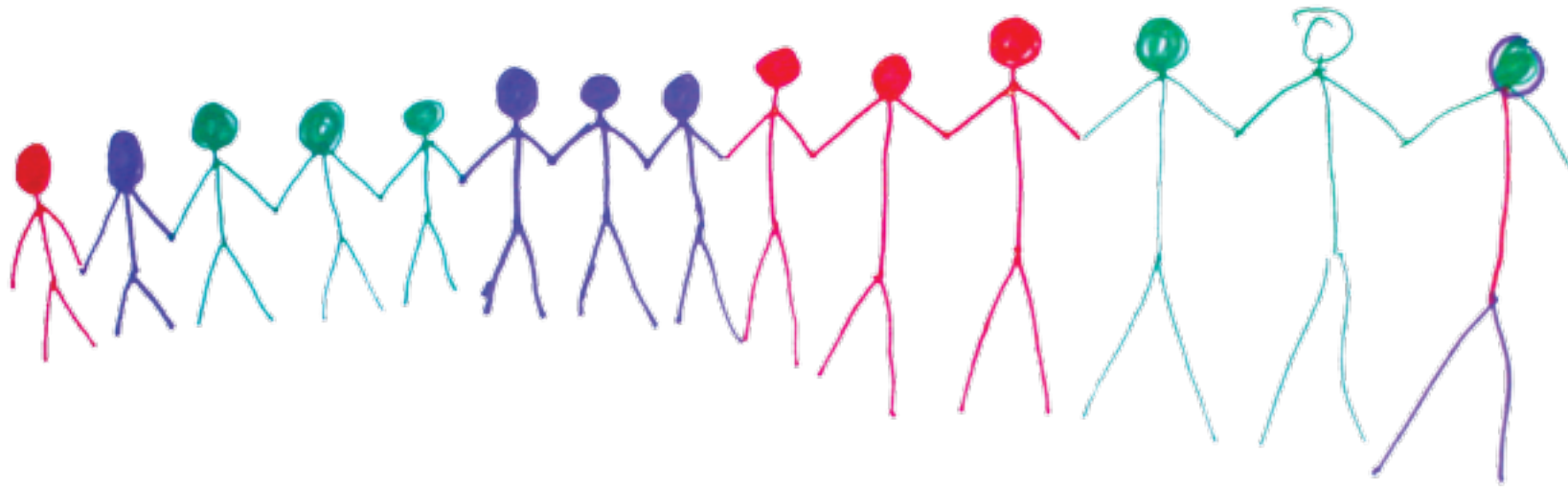




A Time for Strong Leadership

NO LABELS IS COMMITTED TO PROBLEM SOLVING



At No Labels we understand that there are real philosophical differences between Democrats, Republicans and independents. And we don't expect our leaders or No Labels members to check their principles at the door.

But philosophy and principle many times have little to do with the dysfunction in Washington, D.C.

Too often it's not the quality of a leader's ideas that matter, but the label — Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative — that he or she wears.

In Washington, D.C., the most powerful interest groups work to push our leaders and our political parties apart.

No Labels is different. We are the only grassroots organization in Washington, and indeed in America, that is mobilizing citizens to push our leaders to work together.

We aim to force important issues onto the public agenda and to give our leaders the space and support they need to work across the aisle to address those issues.

You don't need to shed your identity to join the No Labels movement. You can be a proud liberal, a proud conservative or anything in between. You just need to be open to the idea that people with different beliefs really can set aside the labels and come together to solve problems. It has happened before, and it can happen again.

Where
have
all
the
leaders
gone
?

In America we often describe an election as a “battle of ideas.”

But ideas alone aren’t enough to build a nation or grow an economy. You need leaders to bring those ideas to fruition, and throughout our history, America has been blessed with truly exceptional leaders — people with the confidence, character and vision to lead our nation through times good and bad.

And today millions of Americans are all asking themselves the same question:

Where have all the leaders gone?

We have many deficits in America right now: a fiscal deficit, a jobs deficit, an opportunity deficit — but none is bigger or more threatening to our future than our leadership deficit. And the 2012 elections did not magically solve the problem.

