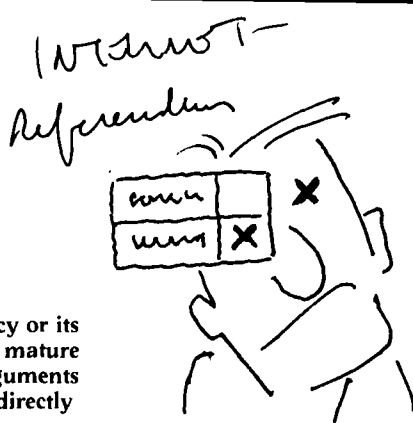


PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

POLITICS BRIEF



The people's voice

Is the growing use of referendums a threat to democracy or its salvation? The fifth article in our series on changes in mature democracies examines the experience so far, and the arguments for and against letting voters decide political questions directly

WHEN Winston Churchill proposed a referendum to Clement Attlee in 1945 on whether Britain's wartime coalition should be extended, Attlee growled that the idea was an "instrument of Nazism and fascism". The use by Hitler and Mussolini of bogus referendums to consolidate their power had confirmed the worst fears of sceptics. The most democratic of devices seemed also to be the most dangerous to democracy itself.

Dictators of all stripes have continued to use phony referendums to justify their hold on power. And yet this fact has not stopped a steady growth in the use of genuine referendums, held under free and fair conditions, by both established and aspiring democracies. Referendums have been instrumental in the dismantling of communism and the transition to democracy in countries throughout the former Soviet empire. They have also successfully eased democratic transitions in Spain, Greece, South Africa, Brazil and Chile, among other countries.

In most established democracies, direct appeals to voters are now part of the machinery for constitutional change. Their use to resolve the most intractable or divisive public issues has also grown. In the 17 major democracies of Western Europe, only three—Belgium, the Netherlands and Norway—make no provision for referendums in their constitution. Only six major democracies—the Netherlands, the United States, Japan, India, Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany—have never held a nationwide referendum.

The volatile voter

Frustrated voters in Italy and New Zealand have in recent years used referendums to force radical changes to voting systems and other political institutions on a reluctant political elite. Referendums have also been used regularly in Australia, where voters go to the polls this November to decide whether to cut their country's for-

mal link with the British crown. In Switzerland and several American states, referendums are a central feature of the political system, rivaling legislatures in significance.

Outside the United States and Switzerland, referendums are most often called by governments only when they are certain of victory, and to win endorsement of a policy they intend to implement in any case. This is how they are currently being used in Britain by Tony Blair's government.

But voters do not always behave as predicted, and they have delivered some notable rebuffs. Charles de Gaulle skillfully used referendums to establish the legitimacy of France's Fifth Republic and to expand his own powers as president, but then felt compelled to resign in 1969 after an unexpected referendum defeat.

François Mitterrand's decision to call a referendum on the Maastricht treaty in 1992 brought the European Union to the brink of breakdown when only 51% of those voting backed the treaty. Denmark's voters rejected the same treaty, despite the fact that it was supported by four out of five members of the Danish parliament. The Danish government was able to sign the treaty only after renegotiating its terms and narrowly winning a second referendum. That same year, Canada's government was not so lucky. Canadian voters unexpectedly rejected a painstakingly negotiated constitutional accord designed to placate Quebec.

Referendums come in many different forms. **Advisory referendums** test public opinion on an important issue. Governments or legislators then translate their results into new laws or policies as they see fit. Although advisory referendums can carry great weight in the right circumstances, they are sometimes ignored by politicians. In a 1955 Swedish referendum, 85% of those voting said they wanted to continue driving on the left side of the road. Only 12 years later the

government went ahead and made the switch to driving on the right without a second referendum, or much protest.

By contrast, **mandatory referendums** are part of a law-making process or, more commonly, one of the procedures for constitutional amendment.

Both advisory and mandatory referendums can usually be called only by those in office—sometimes by the president, sometimes by parliamentarians, most often by the government of the day. But in a few countries, petitions by voters themselves can put a referendum on the ballot. These are known as **initiatives**. Sometimes these can only repeal an already existing law—so-called "abrogative" initiatives such as those in Italy. Elsewhere, initiatives can also be used to propose and pass new legislation, as in Switzerland and many American states. In this form they can be powerful and unpredictable political tools.

