

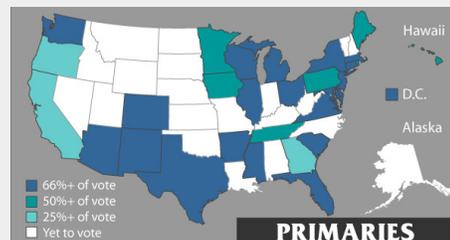
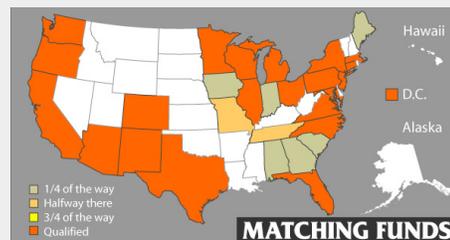
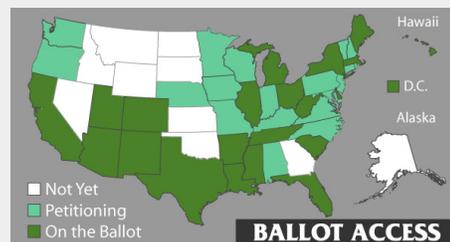


**A Green New Deal for America**  
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## TEXT: People's State of the Union

### A PEOPLE'S STATE OF THE UNION: A GREEN NEW DEAL FOR AMERICA

*Presented by Dr. Jill E. Stein, Green Party presidential candidate, January 2012 ~ [www.JillStein.org](http://www.JillStein.org)*

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to talk with you tonight. We're here to talk about the actual state of our nation, and how we can reclaim the promise of our democracy and the peaceful, just green future we deserve. We have heard President Obama deliver his State of the Union Address. And we heard the Republican response. Each claims to have the answer, and that the other was an obstacle to progress.

But the truth is both sides – despite the rhetoric – are responsible for the harsh policies driving our economy and our democracy into deep crisis. Simply put, they place the interests of Wall Street ahead of the needs of everyday people and the long term welfare of our nation.

So tonight, we are going to talk about the major problems that are not being solved by the political establishment. And we will focus on key game-changing solutions that have been kept off the table for too long.

As we speak tonight, our economy is not working for the vast majority of Americans.

One hundred and forty-six million people – that's nearly one in every two Americans – is now living below or near the poverty level. The stress falls hardest on our most vulnerable and disadvantaged, with the majority of children, half of our elders, three quarters of Latinos, and two thirds of Alaskan Americans living in or near poverty.

Last year, one million Americans lost their health insurance, raising the numbers of the uninsured to almost 50 million of our people. Over 6 million Americans have lost their homes to foreclosure.

Thirty million college students and recent graduates are trapped in the financial prison of student loan debt. Most students must take out costly loans to meet the skyrocketing cost of tuition. Yet paying off those loans is almost impossible as young people face double-digit unemployment and much lower pay – 40% less – than their parents' generation received for the same work.

Overall, nearly 25 million Americans are unemployed or unable to find full time work. And even those who have jobs are struggling, because wages have been declining for American workers, and are now lower on average than in 1996. Household income has fallen faster since the official end of the recession than during the recession itself, because the so-called "recovery" is made up of mostly low paying jobs.

Over seven million are under "correctional supervision", 10 times greater than in 1965, as incarcerating poor people – disproportionately of color – has become big business with the failed war on drugs. And more African American males are now locked up in US prisons than were slaves in 1850.

America's creed is "With Liberty and Justice for All." That is a creed of Equality. But right now we are experiencing the worst economic inequality in our nation's history. The gap between the very rich and the many poor has never been so great. The

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wealthiest 1% in America now own as much wealth as 90% of all Americans. Those over 65 hold, on average, 47 times as much wealth as heads of households who are under 35. White families own, on average, twenty times as much as Black families. Such inequality is unacceptable, unconscionable\* and un-American.

While the economy does not work for the vast majority, it does work for a few; at least for now.

The owners of the big corporations are enjoying historic profits, with a record \$2 trillion in cash reserves at home and \$1.4 trillion overseas. Though the corporate elite are richer than ever, they are contributing less than ever to the tax base that keeps the infrastructure going that their profits rely on – schools, transportation, clean air and water, safe food, the legal system, the police, and the military. In fact, 30 major corporations paid no corporate income tax at all over the last three years, despite making \$160 billion in profits. And the big banks – whose fraud and greed crashed the economy to start with – are bigger than ever, with the six biggest banks now controlling capital equivalent\* to 60% of all economic activity in this country.