That’s not a political judgment on the winners or losers of the election. It’s a recognition of the fact that many of our government’s problems have become election-proof. Democratic and Republican leaders come and go, but the partisanship, gridlock and dysfunction remain. It’s the only constant in Washington these days.

As a consequence America is facing a confidence crisis.

We have way too much of one kind of confidence and way too little of another and, unfortunately, the one we have too

little of is the one we need to get our country moving again.

The confidence that too many leaders in Washington have is the confidence that they and only they are right about what’s wrong with our country and what must be done to fix it. It’s the confidence that people with different views aren’t just wrong, but stupid, evil or treasonous.

This confidence has given us “leaders” who want all or nothing, consequences be damned. And these “leaders” gave us the debt ceiling debacle of 2011, the fiscal cliff fiasco of 2012 and the promise of more manufactured crises to come.

As this pernicious kind of confidence has risen, the other, absolutely essential American confidence has evaporated:

The confidence that together we can solve problems and as a result tomorrow will be just a little better than yesterday.

It may sound trite but this can-do attitude is the secret sauce of America’s centuries’ long success story.

With confidence that we can create a brighter future, businesses will invest and take risks, workers will build a stronger nation, and all Americans can continue to pursue their dreams. Without it, America gets stuck in a ditch.



There are times when the American people and our economy have prospered with less than inspired leadership from Washington. This is not one of those times. Washington's dysfunction is making America dysfunctional. It's disfiguring our economy and dooming this generation to a standard of living worse than previous generations.

There is only one way out of this: real leadership. America hasn't always had great leadership but we have usually had it when we needed it, and never more so than when our nation was founded.

Measured against the seemingly impossible challenges our founders faced and overcame, fixing our tax code, shoring up Medicare's finances or rebuilding our infrastructure are hardly insurmountable problems.

In the early years of our Republic the American experiment could have failed many times. There were fiery arguments over how much power to give states in Congress, where to situate our capital and whether state Revolutionary War debts should be assumed by the federal government. These issues were even more contentious and controversial than our hot-button issues today, and our political leaders could've dug in their heels and refused to compromise. That's what many in their "base" wanted.

The pull of partisanship was strong then as it is now, but our founders managed to forge ahead because they had a common purpose:

They wanted to build a truly United States of America, where every citizen would be entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

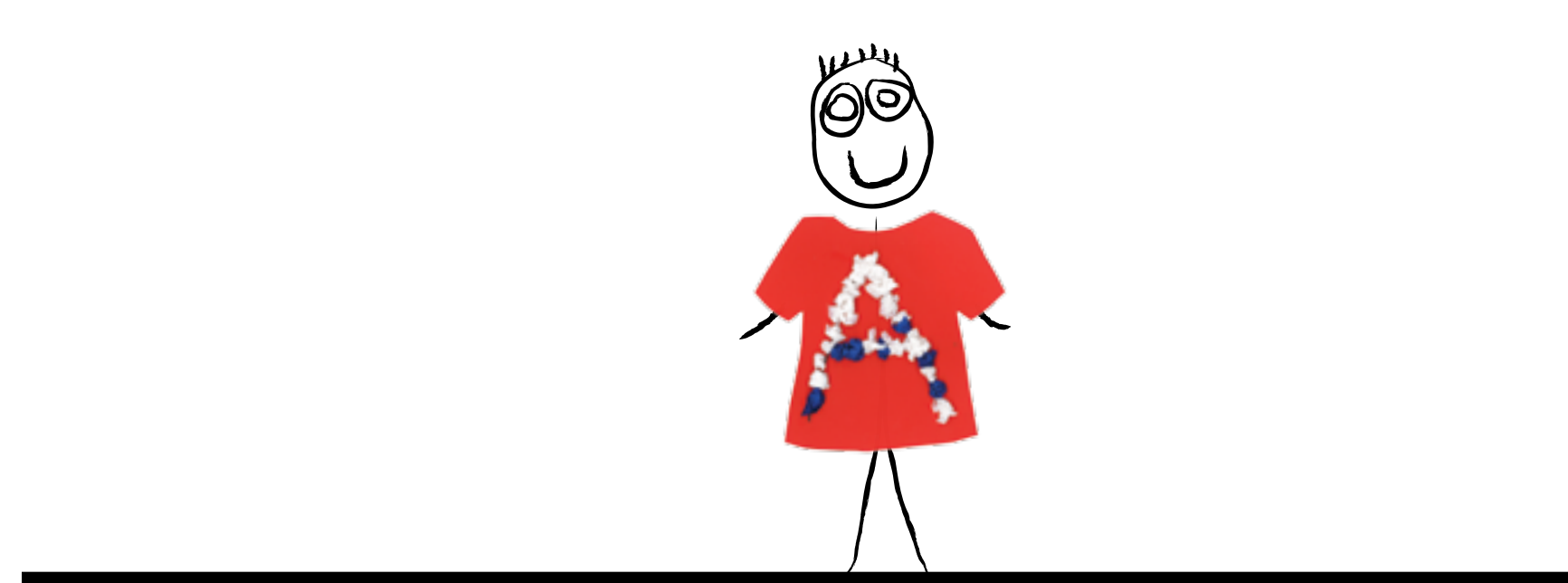
In 2012 our political leaders seem to have no common purpose other than vanquishing their political opponents.