The rules for conducting and winning referendums also vary greatly from country to country. Regulations on the drafting of ballot papers and the financing of Yes and No campaigns are different everywhere, and these exert a great influence over how referendums are used, and how often.

The hurdle required for victory can be a critical feature. A simple majority of those voting is the usual rule. But a low turnout can make such victories seem illegitimate. So a percentage of eligible voters, as well as a majority of those voting, is sometimes required to approve a proposal.

Such hurdles, of course, also make failure more likely. In 1978 Britain's government was forced to abandon plans to set up a Scottish parliament when a referendum victory in Scotland failed to clear a 40% hurdle of eligible voters. Referendums have also failed in Denmark and Italy (most recently in April) because of similar voter-turnout requirements. To ensure a wide geographic consensus, Swit-

zerland and Australia require a "double majority", of individual voters and of cantons or states, for constitutional amendments.

The use of referendums reflects the history and traditions of individual countries. Thus generalising about them is difficult. In some countries referendums have played a central, though peripatetic, role. In others they have been marginal or even irrelevant, despite provisions for their use.

Hot potatoes

Although referendums (outside Switzerland and the United States) have been most often used to legitimise constitutional change or the redrawing of boundaries, elected politicians have also found them useful for referring to voters those issues they find too hot to handle or which cut across party lines. Often these concern moral or lifestyle choices, such as alcohol prohibition, divorce or abortion. The outcome on such emotive topics can be difficult to predict. In divorce and abortion referendums, for example, Italians have shown themselves more liberal, and the Irish more conservative, than expected.

One of the best single books on referendums—"Referendums Around the World" edited by David Butler and Austin Ranney, published by Macmillan—argues that many assumptions about them are mistaken. They are not usually habit-forming, as those opposed to them claim. Many countries have used them to settle a specific issue, or even engaged in a series of them, and then turned away from referendums for long periods. But this is mostly because politicians decide whether referendums will be held. Where groups of voters can also put initiatives on the ballot, as in Switzerland and the United States, they have become addictive and their use has grown in recent years.

Messrs Butler and Ranney also point out that referendums are not usually vehicles for radical change, as is widely believed. Although they were used in this way in Italy and New Zealand, referendums have more often been used to support the status quo or to endorse changes already agreed by political parties. Most referendums, even those initiated by voters, fail. In Australia, 34 of 42 proposals to amend the constitution have been rejected by voters. According to an analysis by David Magleby, a professor at Brigham Young University in Utah, 62% of the 1,732 initiatives which reached

the ballot in American states between 1898 and 1992 were rejected.

Arguments for and against referendums go to the heart of what is meant by democracy. Proponents of referendums maintain that consulting citizens directly is the only truly democratic way to determine policy. If popular sovereignty is really to mean anything, voters must have the right to set the agenda, discuss the issues and then themselves directly make the final decisions. Delegating these tasks to elected politicians, who have interests of their own, inevitably distorts the wishes of voters.

Referendums, their advocates say, can discipline representatives, and put the stamp of legitimacy on the most important political questions of the day. They also encourage participation by citizens in the governing of their own societies, and political participation is the source of most other civic virtues.

The case against

Those sceptical of referendums agree that popular sovereignty, majority rule and consulting voters are the basic building blocks of democracy, but believe that representative democracy achieves these goals much better than referendums. Genuine direct democracy, they say, is feasible only for political groups so small that all citizens can meet face-to-face—a small town perhaps. In large, modern societies, the full participation of every citizen is impossible.

Referendum opponents maintain that representatives, as full-time decision-makers, can weigh conflicting priorities, negotiate compromises among different groups and make well-informed decisions. Citizens voting in single-issue referendums have difficulty in doing any of these things. And as the bluntest of majoritarian devices, referendums encourage voters to brush aside the concerns of minority groups. Finally, the frequent use of referendums can actually undermine democracy by encouraging elected legislators to sidestep difficult issues, thus damaging the prestige and authority of representative institutions, which must continue to perform most of the business of government even if referendums are used frequently.

Testing any of these claims or counter-claims is difficult. Most countries do not, in fact, use referendums regularly enough to bear out either the hopes of proponents or the fears of opponents. The two exceptions are Switzerland and

some American states, where citizen initiatives are frequent enough to draw tentative conclusions on some of these points, although both examples fall far short of full-fledged direct democracy.