To be clear: the greed for record profits is what got us into this mess in the first place. Of course it wasn't greed alone. It was the capture of both political parties by Wall Street and other powerful corporations that buy influence with campaign contributions and lobbyists. Using this routine currency of American policy making, Democrats and Republicans alike dismantled protections against waste, fraud and abuse by Wall Street.\* This bipartisan cooperation enabled greed to crash the economy. That not only killed jobs, it also depressed tax revenues – which has been one of the biggest drivers of the federal deficit. That deficit has also been made worse by unconscionable spending choices: notably the 4 trillion dollars spent on the illegal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and trillions more spent on the bloated Pentagon budget, tax giveaways for the wealthy, and bailouts for Wall Street.

And now, the political establishment in the White House, Congress, and state governments are making matters far worse, doing the opposite of what we need, by inflicting needless, harsh austerity policies on the country.

This is bad for people, bad for the economy, and completely unnecessary. When they say there's not enough money, they mean there's not enough money for YOU. Instead of austerity, we can end the Wall Street bailouts, cut the bloated military and tax the bloated rich.

These austerity cuts mean that Americans are losing jobs. From Scott Walker to Andrew Cuomo, and yes, Barack Obama, the result of these austerity cuts is layoffs for teachers, nurses, child and eldercare workers, firefighters, janitors, bus drivers and all the people who keep our communities educated, healthy, and moving forward.

Worse, these austerity cuts are hurting the people who receive those services. Students, the disabled, the elderly, the ill, the unemployed, the hungry – these are the Americans who are suffering because of austerity cuts to education, financial aid, health care, fuel assistance, homeless shelters, prevention, food support, and more.

All of this adds up to the ongoing crisis we face – the cumulative result of many years – decades – of policies under both Democratic and Republican presidents that enrich the few while exploiting the many.

The political establishment is telling us there's little we can do to change our direction. I don't believe it and I suspect you don't either.

It is time to break free from the old economy, and the old politics.

It's time for a Green New Deal for America.

## **A GREEN NEW DEAL**

The Green New Deal is an emergency four part program of specific solutions for moving America quickly out of crisis into the secure green future.

We call these solutions a Green “New Deal” because they are inspired by the New Deal programs that helped us out of the Great Depression of the 1930s. And these solutions are “Green” because they create an economy that makes our communities sustainable and healthy.

First, we will guarantee the economic rights of all Americans, beginning with the right to a job at a living wage for every American willing and able to work.

Second, we will transition to a sustainable, green economy for the 21st century, by adopting green technologies and sustainable production.

Third, we will reboot and reprogram the financial sector so that it serves everyday people and our communities, and not the other way around.

Fourth, we will protect these gains by expanding and strengthening our democracy so that our government and our economy finally serve We the People.

Take courage. Because of the urgency of these times, I am asking you personally to take courage and to be willing to believe that these major changes to our economy and politics are within our reach.

### **THE ECONOMIC BILL OF RIGHTS**

For this reason, The Green New Deal **begins with an Economic Bill of Rights that recognizes our rights to an economy that serves people.** This means that everyone willing and able to work has the right to a job at a living wage. All of us have the right to quality education, health care, utilities, and housing. Each of us has the right to unionize, to fair taxation, and to fair trade.

The promise of an Economic Bill of Rights came out of the last period of widespread, extreme economic hardship, the Great Depression. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his 1944 State of the Union address said that “true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence.”

FDR's promise lives on through the United Nations that Eleanor Roosevelt was central to founding. And twenty years later, the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. raised up the call for an Economic Bill of Rights once again, insisting that it was needed to free America of the continuing misery of racism and poverty.

The Roosevelts, the Kings, and the tens of millions of Americans who have struggled for these rights of freedom from economic slavery – their cause is our urgent cause today. Our country cannot truly move forward until the roots of inequality are pulled up, and the seeds of a new, healthier economy are planted. The Green New Deal does that by fulfilling the promise of the Economic Bill of Rights.

We will end unemployment in America once and for all by ensuring a job at a living wage for every American willing and able to work. This includes jobs that improve our environment, like clean manufacturing, organic agriculture, public transportation and clean renewable energy. It also includes jobs that provide urgently needed social infrastructure – for public education, health care, child care, elder care, youth programs, and arts and culture.