America needs its leaders to embrace that common purpose shared by our founders. But it will not be achieved with just new people or new parties running the show.

We need our leaders to abandon the old politics of point scoring and embrace a new politics of problem solving. This is the cause that No Labels has been fighting for since we launched in 2011. It's a cause that is gaining new traction every single day in every state and congressional district in America.

But how do we get to this new politics of problem solving?

As No Labels sees it, there are two key things that need to be done.



One, we need our leaders to recommit themselves to the core responsibilities of leadership and to redefine their relationship with the American people.

And two, we need our leaders to commit to reforming the government itself; to fixing the outdated rules and procedures that were created in a different time to deal with very different challenges than those that we face in the 21st century.

Despite our current difficulties America is still as innovative and well-educated as any nation on Earth — with companies that want to invest and hire new workers. We still have the fundamental strengths that made us the strongest economy in the world. What we don't have is any faith that our political leaders can stop fighting and start fixing America's problems.

Make America Work! is a call to action for our leaders to fix themselves and to fix the government that they aspire to lead. That's the only way we can restore the right kind of confidence in America — the kind that allows us to create and take risks because we know our leaders are helping to create a better tomorrow.

Most importantly, the ideas in *Make America Work!* can be embraced and implemented now.

No Labels is supportive of ambitious reform efforts like building a better election system by creating open primaries or ending the gerrymandering that effectively allows politicians to draw their own districts. But as promising as these reform efforts are, they are tough, state-by-state slogs that will take years, or even decades, to succeed. We don't have that kind of time. Not with the problems we're facing.

We need action now, and that's what *Make America Work!* is all about.

The clock is ticking, and it's time to get to work.

NOT A NEW DEAL OR A CONTRACT WITH AMERICA. A NEW PROMISE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The New Deal and the Contract with America were both efforts to redefine the government's relationship with the American people. Today we need to redefine the relationship between America's leaders and the American citizens who send them to Washington. During this time of great national challenge, Americans have a right to expect all our leaders to follow some common principles, regardless of party or position.



1

TELL US THE FULL TRUTH

Neither party is being completely upfront with the American people about the choices and challenges we face in the months and years ahead. A telling example is America's fiscal mess. Our government spends way more money than it takes in, but most of what we hear from Democrats and Republicans would do little to solve the problem.

To hear some on the right tell it, you'd think our deficit is driven primarily by welfare cheats, government waste and shiftless bureaucrats. Many Democrats seem to think rich tax dodgers are the ones busting our books.

But these culprits — however egregious they may be — are relatively small potatoes. The real cause of our deficit isn't those "other people" gaming the system. It's all of us. It's the repeated tax cuts that we can no longer afford and the entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security that are growing far faster than our ability to pay for them.