Voters in both countries seem to believe that referendums do, in fact, lend legitimacy to important decisions. The Swiss are unlikely now to make a big national decision without a referendum. Swiss voters have rejected both UN membership and links with the EU in referendums, against the advice of their political leaders. Similarly, American polls show healthy majorities favouring referendums and believing that they are more likely to produce policies that most people want. Polls also show support for the introduction of referendums on the national level.

fallen by a third in the past 50 years to about 40%. On big issues, however, turnout can still soar.

Many of the fears of those opposed to referendums have not been realised in either country. Initiatives have not usually been used to oppress minorities: A proposal to limit the number of foreigners allowed to live in Switzerland was rejected by two-thirds of voters in 1988. In 1992 Colorado's voters did approve an initiative overturning local ordinances protecting gays from discrimination, but more extreme anti-gay initiatives in Colorado and California have been defeated by large majorities. Since 1990 voters have consistently upheld certain abortion rights in initiative ballots. Minorities and immigrants have been the targets of initiatives in some states,

countries. In the United States they are frequently seen, rightly or wrongly, as a barometer of the national mood. And they can occasionally spark a political revolution. California's Proposition 13, for example, a 1978 initiative lowering local property taxes, set off a tax revolt across America. Elected officials themselves are often active in launching initiatives, and relatively successful in getting their proposals approved, which hardly indicates that voters have lost all faith in their politicians. Initiatives have made legislating more complicated, but also more responsive to the public's concerns.

There is some evidence that American voters, at least, are sometimes overwhelmed by the volume of information coming their way, and cast their vote in ignorance, as critics contend. Mr Magleby cites studies showing that on several ballots, 10-20% of the electorate mistakenly cast their vote the wrong way. Ballot material dropping through the letterboxes of residents in California is now often more than 200 pages long. According to one poll, only one in five Californians believes that the average voter understands most of the propositions put before him. Quite rationally, this has also bred caution. Californians approve only one-third of initiatives.

Hybrid democracy?

The Swiss and American experience suggests that in the future there is unlikely to be a headlong rush away from representative to direct democracy anywhere, but that, even so, the use of referendums is likely to grow. The Internet and other technological advances have not yet had much impact on referendums, but they should eventually make it easier to hold them, and to inform voters of the issues they are being asked to decide upon.

Representative institutions are likely to survive because of the sheer volume of legislation in modern societies, and the need for full-time officials to run the extensive machinery of government. Nevertheless in an age of mass communication and information, confining the powers of citizens to voting in elections every few years seems a crude approach, a throw-back to an earlier era. In a political system based on popular sovereignty, it will become increasingly difficult to justify a failure to consult the voters directly on a wider range of issues.



The claim that referendums increase citizen participation is more problematic. Some referendum campaigns ignite enormous public interest and media attention. Initiatives also give political outsiders a way to influence the public agenda. But in the United States, much of the activity involved in getting initiatives on the ballot, such as collecting signatures, has been taken over by professional firms, and many referendum campaigns have become slick, expensive affairs far removed from the grassroots (so far, this is much less true in Switzerland). Even more surprising, voter participation in American referendums is well below that of candidate elections, even when these are held at the same time. The average turnout for Swiss referendums has

but voters have generally rejected extreme measures and have often proven themselves no more illiberal than legislators. Most initiatives are, in fact, about tax and economic questions, not civil liberties or social issues, although the latter often gain more attention.

While the frequent use of initiatives has not destroyed representative government, as some feared, it has changed it. Party loyalty among Swiss voters is strong at general elections, but evaporates when it comes to referendum voting. Initiatives, and the threat of mounting one, have become an integral part of the legislative process in Switzerland, as they have in California, Oregon and the other American states where they are most used. Referendums now often set the political agenda in both

TOM RYAN

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
7-27-99

Bleed
What about Tim
says we never responded
can it be made better?
Has some appeal to me - R/S

Thomas Jefferson's Proposal
for a
National Advisory Referendum

copied
Reed
Podesta

INTERNET -
Referendum

TOM W. RYAN
144 Willowleaf Dr.
Littleton, CO 80127
303-973-5077 (Fax) 303-932-6010
ryan.denver@msn.com

copy of letter
Fed Ex'd to Pres.
Tuesday - sent to
Bruce Lindsey &
John Podesta &

July 19, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

I will see you this
Saturday 7-24-99
in Aspen at Sen.
Diane Feinstein's
home. I'll be wearing
my Bronco's T-shirt!