Our Full Employment Program will create 16 million jobs through a community-based direct employment initiative that will be nationally funded, locally controlled, and democratically protected against conflicts of interest and pay-to-play influence peddling. The program will directly create jobs in the public and the private sector. Instead of going to an unemployment office when you can't find work, you can simply go to the local employment office to find a public sector job.

These 16 million jobs in the Full Employment Program is eight times the number sought in Obama's recent jobs proposal. In addition, our program indirectly creates another eight million jobs in the private sector, as paychecks are spent in our local economies, consumer demand surges, and businesses hire new employees to meet that demand.

This program will not be run from Washington D.C.. Our job in Washington will be limited to insuring that you have a say in how this program runs. Local communities will be responsible for putting this jobs program into practice through a process of broad community input and democratic decision-making involving you, your neighbors and local government – not corrupting monied interests. Pay-to-play prohibitions will ensure that anyone participating in decision-making has not received campaign contributions or lobbying favors from proponents or applicants.

Using this process, counties and municipalities can plan projects and jobs in public works and public services. These will be "stored" in local job banks where they will stand ready to take up any slack in private sector employment.

The Green New Deal's Full Employment Program will change what it means to be a working person in America. It ends the agonizing wait for a business recovery that's not in the cards. It creates jobs that can never be produced by trickle-down giveaways to the rich. And it will move our economy decisively because it will put paychecks back in people's pockets and put customers back in stores. And all by meeting needs of our communities and making them healthy, just and sustainable.

Full Employment is the first, and central part of the Green New Deal's Economic Bill of Rights. But life is more than work and paychecks. We must fulfill the full promise of the Economic Bill of Rights.

Therefore, my administration will honor the right to quality health care through an improved Medicare for All program. This will provide comprehensive care for all. It will be free to consumers at the point of delivery, but will save money overall by reducing the massive wasteful health insurance bureaucracy and by stabilizing medical inflation. And it restores freedom of choice so you pick your health care provider, and your care is decided by you and your provider- not by a profiteering insurance executive. This will be federally financed and democratically controlled.

We will honor the right to a tuition-free, quality public education from pre-school through college at public institutions. And we will forgive student loan debt left over from the current era of unaffordable college education.

We will honor the right to decent affordable housing, including an immediate halt to all foreclosures and evictions. We will create a federal bank with local branches to take over homes with distressed mortgages and either restructure the mortgages to affordable levels, or if the occupants cannot afford a mortgage, rent homes to the occupants. We will expand rental and home ownership assistance, create ample public housing, and capital grants to non-profit developers of affordable housing until all people can obtain decent housing at no more than 25% of their income.

We will honor workers rights, including the right to a living wage, a safe workplace, to fair trade, and to organize a union at work without fear of firing or reprisal. The idea that the Bill of Rights does not apply to you when you enter your workplace is an idea that says that you are only free when you are not working. That's not acceptable in America.

We will honor the right to accessible and affordable utilities – heat, electricity, phone, internet, and public transportation – which will be made available to all through democratically run, publicly owned utilities that operate at cost, not for profit.

We will honor that oldest of American rights, the right to fair taxation that's

distributed in proportion to ability to pay. And we will make any corporate tax subsidies transparent by putting these subsidies in public budgets where they can be scrutinized, not hidden as tax breaks in complicated tax codes.

In honoring these rights we will create the basis for a new economy – an economy that is stable and not vulnerable to speculation – an economy that is prosperous and that pays for itself through the creation of real wealth that is distributed throughout America – an economy that is no longer dragged down by big corporations preying on the elderly, the poor, the disabled, the unemployed, and the young, but which instead supports small business, individual liberty, and local, thriving communities.

## **A GREEN TRANSITION**

The second priority of the Green New Deal is a Green Transition Program that will convert the old, gray economy into the new green economy. We will do this by shifting to green technologies and sustainable ways of making things. We must do this right now because the environment is the foundation for our economy – and for life itself. And that environment is deeply imperiled.

The benefits we get from the environment dwarf those that come to us from human economic activity – even when measured strictly in dollar terms. What we usually call “the environment” is really another word for Mother Nature’s economy. A business model that destroys our forests, our fisheries, our topsoil, our water supplies, our health, and our climate – is a business model that will inevitably collapse upon itself. And an economy that is addicted to ever-increasing supplies of oil is not only doomed, it is a national security disaster just waiting to happen.