It's time for Democrats and Republicans in Washington to be straight with us about our deficit and about what it will take to solve the various other challenges we face as a nation, from our broken immigration system to our underperforming schools and our Frankensteinian tax code.

MONTHLY BIPARTISAN GATHERINGS

Democratic and Republican leaders can't be straight with the American people until they are straight with one another. Unfortunately, our leaders don't talk to each other. They talk past each other in a blizzard of partisan talking points. That's why No Labels' Monthly Bipartisan Gatherings idea is so important. To get members talking to one another, both the House and Senate should institute monthly bipartisan gatherings. The gatherings would be off the record and would offer a free flowing forum for our leaders to debate, discuss and solve real problems.





2 GOVERN FOR THE FUTURE

In 1956, Republican President Dwight Eisenhower, working with a Democratic Congress, signed a bill that commenced the construction of America's 47,000-mile Interstate Highway System. The project was finished in 1992, 32 years after Eisenhower left office.

Americans owe so much of what we have today to farsighted decisions that our leaders made yesterday. From the creation of the Interstate Highway System and the space program to the invention of the Internet and GPS, our leaders have laid the groundwork for innovation and prosperity with decisions made with an eye towards the future. These decisions weren't always right for them politically, but they were right for America.

In today's Washington, no one seems willing to make these kinds of decisions anymore, because too many of our leaders are engaged in never-ending campaigns where the demands of governing for the future give way to the demands of the next media cycle or the next election.

That has to change. The job of our leaders is not to serve as a daily barometer of public opinion. It is to make the best decisions for the future of our country.

MAKE MEMBERS COME TO WORK

You can't lead if you don't show up, which is why No Labels' Make Members Come to Work proposal is so essential. Right now, members are often in their congressional offices only three days a week. They need to be at the office five days a week. In addition, the House and Senate should ensure that they are in session at the same time to ensure legislation can move efficiently through Congress.

If you do not tell
the truth that is bad

Ashton, 8

we need to be
responsible with how
much we save and
spend \$.

Sydney, 9

I think we should
stick together because
we would get smarter.

Chris, 7

If you work together
you get things done faster
and it's fun!

Phoebe, 9

work together
to meet
new people

Arjon, 9

In the future I look forward
for people to be more honest

Jack, 12

It is important to work together
because we are a team

Fazman, 8

It is important
to have a good
leader because
they keep
you safe.

Lawrence, 7

Shane, 9

We need a good leader
because if we had a bad
leader America would fall apart.

3

PUT THE COUNTRY FIRST



In 1990, George H.W. Bush agreed to a moderate tax hike as part of a comprehensive deal to balance the federal budget. It was a pragmatic decision made for the good of the country — but it also enraged his base and possibly cost him the 1992 election.

Today, Washington needs a lot more leaders willing to put their country ahead of their career. Let's face it: We're not going to reform the tax code, curb our deficit or solve any other number of pressing challenges without infuriating some very powerful interest groups. We will need leaders willing to make tough and sometimes unpopular choices. It may cost them an election, but it's a price our leaders have to be willing to pay if they want to save the country.

4 BE RESPONSIBLE



When the Bay of Pigs invasion turned into a complete disaster in 1961, President John F. Kennedy did something that would be almost unthinkable for a politician in Washington today. He said it was his fault, saying that “Victory has a hundred fathers and defeat is an orphan. ... What matters is only one fact: I am the responsible officer of the government.”

Today, both Democrats and Republicans like to routinely accuse the other of playing the “blame game.” But increasingly that’s the only game that anyone in Washington plays. It’s time for our leaders to take responsibility for their actions. When they mess up, they should fess up and deal with the consequences.

