



## What We Want and How to Get It

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British-American philosopher Mick Jagger [put it](#) best: “You can’t always get what you want.”

A universal verity.

But what about a sadder situation? “You must always get what you don’t want.”

Only the deepest pessimist thinks this pertains to our lives, our “lived experience” in even these our mixed-up times. But it does apply to one huge domain of life: our representation in Congress.

Or so [says](#) Stephen Erickson. “The American people consistently rank career politicians among the least trustworthy professions. At the same time, professional politicians are supposed to represent us, and they have more power over our lives than any other profession.”

I don’t think this needs to be argued. Though Mr. Erickson does cite evidence, the thesis hardly needs massive data sets. Or British-American philosophers. So what to do? Erickson, being a practical man, takes the bull by the bumps on its head, two of them:

“First, we need to show how representative democracy might work without professional politicians.” The basic proposal is to “Reduce all local electoral districts to no more than 10,000 residents” where “every district becomes walkable and winnable with handshakes, flyers and yard signs.” This would work because small districts turn politics into “personal reputations and relationships, not money and marketing. Special interests therefore lose their influence.”

His second show-and-tell is “a realistic path forward.” That path lies with “the citizens’ initiative and referendum.”

As readers of this column know, my support for this more direct approach is both long-standing and thorough-going. The initiative process is the only decent process for serious reforms of our representative system because our representatives will block serious reform otherwise.

Please read Stephen Erickson’s [essay](#), “How to Eliminate Politics as a Profession.”

No one wants to be their [Beast of Burden](#).

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.