At the recent UN climate conference in South Africa, the Obama administration worked to delay international agreements on carbon emissions until 2020. This delay will allow critical climate tipping points to be passed that will accelerate warming to the point it cannot be controlled. As renown NASA scientist James Hanson puts it, delaying action to aggressively lower carbon would mean game over for the climate and therefore for civilization as we know it. For that reason the Green New Deal will address these problems with a World War II-scale mobilization to transform the way we produce and use energy. We will provide leadership along the way to binding international agreements that will return the carbon burden in our atmosphere to safe levels. We will proceed with utmost urgency, and put the United States 30 years ahead of the global curve. Let the rest of the world catch up with us!

If you are someone who wants to start a small business or cooperative in the green economy or in providing for other vital community needs, you will find an ally in the Green Transition Program. Right now, our federal government subsidizes the rich agribusiness corporations and the oil, mining, nuclear, coal and timber giants at the expense of small farmers, small business, and our children’s environment. We spend tens of billions every year moving our economy in the wrong direction. We will instead redirect that money to the real job creators who make our communities more healthy, sustainable and secure at the same time.

The Green Transition Program will provide grants and low-interest loans to grow green businesses and cooperatives, with an emphasis on small, locally-based companies that keep the wealth created by local labor circulating in the community rather than being drained off to enrich absentee investors. These types of businesses provide a solid foundation for our prosperity – a prosperity that will not be offshored, outsourced or downsized, and that will be unaffected by the collapse of foreign credit markets.

This Green Transition Program will also redirect research money from fossil fuels and other dead-end industries toward for research in wind, solar and geothermal. We will invest in research in sustainable, nontoxic materials, closed-loop cycles that eliminate waste and pollution, as well as organic agriculture, permaculture, and

sustainable forestry.

The 16 million jobs created by the Full Employment Program mentioned earlier will be the core of the Green Transition Program. It will provide jobs in sustainable energy, transportation and manufacturing infrastructure: clean renewable energy generation, energy efficiency retrofitting, intra-city mass transit and inter-city railroads, weatherization, "complete streets" that safely encourage bike and pedestrian traffic, regional food systems based on sustainable organic agriculture, and clean manufacturing of the goods needed to support this sustainable economy.

A new world really is possible. We can, and must, shift to an economy in which 100% of our electricity is generated renewably. We can and must leave the old economy behind - which was based on mining, extraction, and dirty dangerous expensive nuclear power. We can and must stop poisoning ourselves, our children, and other living beings.

When we make the investment required to clean up our emissions and waste, our economy will be revitalized by the wealth that stays in America rather than being sent abroad to buy foreign oil. Our national security will no longer be vulnerable to disruption of oil supplies, and we won't have to send our people abroad to fight wars for oil. Health care costs will go down because the foundations of a green economy - clean energy, healthy food, pollution prevention, and active transportation - are also the foundations of human health. Or to put it another way, greening our economy also reduces the drivers of preventable chronic disease, which consume a staggering 75% of health care costs. All in all, this is an investment that will pay off enormously as we build healthy, just, sustainable communities.

#### **REAL FINANCIAL REFORM**

Speaking of investments, the takeover of our economy by big banks and well-connected financiers has destabilized both our democracy and our economy. We do not need and should not tolerate the dictatorship of bankers and financiers who manipulate money without doing productive work and who enrich themselves at the expense of real businesses and real working people. It's time to take Wall Street out of the driver's seat and to free the truly productive segments of working America to make this economy work for all of us.

That is why a third priority of the Green New Deal is real financial reform, beginning by breaking up the big banks and retaking our monetary policy from the Federal Reserve Banks. We will reboot and reprogram the financial sector so that everyday Americans no longer need to live in fear of periodic crashes that are not of our making.

The financial reforms of the original New Deal in the 1930s turned a failing unregulated system into a stable regulated system that did not experience a financial crisis for half a century. Then in the 1990s, as the establishment parties cozied up to this deep-pocketed industry, the New Deal protections were tossed aside in a new era of deregulation. This misguided deregulation resulted in ever bigger and more frequent financial crises, including the financial collapse of 2008.

Currently U.S. banks and corporations have huge cash assets that are badly needed for business expansion. Yet lending and investment for business expansion is stagnant. Meanwhile, financial institutions are profiting from speculative trading in stocks, bonds, commodities, currencies, and derivatives. They are rearranging who owns existing productive assets instead of investing to create new productive assets. The rich get richer while the economy stagnates, unemployment persists, and needed investments in infrastructure and production are not being made.