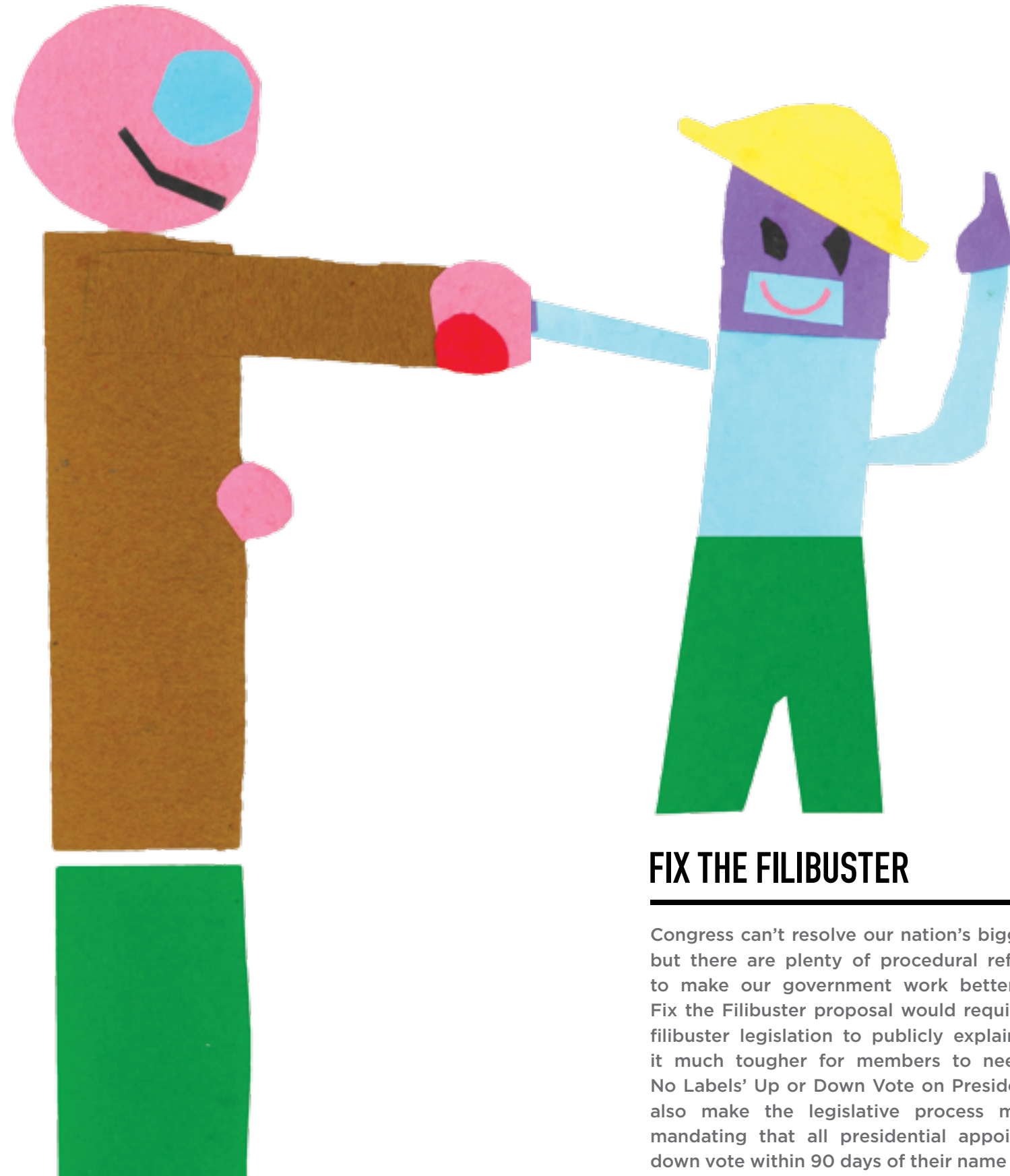
NO BUDGET NO PAY

Our No Budget, No Pay proposal is all about restoring responsibility and accountability in Washington. The idea is simple: If Congress can’t make spending and budget decisions on time — which they have not done for 15 years running — they shouldn’t get paid. Every government fiscal year begins October 1. If the congressional appropriations (spending) process is not completed by that date, congressional pay ceases as of October 1 and isn’t restored until appropriations are completed.

