

## MEDIA CONTACT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## A BIPARTISAN GROUP OF POLITICIANS, AUTHORS, SCHOLARS, AND FOUNDATION EXECUTIVES CONVENE TO DISCUSS THE REAL POWER OF MONEY IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Through investigative journalism, it is proven that the U.S. government is now victim to active bribery, foreign interference and the use of power to enrich its office holders. This sixth episode of “Democracy Unchained: A Conversation Series” talks about how we got here—and the remedies that can exist to restrain corruption (and to “unchain democracy”).

On Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 7 p.m. EST/4 p.m. PST, the sixth episode of “Democracy Unchained: A Conversation Series” will premiere online. In this episode, “Money and Democracy,” an esteemed and diverse group of individuals convene to discuss how secret and unaccountable money influences American democracy.

David W. Orr, Ph.D., environmental activist and professor emeritus at Oberlin College—and founder of the State of American Democracy project—recognizes that the authors of the U.S. Constitution saw corruption as the primary threat to the government that they created. “Without attention to bribery, foreign interference, government power to enrich office holders, and elections built on wealth, democracy *is* in chains (in reference to Nancy McLean’s best-selling book, *Democracy in Chains*).

McLean joins a list of other scholars, alongside politicians and foundation executives (listed below), to not only discuss the history and current day examples corruption, but to also discuss the list of remedies to restrain corruption, control lobbying, establish accountability and require transparency and how we fund elections.

State of American Democracy Project—a nonpartisan collective of acclaimed thought leaders, journalists, political leaders, and theologians stream its weekly episodes of “Democracy Unchained: A Conversation Series” on Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, Roku and Fire TV.

Panelists in episode six, “Money and Democracy,” include:

- **Zephyr Teachout**, Associate Law Professor, Fordham University
- **Sen. Russ Feingold**, President, American Constitution Society
- **Trevor Potter**, Founder and President, Campaign Legal Center
- **Nancy MacLean**, Scholar and Author, "Democracy in Chains"
- **Ellen Dorsey**, Executive Director, Wallace Global Fund
- **Chisun Lee**, Deputy Director, Election Reform Program, Democracy
- **Nick Rathod**, Founder & Former Executive Director of the State Innovation Exchange (SiX)
- **Crystal Hayling**, Executive Director, The Libra Foundation
- **Stephen Heintz**, President and CEO, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

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### About the State of American Democracy Project

The State of American Democracy initiative began with a conference at Oberlin College in 2017, with a goal to clarify the historic and institutional origins of the election of 2016 and the breakdown in governance, civility, and fairness that transcends party politics. The second phase of the work through the election of 2020 focuses on repairing and strengthening democratic institutions to serve the aims of justice, fairness, prosperity, and resilience.

Today, the State of American Democracy is a nonpartisan collective of individuals and organizations from across the country who are passionate about rebuilding politics and government in America for the benefit of all Americans. *Democracy Unchained*, the book, edited by David W. Orr, Andrew Gumbel, Bakari Kitwana and William S. Becker (New Press, March 2020), brings together more than 30 contributors, and “Democracy Unchained: A Conversation Series” brings together more than 100 thought leaders from a variety of disciplines. Today, more than 50 organizations have also partnered and/or sponsored this project, as well.

The State of American Democracy project is made possible through the generous support of Ford Foundation, Germeshausen Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, Wallace Global Fund, Park Foundation, and Kallopeia Foundation.

To learn more, visit [stateofamericandemocracy.org](https://stateofamericandemocracy.org).