

**Project:** Civil Pursuit

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**Motivation:** The people of our country are divided and polarized on many important issues and our political decision making is gridlocked and not responding fast enough or well enough to these issues.

**Question:** Can we create an online deliberation platform that will unite America, in mass, to find the right direction for our country, one that reverses the division and polarization, brings more efficient and productive political decision making, and makes America awesome.

**Next Milestone:** Engage 500 participants, 10 from each state, online, in text form, to deliberate within a process designed to find large scale accord, on the question:

“To get our country moving in the right direction, what should *We the People* fix first”.

### Participant Acquisition

Getting people to participate for the length of time necessary for a deliberation like this (20 to 60 minutes) has many challenges. To get around many of these challenges, in order to expedite this milestone of the project, Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) will be used.

AMT is a web market place that connects requesters (such as this) with workers, people who will do online tasks like answer survey questions. When using AMT we are able to specify their state of residence as a criteria, so we will acquire 10 participants from each of the 50 states.

Generally, workers expect minimum wage for the time they spend.

**Technology:** In order to have discussions quickly, across great distances, with little money, the deliberation is carried out online.

In order to make it as easy for busy people to participate, by allowing them to do so when it is convenient for them, the technology is text based and asynchronous (not at the same time)- like email or Facebook. [Recorded video statements are desired feature for the future that will also meet this requirement].

Because large online discussions have been mostly ‘unproductive’, and because at large scale human moderation becomes a resource limitation, the discussion process is built into a web application utilizing structures based on the practices of human moderated face to face deliberative discussion. [see Structure below]

To make it possible for large populations to engage in discussions that converge to a common agreement, each individual will interact with comments from only a small number of others (typically 10) at a time, taken at random, and the questions are designed so that the answers from one round of interaction can be the input to the next. This makes it possible for a population (P) to convergence to a single answer in  $1+\log_{10}(P)$  rounds of interaction – meaning 4 in this milestone. [  $\log_{10}(P)$  basically means count the number of digits in the number P. example  $\log_{10}(500)$  is about 3]

In this way, with a good structure it could be possible for 300,000,000 Americans to find accord in about 10 rounds.

## Structure:

The remainder of this document illustrates the steps involved in the structure of the deliberation proposed for this milestone. It is important to point out that the steps here represent software components that can be connected in different ways for different discussions. It is built this way because an important lesson of face to face deliberative discussion is that different topics require different structures. Also, as we learn from the results of each milestone, components can be updated, new components can be created and added, and our goal is to find the structures that achieve the goal.

- 1) Collect demographic information about state of residence, age, political party, gender, and race will be collected.

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Profile' with a dark header. Below the header is a grey box containing the text: 'For this discussion we ask participants for demographic information to help us determine the diversity of the discussion.' Below this box is a 'Login' link and the text 'If you have been here before'. The form contains several input fields: 'Political Party' (a dropdown menu), 'Gender' (a dropdown menu with 'Choose one' selected), 'Year Of Birth' (a text input field), and 'Race' (a section with the instruction 'Check all that apply' and a list of race categories, each with a checkbox). The race categories are: American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, White, and ~Other. A 'next' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

**Profile**

For this discussion we ask participants for demographic information to help us determine the diversity of the discussion.

[Login](#) If you have been here before

Political Party

Gender

Year Of Birth

Race *Check all that apply*

- ☐ American Indian and Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ ~Other

[next](#)

- 2) Participants will be asked to answer the question. (Without seeing other's answer to the question).

Contribute

Please contribute an ideas to this discussion. Try to separate big ideas into separate posts rather than combining them into one. If you have more, hold onto the others, there will be more opportunities. Don't worry - everyone starts by first contributing an idea, it doesn't have to be a big idea yet and it's fine if it's the same as someone else's.

To get our country moving in the right direction, what problem shall We the People fix first?

The problem we fix first doesn't have to be the biggest or the hardest. One idea would be to focus on a problem that, when fixed, makes it easier to fix the next problem. But that is just a starting point.

Often we like to talk about great ways to fix the system, but we start here with the problem because there are so many of us. Otherwise one person could be proposing universal healthcare and another one could be proposing charter schools and they just aren't on the same page. The problem is the first step. Then after we agree on the problem, creating the solution for it will be the next step, and that will be much easier because we all agreed on the problem we are fixing.

And the reason that we have been stuck headed in the wrong direction is that we are divided. We have all been fighting for different solutions to different problems, and the result have been that we just keep fighting.

After we agree on one problem, and it's solution, then we return to the problems and agree on the next one and repeat until America is racing forward in the right direction.

Idea title or key words

Description

Post

One more to continue

next

- 3) Participants will be shown answers from 9 other participants taken at random, plus their own (10 total). They will be asked to go through the list and mark 2 as most important to consider, 1 as least important, and 7 as moderate.