5 WORK TOGETHER

Throughout American history, the best and most durable solutions were found when our leaders worked across the aisle. We needed buy-in from both parties to pass civil rights laws in the 60s, reform our tax code in the 80s and balance our budget in the 90s — and we need it again today to solve our current problems.

Power in Washington is evenly divided, which means neither party will soon have the ability to unilaterally ram through its agenda. Democrats, Republicans and independents will have to find common ground. There is no other way.



FIX THE FILIBUSTER

Congress can't resolve our nation's biggest problems overnight, but there are plenty of procedural reforms they can embrace to make our government work better right now. No Labels' Fix the Filibuster proposal would require senators who want to filibuster legislation to publicly explain why, and would make it much tougher for members to needlessly stall legislation. No Labels' Up or Down Vote on President Appointments would also make the legislative process much more efficient by mandating that all presidential appointees receive an up or down vote within 90 days of their name being sent to the Senate.



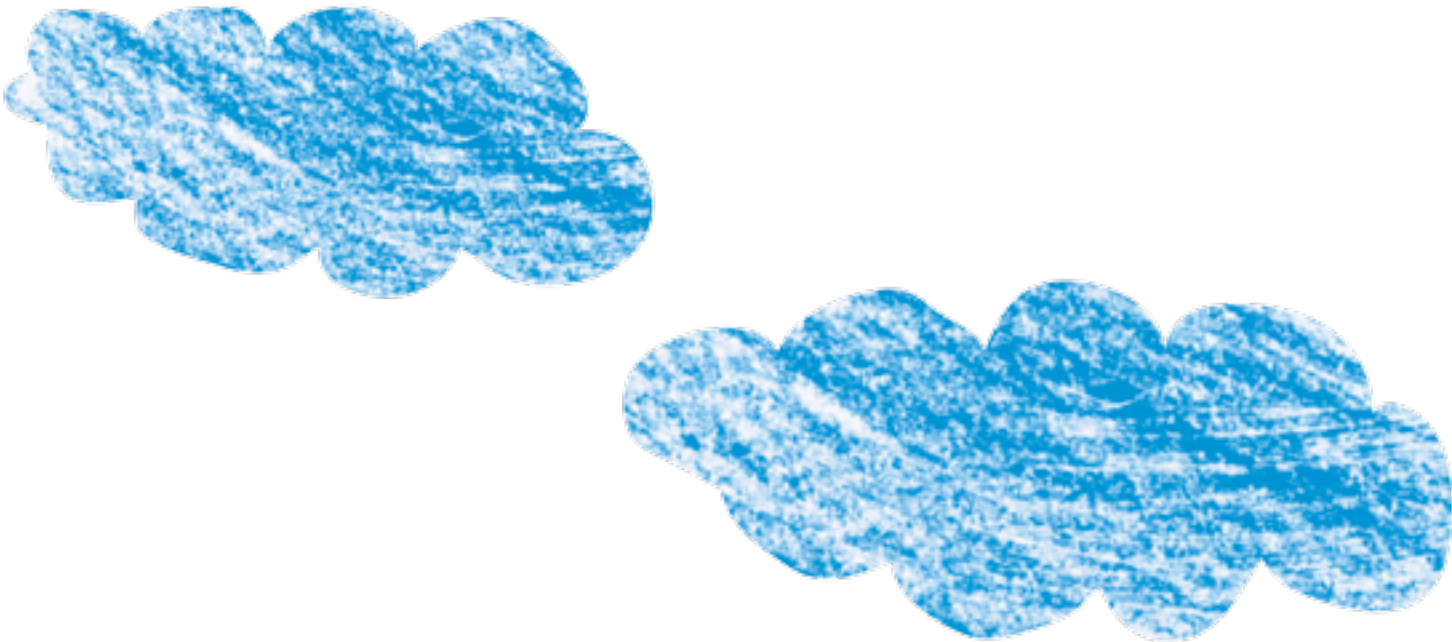


MAKE CONGRESS WORK!