The greed, speculation and fraud that crashed the economy continues unabated as we suffer through a recovery for the 1% alone. And it continues to threaten further

recovery with backdoor bailouts, and the very real potential to tank the economy again.

There is currently a bipartisan failure in Washington to pursue the vitally needed reforms that this will require. The watered down Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform did not fix the massive problems with the deregulated financial status quo. Wall Street and the big banking interests continue to steer the economy just as they did before the Great Financial Crash of 2008. Bank assets are actually more concentrated than before the crash. Depository commercial banking, speculative investment banking, and insurance remain intermingled under giant bank holding companies. The financial system is as over-leveraged and vulnerable as ever. Many big banks survive only by hiding their liabilities and avoiding honest bookkeeping. Yet the officers of these bailed-out firms continue to pay themselves record level bonuses and to devise new schemes for skimming profits from Main Street in order to enrich Wall Street.

It's time to really reform Wall Street so that working America has a chance. Here is what the financial reforms of the Green New Deal will do.

First, the debt overhang holding back the economy must be deleveraged by reducing homeowner and student debt burdens. An immediate halt to all foreclosures and evictions – as called for in the Economic Bill of Rights – will be coupled to the creation of a federal bank with local branches to take over distressed mortgages and either restructure the mortgages to affordable levels, or if the occupants cannot afford a mortgage, rent homes to the occupants. Forgiving student debt will be coupled to tuition-free higher education on the model of the post World War II GI Bill, which has paid for itself more than seven times over in increased government revenues from higher productivity, according to a study by the congressional Joint Economic Committee in the 1980s.

We will democratize monetary policy to bring about public control of the money supply and credit creation. This means we'll nationalize the private bank-dominated Federal Reserve Banks and place them under a Monetary Authority within the Treasury Department, along the lines proposed in the National Emergency Employment Defense – or NEED – Act of 2011 (HR 2990), sponsored by Representatives Dennis Kucinich and John Conyers.

Through the Green New Deal's financial reforms, the federal government will retake its powers to create money, as granted by the Constitution in Article I, Section 8.

That's just a beginning. Through the financial reforms of the Green New Deal:

- We will break up the oversized banks that are “too big to fail.”
- We will end taxpayer-funded bailouts for banks, insurers, and other financial companies. We'll use the FDIC resolution process for failed banks to reopen them as public banks where possible after failed loans and underlying assets are auctioned off.
- We will adequately regulate all financial derivatives and require them to be traded on open exchanges.
- We will restore the Glass-Steagall separation of depository commercial banks from speculative investment banks.
- We will establish a 90% tax on bonuses for bailed out bankers.
- We will support the formation of federal, state, and municipal public-owned banks that function as non-profit utilities.

Under the Green New Deal we will start building a financial system that is open, honest, stable, and serves the real economy rather than the phony economy of high finance.

## A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY

We have addressed the first three elements of the Green New Deal:

First, an Economic Bill of Rights, beginning with a Full Employment Program.

Second, a Green Transition Program to create a sustainable economy with green technologies and sustainable ways of making things.

Third, real financial reform that reboots the financial sector.

We won't get those vital reforms without a fourth and final set of reforms to give us a real, functioning democracy. We don't have that in America today. And so, just as we are replacing the old economy with a new one, we need a new politics to restore the promise of American democracy.

When corporations and big money dominate our elections, government of, for, and by the people cannot take root. For this reason, we urgently need to Amend our Constitution to make clear that corporations are not persons and money is not speech. Those rights belong to living, breathing human beings like you and me – not to business entities controlled by the wealthy.

The executive branch does not have much of an official role in constitutional reform. But a president certainly can, and should, use the bully pulpit to overturn the Un-American idea that the 1% have rights as a class that the rest of us are denied. And a president can, and should, support Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s proposed "Right to Vote Amendment," to clarify to the Supreme Court that yes, we do have a constitutional right to vote.