Mike
Waldman

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to meet with you for 30 minutes at the White House to discuss with you an idea first proposed by Thomas Jefferson to forge a public consensus for public policy by creating a mechanism for a national advisory referendum. Jefferson's plan for direct democracy was first proposed in 1816 in a letter to Sam Kercheval, but has been lost in history for over 180 years.

You can make history by building a bridge from Jefferson to the 21st century. You can become a man for the next millenium by being the bridge builder who has the vision to merge Jefferson's ideas of democratic participation in policy formation with the technology of today.

To meet your goals of unifying this country, the President needs a new power—the power to go directly to the people for an advisory vote either to build support for legislation prior to its introduction or to spur a reluctant Congress entangled by special interests to take action in the public interest (See enclosed draft of legislation).

I found Jefferson's idea to reform the democracy he helped create by reading a book of Jefferson's letters. Moreover, you and I have discussed Jefferson's ideas 5 times in 1996 at Democratic fundraisers in St. Louis for Congressman Richard Gephardt, in Denver for Tom Strickland for Senate, and at public rallies at Red Rocks, the Courthouse in Pueblo, Colorado, and the Denver Coliseum.

However, the advent of the Internet makes the need for a 30 minute meeting even more compelling today than in 1996.

- 1) You can make history by being the first President to hold a National Advisory Referendum--with or without Congressional support. You can box the Republicans into an corner—if they support giving people a direct voice, you and Al Gore win by creating the first National Advisory Referendum for the year 2000. If they oppose your plan, you can show the electorate that the Republicans blocked your move to give people a direct say in shaping public policy. You can then hold the first-ever National Advisory Referendum on the Internet for the 2000 elections where over 100 million Americans now have access to the Internet.**

For those without computers, publicly funded libraries and schools can be called upon to open their doors for the taxpaying voters to participate in our nation coming together in the first National Advisory Referendum.

Moreover, you can propose placing “voting kiosks” in federal buildings all across America where citizens access public services, such as Social Security offices. My brother, Kevin Ryan, has designed a prototype “voting kiosk” which could be placed throughout the United States. A person would be able to vote electronically on national referenda by using their Social Security number as their federal “voter ID” just as people have e-mail addresses.

You can move forward to implement Jefferson’s ideas for expanding public participation in policy formation with or without Congress passing a National Advisory Referendum bill.

You can create the model today.

How do you think people voting in the first National Advisory Referendum will react to the Republican Party if they block the Clinton/Gore plan in Congress to implement Jefferson's ideas to give people a direct say on the issues through an advisory vote?

The Republicans will find themselves in a democratic catch-22.

You can't lose. It's a win-win strategy.

- 2) You can turn the Republican derision of Gore's Internet remarks upside down by making Gore the co-architect of the Jefferson-Clinton plan for a National Advisory Referendum. If Congress fails to act, you and Gore will champion a National Advisory Referendum on the Internet. Vice President Gore can then take credit for merging technology with democracy to give people a greater voice in government.

It's a win-win strategy for Al Gore.

- 3) This idea can help Hillary win a Senate seat in New York. There is no better way to listen to the people than to take Jefferson's idea to give people a direct say on the issues and make a structural change in our democracy to give people an advisory vote as he envisioned in 1816.

Hillary wins by giving people a greater voice!

When you visited Monticello January 17, 1993, you talked about Jefferson's vision saying Jefferson believed "people should be able to participate by voting every day or in small groups."

Early in 1996 Senator Bill Bradley forwarded you a letter I wrote outlining Jefferson's proposal for a National Advisory Referendum. You responded saying you would try to have your scheduling office set up a meeting. However, your schedulers didn't see the

importance and told me "no" for a private meeting at the White House.

Since then, you and I have met 5 times at Democratic campaign fundraisers, private receptions, and public rallies. When we met at a Tom Strickland for Senate fundraiser in at the Inverness Country Club in Denver, you remembered me from our previous meetings. We briefly talked about Jefferson's proposal for direct democracy. At one point I said, "Mr. President, just think of the National Advisory Referendum as an extension of your concept of community." You paused in reflection and then said, "I agree."