No Labels’ first action plan featured a dozen simple, straightforward proposals to break gridlock, promote constructive discussion and reduce polarization in Congress. No Labels believes that Congress has become a place where even good, talented people can get dragged down by a broken system. That’s why this action plan focuses on fixing the outdated rules, procedures and traditions that govern the institution and make it impossible for anything to get done. Our proposals — ranging from No Budget, No Pay to importing British parliament-style “question time” for the president — can have an immediate, positive impact on solving America’s national challenges. And most of them can be adopted, almost all at once, at the beginning of any new session of Congress with simple rule changes.

MAKE THE PRESIDENCY WORK!

Almost 40 years after Congress began the post-Watergate roll-back of the “Imperial Presidency,” America’s chief executive now arguably faces too many impediments to enacting his or her agenda. Our president may be the CEO of the most powerful organization in the world, but he often can’t carry out basic executive functions like hiring the people they want or reorganizing inefficient or ineffective government agencies. The office of the presidency has also become too insular and too political. These are the problems that No Labels’ *Make the Presidency Work!* action plan is designed to address, with eleven straightforward proposals including fast-track legislative authority for the president, reforms to the presidential appointment process and more regular interactions between the President and leaders in Congress.



A CALL TO ACTION

Without real leadership in Washington, there’s little hope of restoring the can-do attitude that is so essential to growing our economy and rebuilding America. And at No Labels we aren’t leaving a Washington leadership renaissance to chance. We are mobilizing our grassroots army behind a series of focused efforts to empower leaders who are committed to problem solving.

We’re building a Problem-Solvers Bloc of House and Senate members, which we believe will jump-start constructive debate around America’s most pressing issues. This Problem-Solvers Bloc — featuring Democrats, Republicans and independents — will meet regularly to help develop a foundation for working across the aisle. This bloc will be more than just a source of good ideas. It can eventually be a source of votes to help pass problem solving oriented legislation.

No Labels is also continuing to encourage our political leaders to embrace key elements of our congressional and presidential reform agenda. Legislation modeled on No Budget, No Pay has already been introduced in the House and Senate and we are

continuing to gather a significant number of cosponsors. And we are working to lay the groundwork for a serious fiscal debate in America by encouraging Congress to embrace our annual fiscal report idea.

The success of our effort depends almost entirely on the size and dedication of our grassroots army, which is growing every single day. But we need more new members to join and more existing members to do more. Our movement needs to combine patience — because reform doesn’t happen overnight — and urgency, because we don’t have any time to waste.

No Labels is working to empower leaders who actually want to solve problems — but it’s incumbent upon our leaders to seize the opportunity. It is time for our leaders to embrace the full responsibilities of leadership. They’ve got to tell us the truth, govern for the future, put our country first, be responsible and work together. The times demand nothing less.

And the American people expect nothing less.

THEORY OF THE CASE



There is a historic opportunity in America and citizens are coming together to turn it into reality.

The vast majority of the American people want our government to solve problems. They want our leaders to work together to build a smarter tax code and immigration system; to curb our deficit and put us in control of our energy future. That is not what you hear on cable news, but it is true. There are far more problem solvers in America than there are hyperpartisans.

However in today's Washington, the hyperpartisans seem to have all the power. They have created a dysfunctional system where our political leaders value defeating the other side over the most basic acts of governing. This dysfunction in our government is diminishing our economic competitiveness, our ability to make progress, and our future as a nation — while creating a tone that is in conflict with practical solutions to complex, but solvable, problems.

It is time to create a new system, where working together is a sign of strength, not weakness; where legislators make progress, not points; and where our leaders are focused on the next generation instead of the next election.

We are doing this, with the right organization and the right focus on fixing what ails our government.

Many ambitious reform efforts — like curbing the influence of money in politics or opening up the primary election process — are essential to building a better political system. But these are often tough, state-by-state slogs that will take years, or even decades, to succeed. America can't afford to wait this long. Not with the challenges we face.

We need our leaders to find a way to work together now, and the only way it will happen is for more of us — even those who do not usually pay attention to politics — to demand it and stand with those who do.

A week in the life of a typical member of Congress is dominated by party caucus, policy and fundraising meetings that are singularly focused on defeating the opposing party. There is precious little time for members actually to discuss or negotiate substantive issues with the other side, and legislators who do so are often branded as apostates by party leaders and their respective bases.