Sort these Ideas		✉
<p><b>Congress isn't getting stuff done</b></p> <p>There is so much to do and congress isn't going it, they are falling behind. Gridlocked is the new norm. We need to do something about this problem, before anything else can get fixed.</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p><b>The leadership of both parties is in it for themselves and not the people</b></p> <p>The leadership of both parties are more interested in the party, and party dominance, and party wealth, than they are interested in doing the right thing for the people they represent, or for the country as a whole. The self serving nature of the party leadership is driving the polarization and gridlock that we see in congress.</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p><b>Fix the Fake News</b></p> <p>The news media are putting on a show, and sometimes they are ought right lying when they twist real information to make it what they want to say to get ratings.</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p><b>Congress members have been there too long</b></p> <p>We have congress members that have been in office for decades. Times have changed, the population has changed. These people are holding back progress.</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p><b>The National Debt</b></p> <p>Our National Debt is set to Reach 1 Trillion dollars - this should be going doing not up. We need to come up with a better way of deciding on the budget that allowing congress to compromise by accepting everyone's spending proposals!</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p><b>Congress not serving the people</b></p> <p>Congress is not serving the people - as a whole their approval rating is 20%. The need to server the people, they need to fix these problems in a way that works for everyone, for the future. There are other solutions, than the ones they keep us divided over. There is a longer term to think about - than just waiting until the issues blow over. Congress needs to server ...</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p><b>Climate Change</b></p> <p>Climate Change is killing out planet, this is our most important problem and if we don't do something life as we know it will be gone.</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p><b>Voter registration reliability</b></p> <p>People need to be able to register to vote, it needs to be easy, if not automatic at birth. If there is an ID requirement, it should easy. It should also be easy to tell who's allowed to vote and who isn't.</p>	<input type="button" value="most"/> <input type="button" value="moderate"/> <input type="button" value="least"/>	
<p>Great! You have completed this step. You can review your choices or continue to the next step.</p>		<input type="button" value="next"/>

- 4) For each of the most and least important issues, participants will be asked to give a short explanation of why.

The Pros

Of the ideas you thought were most important for the US to consider, please give a brief explanation of why

Getting elected takes too much money

It takes too much money to get elected to National office. We should change this so that we get people who are better at representing the needs of the people than at raising money.

title / key words

Description

Post

Congress is not working on the most important things, and it is gridlocked

There are a few really important things that need to be worked on in order to make things better - but congress is not working on them.

title / key words

Description

Post

The Growing Economic Disparity

The difference in wages between the rich and poor is becoming so significant that our system is breaking down. For the poor, healthcare is more than the earn. For the wealthy, it's not a noticeable amount. Or another example, for the poor, a traffic ticket can be a months pay. For a CEO, it's a few minute's pay. I'm not saying that we should pay everyone the same amount, and I'm not saying

title / key words

Description

Post

3 to go.

next

- 5) For each of the most and least important issues, participants will be shown up to 5 pairs of other participant's explanation why, and asked to pick the best. The last pair will include their own explanation.

Consider the Pros

Of these reasons others have given for why this idea is most important, please choose the most convincing explanation

The Growing Economic Disparity

The difference in wages between the rich and poor is becoming so significant that our system is breaking down. For the poor, healthcare is more than the earn. For the wealthy, it's not a noticeable amount. Or another example, for the poor, a traffic ticket can be a months pay. For a CEO, it's a few minute's pay. I'm not saying that we should pay everyone the same amount, and I'm not saying

...

1 of 1

Which of these is most important for the community to consider?

Economic collapse instead of Economic Growth

At some point, the poor will be so poor, and there will be so many of them, that they will rise up an revolt. But if they were making more money, they would be able to buy things like cars

...

Economic collapse instead of Economic Growth

It's so big it's screwing up incentives

For some people, \$1K for a speeding ticket is no problem, for other's its a huge setback.

It's so big it's screwing up incentives

Which of these is most important for the community to consider?

Getting elected takes too much money

It takes too much money to get elected to National office. We should change this so that we get people who are better at representing the needs of the people than at raising money.

If we get the money out - congress will be more connected to the people

If we get the money out congress will be more connected to the people who don't have money - meaning most of them.

Congress is not working on the most important things, and it is gridlocked

There are a few really important things that need to be worked on in order to make things better - but congress is not working on them.

Getting focused will help

If we could get congress to focus on the biggest problems, we would get the biggest problems fixed first.

1 to go

next

- 6) Participants will be shown the list again, in a random order, with the explanations for most and least important in two column format. Participants will be asked to choose 2 most, and 1 least important to consider.