Now that the events of the past two years are behind us, the time to move forward on Jefferson's idea has come. The need to meet is even more compelling today than in 1996.

The advent of the Internet gives you the power to implement a National Advisory Referendum for the year 2000 elections without waiting on Congress to act. While passing legislation giving you the power to put three advisory issues on the ballot in every state would be ideal, Congress can't defeat you. Either the Congress passes the "Jefferson-Clinton Plan for Direct Democracy," or you can hold the National Advisory Referendum on the Internet as President.

According to Nielsen/NetRatings, over 101 million people have Internet access. Sometime early in the next century technology and democracy will merge to create a National Town Meeting where people will participate directly in shaping public policy on a regular basis.

But today you have the opportunity to share the vision for the future where everyone can participate in shaping public policy much like when President John Kennedy promised to send a man to the moon. His vision is burned in our minds as the architect of our greatest technology quest as a nation.

You can become the visionary to vault our democracy into the next millenium. You can dust off Jefferson's plans. You can build the bridge. You can lead the way.

You can send the enclosed legislative proposal to the Congress to give the President the power to hold a National Advisory Referendum on 3 selected issues every general election starting with the 2000 general election, but if the Republican controlled Congress fails to act, you can hold the referendum on the Internet for 101 million Americans. Moreover, USA Today reported that half of all registered voters 18 or older say they have accessed the Internet using schools or libraries. For voters without home computers, public libraries and schools can be their portals to participate in a National Advisory Referendum. In addition, AT&T has "tele-voting" technology that can allow people to vote over the telephone.

Let's look at three issues you can propose for a National Advisory Referendum for the 2000 elections:

- 1) Any one of your gun control measures submitted to Congress in the aftermath of the Columbine High School shootings which Congress fails to pass;**
- 2) Any one of your Medicare or other health care reforms Congress fails to pass; and**
- 3) Any one of your most important endeavors since you became President which Congress failed to pass;**

The idea to create a mechanism for direct participation by the people on shaping public by casting advisory votes at each general election was proposed by Thomas Jefferson in a letter to Samuel Kercheval and has been lost in history for over 180 years.

The time has come to dust off the plans of democracy's greatest architect—Thomas Jefferson—and fulfill your promise as President to build a bridge to the 21st century.

You should call it—

“The Jefferson-Clinton Plan for Direct Democracy.”

This powerful idea—developed by Jefferson himself—can crown your presidential legacy with the most important advance in democracy since Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence. In addition, giving new life to Jefferson’s idea can help elect Vice President Al Gore as your successor to carry on your important work and help elect Hillary to become the next Senator from New York. What better way to listen to the people than to hold a National Advisory Referendum whereby “the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed and decided by the common reason of society,” as Jefferson himself said about his plan for a national advisory referendum process modeled after the New England Town Meeting concept of self-government common to the early days of our democracy.

In 1996 we met 5 times at Democratic campaign functions in St. Louis, Denver(3 times), and Pueblo, Colorado where we talked briefly about Jefferson’s idea to create a national advisory referendum process to forge a public consensus for public policy so that the “voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of society.”

Prior to meeting you in St. Louis at a private reception for Congressman Richard Gephardt, Senator Bill Bradley sent you a copy of my proposal to give life to Thomas Jefferson’s ideas by establishing a National Advisory Referendum at each general election to create a new mechanism to forge a public consensus for public policy.

You sent me the enclosed letter expressing openness to the idea. I would like to meet with you for 30 minutes to show you how you can bring about the greatest structural change in our democracy to empower people since Thomas Jefferson first penned the Declaration of Independence.

You yourself recently said at a speech at Georgetown University, "Politics at its best is about values, ideas and action." This idea to open the doors of public policy to the people themselves can become one of the cornerstones of your legacy—creating the structural change that will forever bring this nation together. You have sought throughout your presidency to unify this nation. A structural change in our democracy is necessary to accomplish your long-sought goals. Few presidents have grasped the need for structural change as instinctively as Jefferson.

