



Sent: December 17, 2008

Subject: Revitalizing Democracy

On the eve of the November 4th presidential election, we updated you about efforts by civic leaders and advocates to map out a reform agenda for a strong democracy. See our [home page](#) with links to the *Strengthening Democracy* report and the original framing document. The agenda calls for national attention to electoral reform, community development/building, **and deliberative democracy**.

Since the release of that report, the organizations driving that agenda continue to push for change by advocating for a new White House Office of Civic Engagement, national dialogues on issues of public concern, and intra- and intergovernmental collaboration. Like these reformers, we at TDI are excited about the high level of civic engagement, enthusiasm, and voter turnout for this election. We too want to keep the fires burning.

We encourage you to read the report and endorse it. The lead organizations are seeking endorsements from individuals and organizations - see [here](#).

We also want to direct you to a special report issued this week by *The American Prospect* entitled [Revitalizing Democracy](#). This issue contains articles on systemic change, improving voting systems, campaign finance, and citizen engagement in political deliberations.

In "[More Than the Vote](#)," authors Joe Goldman (AmericaSpeaks) and Stuart Comstock-Gay (Demos), write,

In recent years, democracy has come to be defined very narrowly, in terms of elections and the right to vote. But America also has a strong belief in participatory democracy -- where people help make the decisions that affect their lives beyond Election Day. Today, these two concepts are often separated. They are the subject of different reform communities, different legislative efforts, different constituencies. But to invigorate democracy, they must be coupled. People need a means to become involved in the decisions that affect their lives. We must also lower barriers to meaningful elections and inspire people to cast their votes.

We couldn't agree more. We hope you will read these articles, share them with your colleagues and students, consider the many recommendations within, and find ways to contribute to the movement to revitalize democracy.