Review the discussion

These are the earlier ideas, with pro's and con's added by the discussion.

Please consider the pro's and con's and sort the list again.

Congress is not working

I isn't doing the job that the people or the country needs. This polarization and gridlock is something they should be taking responsibility for and doing something about - but instead they are blaming each other.

most  
moderate  
least  
Dissect

0%

The Pros

Identify the Cons

Dysfunction in Congress

Congress isn't fixing things fast enough. There is something broken about the way that congress works that causing things to go this way. If you look at our issues, immigration, healthcare, the economy, the justice system, taxes, the national debt, these have been around for a really long time and I don't see anything on the horizon that addresses ...

most  
moderate  
least  
Dissect

100%

The Pros

Identify the Cons

Makes it easier to fix other problems  
Leverage

Getting elected takes too much money

It takes too much money to get elected to National office. We should change this so that we get people who are better at representing the needs of the people than at raising money.

most  
moderate  
least  
Dissect

0%

The Pros

Identify the Cons

If we get the money out - congress will be more connected to the people

Money is speech and we can't regulate political contributions

The supreme court has declared that money is speech and we can't limit campaign spending. This is great if you have a lot of money and you want to buy legislation - but this is terrible for the representation of regular people.

most  
moderate  
least  
Dissect

0%

The Pros

Identify the Cons

The Growing Economic Disparity

The difference in wages between the rich and poor is becoming so significant that our system is breaking down. For the poor, healthcare is more than the earn. For the wealthy, it's not a noticeable amount. Or another example, for the poor, a traffic ticket can be a months pay. For a CEO, it's a few minute's pay. I'm not saying that we should pay everyone the ...

most  
moderate  
least  
Dissect

100%

The Pros

Identify the Cons

Economic collapse instead of Economic Growth  
It's so big it's screwing up incentives

Congress is not working on the most important things, and it is gridlocked

There are a few really important things that need to be worked on in order to make things better - but congress is not working on them.

most  
moderate  
least  
Dissect

0%

The Pros

Identify the Cons

Getting focused will help

After all 500 participants have completed these steps, the top 10% of answers (50) will be used for the next round, repeating steps 3-6. After the second round, the top 5 answers will be used for everyone. Finally, everyone will be shown the 1 answer with the most support, and asked if they support, accept, or oppose this answer.

After the process is complete, users will be asked some questions about how they feel about the process.

## Summary

During the deliberation, and after, it is possible to review a prioritized list of all the answers, sorted by the number of “Most” important rankings, and including the participant prioritized explanations. Ideally, after the deliberation is complete, there will be one answer with a ranking of 333 or more.

Contribute			
<b>Congress not serving the people</b>	2	most	
Congress is not serving the people - as a whole their approval rating is 20%. The need to server the people, they need to fix these problems in a way that works for everyone, for the future. There are other solutions, than the ones they keep us divided over. There is a longer term to think about - than just waiting until the issues blow over. Congress needs to	0	moderate	
...	0	least	
	100%	Dissect	
<u>The Pros</u>		<u>Identify the Cons</u>	
If we could get congress working right - serving the people and what needs to be fixed ...			
This is a core problem			
<b>The Media is Spinning the News</b>	1	most	
Whichever news source you subscribe too, they either spin their content to appeal to liberals, or to appeal to conservatives. You can tell by their readership - if they have fewer conservative, or liberal readers - it's because of the spin. If their liberal readers or their conservative readers think the publication is biased - isn't that telling you they are	3	moderate	
...	0	least	
	100%	Dissect	
<u>The Pros</u>		<u>Identify the Cons</u>	
It's keeping us divided -			
<b>Corporations are not people - but the Supreme Court ruled the are</b>	1	most	
Corporations are not people, corporate interests should not be allowed to play a part in democracy - which is suppose to represent the people. A corporations interests are represented by the votes and democratic participation of all the citizens who work for the corporation - which summed up may not be the same as what the CEO of the corporation thinks	3	moderate	
...	0	least	
	100%	Dissect	
<u>The Pros</u>		<u>Identify the Cons</u>	
Re-balancing the power structure will make it easier to shift other issues in the right d...			
equal income			
<b>Fix the Fake News</b>	1	most	
The news media are putting on a show, and sometimes they are ought right lying when they twist real information to make it what they want to say to get ratings.	2	moderate	
	0	least	
	100%	Dissect	
<u>The Pros</u>		<u>Identify the Cons</u>	
fake news			
<b>Climate Change</b>	1	most	
Climate Change is killing out planet, this is our most important problem and if we don't do something life as we know it will be gone.	2	moderate	
	0	least	
	100%	Dissect	
<u>The Pros</u>		<u>Identify the Cons</u>	
Humanity's biggest challenge			
climate change affects everything			