Since receiving your letter, you and I have met 5 times and talked briefly about Jefferson's long lost idea on 3 of those occasions. Here is a summary of where we have met to jog your memory:

- 1) In April 1996 at a private fundraiser for Congressman Richard Gephardt prior to a Democratic rally at the TWA Dome in St. Louis where we talked briefly about Jefferson's idea;
- 2) On the ropes at a 1996 campaign rally in Pueblo, Colorado in front of the County Courthouse where we talked briefly about Jefferson's idea;
- 3) On the ropes at Red Rocks for a 1996 campaign rally with my son on my shoulders;
- 4) At a private fundraiser for Democratic Senate candidate Tom Strickland at Inverness Country Club where we talked briefly about Jefferson's idea;
- 5) On the ropes at a campaign rally at the Denver Coliseum (stock show arena) with my daughter.

You still have time to build your most important democratic bridge for the 21st century—a bridge that will span the time of Jefferson into the next Millenium.

You are Jefferson's namesake and share his democratic vision.

You have a unique opportunity in history to take Jefferson's democratic idea for direct participation in decision-making and vault it into the next millenium

You have the opportunity to become one of the greatest "democratic" visionary presidents in our nation's history by giving life to one of Jefferson's long lost ideas buried for nearly two centuries.

Today people are already voting on the Internet to choose which shows classic sports shows are going to be broadcast on ESPN and which biographies are going to be shown on A&E's "Biography" program. News web sites like MSNBC are opening the public polling process to everyone who surfs the net with real time polls on the topics of the day.

Today's technology has opened the window for the future where people will participate directly in shaping more and more decisions which affect their lives.

The time has come for you as President to open the democratic door to our future by building on the solid foundation of Jefferson's ideas for a national referendum "where the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed and decided by the common reason of society."

While you still have your strong hand on the door handle to the White House, you have the opportunity to turn that handle and cross the threshold into a new tomorrow for all Americans where democracy and technology will merge to create a stronger bond between citizen and government. Over 180 years ago Thomas Jefferson envisioned a new democratic era of direct public participation in shaping public policy where "the whole is cemented by giving every citizen, personally, a part of the administration of the public affairs."

In setting forth a new democratic vision for America, you can set forth a new democratic vision for all the world. Once we establish a National Advisory Referendum, we will be just a digital vision away from holding a World Vote to bring together our global village on issues relating to the environment, health, trade and ultimately, war

and peace. Television and internet technology will create for the world a new mechanism for peace and prosperity.

You are a visionary.

You have the power to lead this nation across the threshold to an era of democratic decision-making that one day will become the democratic model for all the world.

All I ask is for 30 minutes to make my case for a man who can no longer speak his words—Thomas Jefferson. We have met 5 times in crowded rooms and crowded campaign lines.

I ask for one private meeting to share with you an idea which is so powerful that if we succeed it will forever empower people throughout the world,

History awaits your decision.

Important decisions in law are not made by the courts without time for oral argument. You are the Supreme Court of democratic reform. You have seen the brief for the “Jefferson-Clinton Plan for Direct Democracy.”

I respectfully request a 30 minute meeting to discuss with you these important ideas and make the case for Thomas Jefferson’s last important writings on reforming our democracy to include people directly in public policy decision-making. I will meet with you anywhere, anytime, at the White House or on the road.

Jefferson’s ideas deserve your attention. You share his name. You now have the chance to share the same ideas and be forever linked in history as the architect and the builder of the democratic bridge to the 21st century.

This is a decision you alone can make.

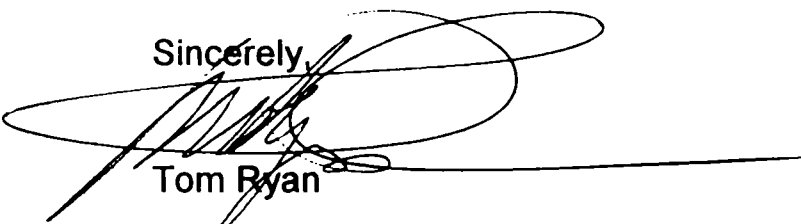
Mr. President, with this idea for a National Advisory Referendum to forge a public consensus for public policy, you can share Jefferson's legacy for all of history.

All I ask, after 3 years and several meetings at campaign and fundraising events, can we meet for 30 minutes at the White House to discuss this important idea.

We are both standing on the threshold of history. Just give me a "yes" or a "no" whether I can come in to represent one of Thomas Jefferson's greatest ideas to improve our democracy.

