigation into opioid manufacturers” Sep. 19, 2017

INDEPENDENT - Business Insider - “There’s a clear link between America’s opioid crisis and unemployment” Aug 26, 2017
How do we think about the opioid crisis in context?

The rate of US opioid deaths has tripled since 1999

Death rates have remained flat or decreased for diabetes, breast cancer, motor vehicles, and HIV/AIDS

The rate of high-risk opioid use has remained flat for Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, and Greece.


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Still need help?

CONTACT

support@thechisel.com
Q & A

CONTACT

support@thechisels.com
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*let’s not do a live demo because something always goes wrong*