



*A former mayor and state legislator urges
nothing less than a new Progressive Era*

Citizens Uniting to Restore Our Democracy

By Daniel Kemmis

The election of Donald Trump in 2016 shocked the American political system, and the aftershocks have widened the nation's partisan divide and magnified deep tensions in the public sphere. At a time when our political focus so often shrinks to the immediacy of the latest jolt, this book puts these alarming events in a much broader—and more manageable—context.

Even as we become more polarized along partisan and ideological lines, author Daniel Kemmis reminds us that authentic conservatism and progressivism are both deeply rooted in genuine human concerns and in the shared history of our democratic republic. *Citizens Uniting to Restore Our Democracy* is at once a cogent analysis of what ails our body politic and a wide-ranging, deeply informed prescription for healing our wounded democracy.

The Supreme Court's 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* amplified the role of big money in American politics. But, as Kemmis notes, the threats to our democracy long preceded *Citizens United*. While the influence of big money and relentless partisanship can make ordinary citizens feel powerless in a chaotic political culture, *Citizens Uniting to Restore Our Democracy* offers a stirring reassertion of the power Americans possess as collaborative problem-solvers—namely, the very homegrown self-governing skills needed to rebuild our democracy. Drawing on several decades of public service—as a politician, activist, and scholar, one of *Utne Reader's* “100 Visionaries Changing the World”—Kemmis highlights the transformative potential latent in the everyday practice of engaged citizenship. Leveraged by new mechanisms, such as an effective democratic lobby of the kind his book advocates, that reservoir of active, hands-on citizenship must be mobilized into a twenty-first-century version of the Progressive movement, providing both necessary and sufficient conditions for the renewal of the nation's democratic institutions.

Daniel Kemmis has served as Minority Leader and Speaker of the Montana House of Representatives and Mayor of Missoula, Montana. He is the author of *Community and the Politics of Place*, *The Good City and the Good Life*, and *This Sovereign Land*.

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