I look forward to seeing you in Aspen at the home of Senator Diane Feinstein this Saturday July 24.

Sincerely,



Tom Ryan

P.S. Just last month John F. Kennedy, Jr. set forth a new vision of our future to expand participation by merging Jefferson's democratic ideas for public decision-making with today's emerging technology by proposing voting on the Internet, calling it "convenient, appealing, and relevant." Kennedy went on to say, "It's hard to kiss rituals goodbye, but if the result is greater participation, it's a worthwhile sacrifice. We need to develop dramatic steps to revitalize our democracy." (Denver Post, 6-10-99)

**Proposed Legislation
to Give the President of the United States the
Power to Refer to the People up to Three
Issues for a National Advisory Referendum to
Give People a Greater Voice in Government
and to Forge a Common Consensus on
Matters of Public Policy.**

Section 1. The President of the United States may at his sole discretion submit to the voters of the United States one, two or three issues for a non-binding advisory vote of the people to be held at any general election for the Congress of the United States.

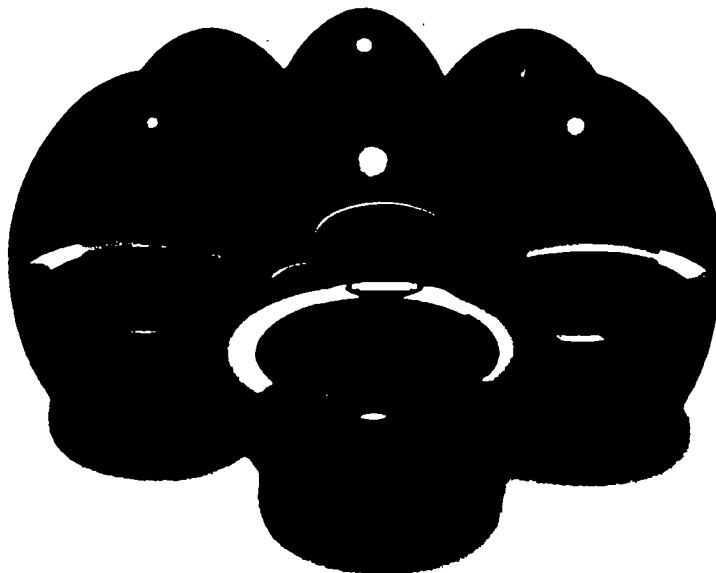
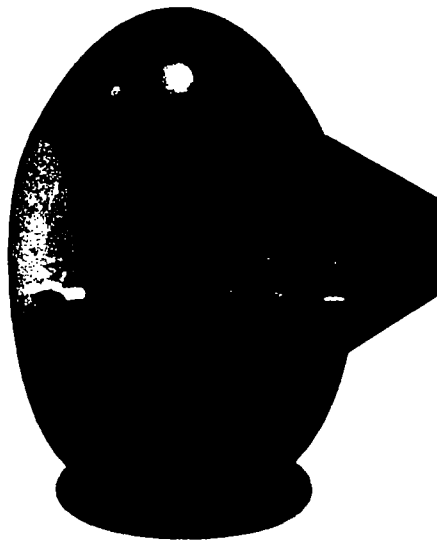
Section 2. The purpose of the advisory referendum is to give people a greater voice in shaping national policy by directly participating in a vote on issues referred to the people by the President of the United States. Issues submitted by the President may include proposed federal legislation, regulations or executive branch policies. Any issue referred to the voters of the United States shall be written in such a way that a "yes" or "no" vote may be taken.

Section 3. The President shall submit to the election authorities of the several states the issues for the advisory vote of the people no later than 120 days prior to the general election. The issues submitted by the President shall appear on the ballot in close proximity to the election of the Senators and Representatives to the Congress of the United States.

Section 4. Any state receiving federal funds shall participate in any referendum referred to the several states by the President of the United States as a condition for the continued receipt of federal moneys.

Section 5. Enforcement of this act shall be by a writ of mandamus in federal district court.

A Voting
Kiosk
For
Internet
Voting
at
public
offices



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 8, 1996

Mr. Tom W. Ryan
144 Willowleaf Drive
Littleton, Colorado 80127

Dear Tom:

Senator Bradley recently sent me your letter explaining your proposal to create a National Advisory Referendum. I appreciate your long-standing interest in this issue, and I'm glad to know of your deep commitment to strengthening our democracy. I have shared your letter with my Office of Scheduling to determine whether the meeting you requested will be possible.