The Green New Deal also requires the enactment of the Voter Bill of Rights. This 10-point platform is the calling card of the modern day voting rights movement, and became a consensus agenda in the years following the stolen presidential election of 2000. Enactment of the Voter Bill of Rights will guarantee us a voter-marked paper ballot for all voting, and require that all votes are counted before election results are released. It will also:

- Replace partisan oversight of elections with non-partisan election commissions.
- Celebrate our democratic aspirations by making Election Day a national holiday.
- Bring simplified, safe same-day voter registration to the nation so that no qualified voter is barred from the polls.
- Do away with so-called "winner take all" elections in which the "winner" does not have the support of most of the voters, and replace that system with instant runoff voting and proportional representation, systems most advanced countries now use to good effect.
- Replace big money control of elections with full public financing and free and equal access to the airwaves.
- Guarantee equal access to the ballot and to the debates to all qualified candidates.
- Abolish the Electoral College and implement direct election of the President.
- Restore the vote to ex-offenders who've paid their debt to society.
- Enact Statehood for the District of Columbia so that those Americans have representation in Congress and full rights to self rule like the rest of us.

Of course, as the great Progressive Wisconsinite, Fighting Bob La Follette taught us, "Democracy is a life," and not merely limited to elections. For this reason, the Green New Deal goes beyond the Voter Bill of Rights to strengthen our country's movement toward democracy in all areas of public life.

The Green New Deal will strengthen democracy at the local and state level. Just last week, a federal court told the people of Vermont that they could not prevent a dangerous nuclear power plant from operating in their state. The court did this on the basis of a doctrine known as “field preemption.” Basically, the State of Vermont is barred – or “preempted” – from regulating the nuclear power industry because a federal judge says that the industry is the concern of the federal government only. Over the past thirty years, we have seen public safety, food labeling, human rights, immigrant rights, drug policy, and other reforms “preempted” in the same way.

The Green New Deal establishes federal environmental and human rights protections as a floor, and not a ceiling, to action by our state and local governments. To do this, we will commission a thorough review of federal preemption law and its impact on the practice of local democracy in the United States. This review will put at its center the “democracy question” – that is, what level of government is most open to democratic participation and most suited to protecting democratic rights. Implementation of the Green New Deal will put this question at its center, and always works to bring government closest to the people.

Democracy doesn’t just happen in our political system. It happens in our economy, every day. Today, more than 500,000 American workers are employed by cooperatives, over 120,000,000 people are member-owners of consumer cooperatives, nearly 40,000 businesses are organized as cooperatives, and another 11,000 which are not coops are employee-stock-owned companies known as ESOPs. Coops have been shown to be very effective producers of jobs and wealth. Yet the federal government does not reward cooperative development in the same way it supports private business corporations; the corporations have their U.S. Department of the Treasury, while coops have no such entity.

The Green New Deal creates a Corporation for Economic Democracy, a new federal corporation (like the Corporation for Public Broadcasting) to provide publicity, training, education, and direct financing for cooperative development and for democratic reforms to make government agencies, private associations, and business enterprises more participatory.

And speaking of the public broadcasting, the Green New Deal strengthens media democracy by expanding federal support for locally-owned broadcast media and local print media.

Finally, we must protect our liberty from those who would frighten us into surrendering our freedoms in the name of security. The Green New Deal will repeal the Patriot Act and those parts of the National Defense Authorization Act that violate our civil liberties. It will prohibit the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI from conspiring with local police forces to suppress our freedoms of assembly and of speech. And it will end the war on immigrants – including the cruel, so-called “secure communities” program – which is terrorizing millions of Americans, both citizens and non-citizen immigrants, on no basis other than their perceived immigration status.

Protecting our liberty requires one additional, important step. Washington and Eisenhower, both generals who became president, warned us about the military industrial complex. They warned us about the dangers of empire.

The Green New Deal includes a 50% reduction in military spending and the withdrawal of U.S. military bases from the over 140 countries in which our military is now located. It calls for restoration of the National Guard as the centerpiece of our system of national defense. It creates a new round of nuclear disarmament initiatives. Overall, it requires shifting from an economy in which the majority – the majority – of our discretionary budget is spent on war and the occupation of other countries, to an economy that provides the secure, just, peaceful future we all deserve.

**COURAGE FOR THE URGENT TASKS OF THESE TIMES**

Tonight I've laid out an agenda for a Green New Deal for America. This agenda would revitalize our democracy and start solving the serious problems that are not being solved by the business-as-usual approach coming out of Washington.

The Green New Deal will end unemployment.

It will honor and enrich the lives of every member of our society.

It will convert our economy from gray to green.

It will end the cycle of financial boom and collapse.

It will allow real democracy to take root.

Securing the Green New Deal depends not on me or the Green Party or some professional politician we see on television. It depends on all of us standing up and declaring that we've had enough of the insider-run big money politics that rules Washington. And it depends on each of us using our concern, our energy, our intelligence to find ways to improve the lives of our community.