This destructive dynamic can change — and is already beginning to change — with support from a focused, organized and strategic movement working to bring our leaders together to solve our nation's most pressing problems.

This is the No Labels movement. We are exerting grassroots pressure and building A Capitol Hill coalition that can fix our government and secure a more prosperous future for America.

Despite our current difficulties, America is still as innovative and well-educated as any nation on earth — with people who want to work hard and companies that want to invest, hire new workers, and build value. We have the fundamental strengths that made us the strongest economy in the world.

All this potential can be unleashed if our political leaders come together to solve problems. It has happened before many times in America's history, and with No Labels leading the way, it will happen again.

No Labels is a fast-growing, movement of over half-a-million Republicans, Democrats and Independents dedicated to a simple proposition:

We want to help move America toward a new politics of problem solving to help preserve our greatness for this generation and generations to come.

When No Labels launched in December 2010, we knew that the first step in getting our leaders to pay attention to us was by mobilizing citizens across America. That is exactly what we have done, using the same cutting-edge digital communications and organizing tools that citizens have used to elect presidents and overthrow oppressive governments.

This makes No Labels fundamentally different from many organizations that promote bipartisan cooperation and policy solutions. The problem in Washington, D.C. is not a lack of policy white papers. It is a lack of organizational muscle pushing for reforms and leaders that make it possible to work across the aisle. This is the muscle that No Labels provides.

The most powerful interest groups in our nation's capital work to push our leaders and our political parties apart. No Labels is the only organization in Washington, and indeed in America, that is mobilizing citizens to push our leaders to work together.

We are, above all, an action and results-oriented organization.

At the same time that No Labels has been growing its grassroots army, we have been recruiting allies on Capitol Hill and throughout Washington to support our reform agenda.

First, we are working to organize and empower legislators who want to get things done. Through the development of a new Problem-Solvers Bloc, No Labels is recruiting House and Senate members who are committed to working across the aisle to find effective, principled, and pragmatic solutions to our country's problems.

The Problem-Solvers Bloc represents No Labels' effort to jump-start constructive debate around America's most pressing issues. With No Labels' new bloc, members have a banner to gather under to build trust across the aisle and to develop real solutions.

Second, we are focusing on breaking down the structural problems that push our leaders apart and on creating new incentives to get them to work together, with a particular focus on solutions that can be implemented immediately.

We have released two comprehensive action plans that are as straightforward as their titles: *Make Congress Work!* and *Make the Presidency Work!* With pressure from our grassroots, these plans are gaining traction on Capitol Hill and beyond, with one of our proposals, No Budget, No Pay, already turned into a bill with significant numbers of co-sponsors in the House and in the Senate. Finally, we have a third action plan, *Make America Work!*, that offers a blueprint for a new kind of leadership that can restore the American's people's confidence in the future of our country.

No Labels is growing our Problem-Solvers Bloc and indeed our entire movement by the day.

In the process, we are starting to shake up Washington and increase the profile and the power of political leaders that are committed to problem solving. Most members of Congress are just as frustrated by the rampant hyperpartisanship in Washington as is the typical American citizen. Many are looking to break out of the box of strict party discipline, and the No Labels message offers precisely that opportunity.

No Labels does not expect anyone to shed his or her identity to join our movement. We are a community of proud liberals, proud conservatives and everything in between. We are united by the conviction that people with different beliefs really can set aside the labels and come together to solve problems.





THANK YOU TO THE ARTISTS



Renee Bernardo and Marian Perez' 1st grade class
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Ginny Flood's Preschool Class
Hillsdale United Nursery School, Hillsdale, NJ

Pelham Road Elementary, Sara Collins Elementary
and Sterling School, Greenville, SC

Peggy White's 8th Grade Class
Walt Whitman Middle School, Alexandria, VA

Lilani Balasuriya's 1st Grade Class
Caryn Purcell's 7th Grade Class
New Canaan Country School, New Canaan, CT



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