I'm glad you took the time to write.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

U. S. SENATOR...



JOHN F. KENNEDY

FOR PRESIDENT



HEADQUARTERS • 1104 CONNECTICUT AVE., N.W. • WASHINGTON, D. C. • DISTRICT 7-1717

November 2, 1960

Mr. Tommy Ryan
114 North Elizabeth
Fergusson 35, Montana

Dear Tommy:

I was delighted to receive your thoughtful letter.

I am indeed pleased to know of your interest in the affairs of our country, and I am especially pleased that you are "in my corner" in this election.

I am proud to number you among my supporters.

Sincerely,

John F. Kennedy

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WITH ADVISORY VOTES OF THE PEOPLE (Proposed "WORLD VOTE 2000")

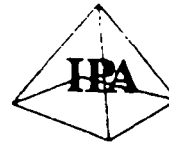
On July 12, 1816, Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Samuel Kercheval, laid out the plans to reform representative government with regular public advisory votes patterned after the New England Town Meeting concept of democratic participation. In commenting on the New England Town Meetings, Jefferson said,

"These wards, called townships in New England, are the vital principle of their governments, and have proved themselves the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government, and for its preservation. ...And the whole is cemented by giving to every citizen, personally, a part in the administration of the public affairs."

Jefferson put forward a plan whereby counties would be divided into wards or townships "of such size as that every citizen can attend, when called on, and act in person. . ." Today such a system would be impractical. However, through the use of advisory referendums at every general election, we can create the participatory democracy which Jefferson envisioned.

"The mayor of every ward, on a question like the present, would call his ward together, take the simple yea or nay of its members, convey these to the county court, who would hand on those of all its wards to the proper general authority; and the voice of the whole people would be thus fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason of society."

With the development of the Internet, we do not have to wait for Congress to act to implement Jefferson's ideas to expand public participation in policy formulation. We can create for the 1998 elections a model National Advisory Referendum on the Internet so that the "voice of the whole people" can be heard on the issues as Jefferson envisioned over 180 years ago. This can become a model for a "World Vote 2000."



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INTERNATIONAL PROFIT ASSOCIATES

Management Consultants

1250 Barclay Boulevard
Buffalo Grove, Illinois 60089
847-808-5590
Fax# 847-808-5599

July 19, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

International Profit Associates is the fastest growing management consulting company in North America. Last year President Gerald Ford spoke at our annual meeting in Las Vegas and in December of this year President George Bush will speak at our meeting in Chicago.

I would like to invite you to speak at a future annual meeting for IPA. I recognize that with your responsibilities as President you may not be able to accept this invitation until after you return to your private life.

However, I want to be the first in line to thank you for all that you have done for America. The last 6 years have been the best this country has ever experienced. The American people and the press do not give you enough credit for what you have done. You have shown that we can have a vibrant economy without giving up on our cherished values of civil rights, health care, environmental quality and consumer protection.

It is because of you, Mr. President, and your strong leadership on the economy, that IPA has been given the opportunity to become the fastest growing management consulting company in the history of American business and the 8th and 9th fastest growing privately-held company overall, according to INC. magazine. In 1991, we started out doing \$100,000 a month in revenue and next year we will pass the \$100 million annual mark in total revenues.

But more importantly, you have shown everyone the character of what it takes to be a winner. The character of a man is not judged by whether he ever gets knocked down, but whether he has the determination to get back up to keep fighting for what he believes.

You have been a personal inspiration to me. You have an open invitation to speak at our company meeting. It would be an honor for me to pay whatever fee is appropriate for your attendance.

Tom Ryan, who is the Director of Marketing Development and built the West for IPA, and whom you have met at Congressman Richard Gephardt's fundraiser in St. Louis in April of 1996 and at Tom Strickland's fundraiser at the Inverness Country Club in Littleton, Colorado later that year, will be representing IPA at the DNC fundraiser you will be attending at the Aspen home of Senator Diane Feinstein this Saturday July 24.

I salute all that you have done for America.

You are truly a great President.

I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,



John R. Burgess
Managing Director

P.S. I would like to help in any way I can to get Hillary elected to the U.S. Senate. Please feel free to call on me.

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