This change will never come from the top. It never ever comes from the career politicians or the powerful Washington lobbyists. Real change has to come from the grassroots – from people who work hard every day pounding nails, driving trucks, changing sheets, teaching children, plowing fields, and making the real economy work.

In the traditional State of the Union address, the President of the United States thanks the people he – or she – respects. Tonight, I do so too.

Thank you to the people who struggle against steep odds to keep a roof over their heads, to feed their families and to find jobs when there are few to be found. Thank you to mothers and fathers who work so hard to raise the next generation in challenging times, to the senior citizens who built this country and deserve Social Security and Medicare support in their retirement. Thanks to the public employees who teach our children, keep us safe, care for the needy, and keep the trains running. And thanks to the thousands of you who have already joined me and my campaign team at Jill Stein for President as we all work to take back the promise of our democracy.

Thank you to the young women and men in the democracy movements in Europe and the middle East, especially those who are braving the guns and the tanks on behalf of liberation.

Thank you to the people of Wisconsin, who rose up in the tens, hundreds, and now thousands of thousands to defend and expand their democracy.

Thank you to the occupiers of Wall Street in Manhattan and across the country who continue to prove in these cold months that Thomas Paine's Winter Soldier lives on in America.

Thank you all for giving us the courage to take on the urgent tasks of these times knowing that the future of people, peace and the planet depends on us all.

Let us not rest until we have pulled our nation back from the brink, and until we have secured the peaceful, just, green future we all deserve.

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 **Laura Lichtenstein** commented 5 days ago · [Flag](#)

Instant runoff voting can only be accomplished in a reasonable timeframe by maintaining computer vote counting. It is not necessary for having proportional representation. "Most advanced countries" do not have instant runoff voting. Also it's hard to believe the people's voice is being accurately recorded in those European countries when huge demonstrations opposed the EU and now oppose the bank takeover of their economic policies, but the voting tallies show everyone voting either for the parties that enabled the policies they oppose and rightwing nationalist parties who say very little about economics except for excluding immigrants. The German high court ruled a few years ago that electronic vote counting violated their Constitution's requirement for public vote counts, but somehow that ruling was never enforced. These problematic voting methods are destructive of democracy both here and abroad, and nothing that a party which wants to empower the people should support.

If the Green Party has decided that instant runoff voting necessitating computer vote counting is such a strategic advantage that it trumps the integrity of the count, I want nothing more to do with it.

 **Laura Lichtenstein** commented 5 days ago · [Flag](#)

The 10 points of the voter "Bill of Rights" does not include a promise of same day hand-counted ballots. The whole slide toward the destruction of our democracy started with the problems in Florida w/ evoting and the Supreme Court's ruling not to count all the state's Presidential ballots. Many people have been fooled into thinking that Obama's election proves that high popularity can overcome vote theft. Given that all his economic advisors both before and after the election were members of the international banking community, it would seem that a more correct explanation would be that those in the best position to use the computer counting system to steal such a large election (the rightwing heads of the voting machine companies) were satisfied with an Obama Presidency.

Personally, while I have donated to the campaign and volunteered for the matching funds phonebank, I won't be able to do so for a candidate not onboard with such a critical democracy issue.

 **@pyfgcrl** retweeted [@jillstein2012](#) 14 days ago

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 **Steven Warner** commented 14 days ago · [Flag](#)

Dh Fabian: Why states do what they do will always be intriguing. I have family in WI that have lost pay and benefits as a result of those same decisions. They opposed them as well, but the people of the state have spoken. You just have to wait until the next round of elections to change things. I only say these things because quite frankly, much less is changed by state governments. When Bush was president, he freely used his centralized power for wars, detentions, and a host of other bad decisions that were forced on everyone in the country. That sort of power should not be allowed. Sure, the federal government does have some leeway, but fundamental rights are more often enshrined in state constitutions in far more detail than in federal statues. More argument is not that we don't need the federal government. Rather, it should stay within its carefully enumerated powers and let the states do the rest. The expansion of federal power through supreme court decisions is not acceptable, but we allow it because we agree with one thing the government does and hope it will always be good. When administrations change hands at the federal level, it is much more serious than at the state level with far less accountability.

