

Dick Pollock

## The occasional need to rebel

Occasionally in our country things just have a way of getting out of hand to the point where some course correction is called for by the citizenry. We have always depended on the sensibilities of "the people" to direct the Congress. We have arrived at that moment again.

Campaign finance reform is just such an issue. Ninety-six percent of the American public believes that our Congress has been captured by financial interests. Many say that we've lost our democracy. We elect the Congress and the large dollar donors take it from there.

In the spirit of Doris "Granny D" Haddock the newly formed New Hampshire Rebellion (NHR) conducted a walk a few weeks ago the length of New Hampshire from Dixville Notch to Nashua, to raise awareness of this issue. You may remember that Granny D walked across the United States in 1999, at 88 years of age, to promote interest in campaign finance reform.

About 30 walkers, including this writer, support staff, and joined by hundreds more along the way, transited the 185-mile distance in two weeks time and in doing so got a glimpse of what the folks in New Hampshire are thinking about this issue.

As it turned out the Rebellion was preaching to the choir. From conservative Coos to relatively liberal Hillsborough County, the story was the same and the words used to describe their feelings were not kind to the national politicians.

The walkers got the impression that we are mostly in agreement here in New Hampshire. Our Congress has become an agent for a very small handful of very well-heeled individuals while the priorities and problems of the country are left unattended and unaddressed. Some said that, in their opinion, it was past time to solve the problem. After all, the foxes are in charge of the henhouse.

On Jan. 15, when the Walk passed through North Conway Lawrence Lessig, author, highly regarded authority on the role of money in politics and the moving force behind the N.H. Rebellion said the following:

"The problem Granny D set out to solve was something she called campaign finance reform. We didn't call our problem campaign finance reform. I've come to think of talking about it that way is much too tame, much too timid ... The problem we set out to solve is the problem of corruption, the sort of thing John McCain called a system of corruption ... And by that he didn't mean corruption by cash secreted in brown paper bags...

Indeed he explicitly called the people involved in that corruption as good people, good souls. Good souls who had been corrupted by a system that corrupted everyone inside of Washington ... In the 15 years since, that corruption has only increased ... And it's not just because that system has spun out of control to make it impossible for us to govern that we need to fight that corruption, not just because it has made it impossible to achieve the simplest of reforms, impossible to address the kinds of catastrophic problems that we as a nation have to face but we must face this corruption for an even more basic reason, a more fundamental reason of morality ... We must fight this corruption because of what it does to the equality of citizens within our Republic. What it does to the dignity of citizens within our Republic ...

Now the framers of our Constitution didn't give us a democracy; they called

it a Republic. But by a Republic they meant a representative democracy and by a representative democracy they meant a government with a branch that would be "dependent on the people alone." But here is the problem. Our government has allowed a different dependence to evolve not just upon the people but increasingly on the funders. This is a dependence too. A dependence on people who are not the people."

In the last presidential election cycle, in 16 televised debates, the number two issue of campaign finance reform, identified by the American public right behind jobs, was never discussed, which is an indictment of the candidates, all of them, and the media. Ironically, the one candidate who would have brought up campaign finance reform, Buddy Roemer, former governor of Louisiana, was never allowed by the networks to be on the stage. His fellow candidates sat mute at this absence. The fact that Roemer was the only candidate in the field to take only small dollar contributions might have had something to do with the boycott of him.

The non-partisan New Hampshire Rebellion has a plan and 2016 Presidential candidates should take note. Capitalizing on New Hampshire's first in the nation primary status The Rebellion is going to put the candidates feet to the fire! The strategy is simple. Hundreds of New Hampshire citizens are being trained as we speak to ask those candidates one simple and very direct question: "What will you do to end the system of corruption in Washington, D.C.?"

The N.H. Rebellion is not accusing individuals of being corrupt but is casting a light on what has become a system that corrupts the process of government by making most in the Congress into fund-raising machines from the day they decide to run to the day before they decide to leave. The actual influence or the appearance of it gained by the funders and the unprecedented access by the few to those who are supposed to represent the many should anger every American.

Candidates will be asked this question at every venue at which they appear. The trend will be obvious and perhaps even the press will notice and get on board with this question. Candidates will probably bob and weave but so won't The Rebellion. Many citizens may channel their own anger at the situation by chiming in as well. The Rebellion wants to create a message heard across the country with the national media looking on.

Campaign finance reform is the one problem that stands in the way of our ability to address and solve all other major problems. If what the Rebellion is planning resonates with you take this opportunity to learn more about what is in store. Join the Rebellion, make Granny D proud, help take our country back and reestablish that our federal government is "dependent on the people alone."

*"We have a duty to look after each other. If we lose control of our government, then we lose our ability to dispense justice and human kindness. Our first priority today, then, is to defeat utterly those forces of greed and corruption that have come between us and our self-governance."* — Doris "Granny D" Haddock

Dick Pollock lives in North Conway. For more information visit [nhrebellion.org](http://nhrebellion.org).

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