A handful of people could in theory do what you say in any state. Just as the federal government can suspend habeas corpus, enforce martial law, and strip us of substantial rights. Under what pretext would the federal government intervene, exactly? States set their own rules on elections. It would be an interesting challenge to state power, but you do have a state constitution to protect you. Only the check by the people prevent it. Your state government is infinitely more accessible and representative than the federal government. The people here WI can change everything in the next election.

Your other arguments about corporation are happening on a far greater scale in Washington, including the health care bill that will guarantee a 20% profit to every health insurer in the country.

Local control means your county, your state, and your city make decisions. I am not saying that everyone will always agree on what to do, but we can reduce corruption in Washington by keeping things more local. I'm not saying we will eliminate corruptions, but people can compel change more effectively in their local governments.

I agree that people want Social Security. It is a necessary program for this country to have. I was speaking only to the administration of that program. And social security is not immune. When the money is gone (it is merely a bunch of IOUs right now) and taxes have to go up, I fear a generational clash will undermine much of the program. The younger generation does not think the benefits will remain, yet they will keep paying payroll taxes (oh, and those were cut too...) until they have the political power to make changes. That is another battle all together.

I will end by saying, yet again, that the balance between federal and state governments has been upset many times in the past few decades. We are at the point now where the president can rule as a king on the world stage, able to use the military to intervene anywhere, decree through the vast bureaucracy with executive orders, and assassinate anyone at will. Congress hands out billions to agribusiness, corporations, lobbyists, and some to the people. The Supreme Court is polarized and gives more power to the Congress and the Executive to usurp more unconstitutional power. On balance, the benefits of Social Security (which would probably still survive if we added an amendment), is not worth allowing the federal government to have so much power. It was good talking to you.

 **Dh Fabian** commented 14 days ago · [Flag](#)

Steven Warner, it's not always a good idea to assume what a stranger is thinking. That said, I'm in a state (WI) where decisions made by state govt in recent years have often been so disastrous — largely because those decisions are formed by a rigid ideology and because they are too often wildly disconnected from real life. But things could be much worse (based on the stated wants of those currently in office). When state govt becomes so extreme, federal intervention becomes necessary at some point to protect the fundamental rights of ALL citizens. There needs to be (as our Founders understood) a balance of power, state and federal, to ensure the protection of ordinary people. You talk about “local control,” but what does that mean? If a handful of elected people in Madison decided that WI will no longer have elections, and all decisions will be dictated by the governor, federal govt does, indeed, have the right and responsibility to intervene. Every state is part of a whole, not individual countries. I don't need to talk to people on Social Security about how it works — I am on Social Security. If states alone were in charge, there is no doubt that Social Security would have been wiped out by this generation of legislators, with all of that money funneled into covering the costs of ongoing, massive handouts to corporations. The program is, indeed, complex, but this is what people actually want. It has worked extraordinary well to root out fraud, thereby protecting the program. So, there are numerous related issues here, but the bottom line is that the US has managed to survive this far precisely because of the balance between state and federal govt.

 **Steven Warner** commented 15 days ago · [Flag](#)

Dh Fabian: I see you still do not want to address my point. I am not saying that

federal programs cannot do a good job. I am saying that states can do a BETTER job, and maintain local control. My point about CA and Philly was that because the people are from different states with no common bond, the national Republicans could fabricate an attack on the "other." This would be a lot harder to do if it was a local program, helping local people. I think you are simply scared that states would not do a good job managing your money. You are trapped in the same thinking that allows the feds to take powers not granted to them by the Constitution. I am not arguing against these programs. I am arguing against the federal government setting a one size fits all approach that is far less effective than tailored, local solutions. Under my interpretation, states could go back to the old welfare system, keep the new one, or do something else entirely. There is a chance that Texas might axe welfare completely, but that would be their choice as citizens of that state. Let the local governments govern. That is the place where Greens can be the most successful on these issues.

Please re-read my posts to understand what I am talking about. We would not be any more "dis-united" than we were in the past. States already have wide latitude to handle most of their internal affairs. All of your anecdotes seem to defend some program or another. I'm not debating the federal program itself (some do work well), but only trying to show how it would be better if it was at the state or local level. The preponderance of evidence supports that the larger, more disconnected a program is, the harder it is to control it. Just look at medicare. It does a great job providing for those over 65 on paper, but talk to a few people about having to go to the social security office and work through the bureaucracy to get anything done. My grandmother could spend all day talking about the chain of mix ups, mistakes, etc that could not be fixed at the regional office.

We have ceded too much control over local issues to Washington. It is making it much harder to have progressive policies locally.

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