

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

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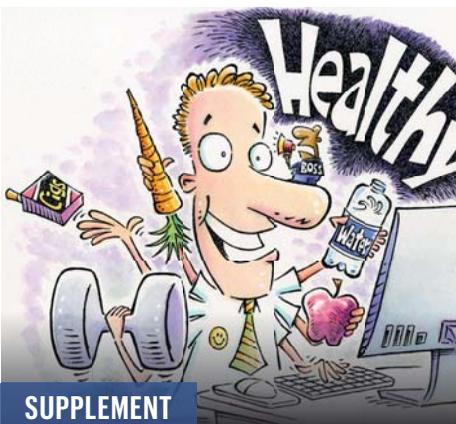
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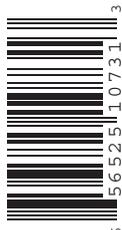


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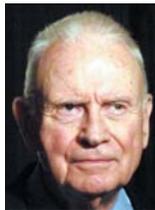
VIEWPOINT

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LEE HAMILTON

What it will take to restore public trust in a fractured Washington



Lee Hamilton

With so much turmoil in Washington and around the U.S., it's easy to get caught up in the crises of the moment. These are, indeed, worth our attention – but so are longer-running developments that threaten the health

of our representative democracy. I want to lay them out in one place, so the most serious problems confronting our system don't slip from our attention.

First, it has become very hard to make our system work. Our country is so large, so complex – and at the moment, so polarized and divided – that it's tough to make progress on our challenges.

In more ways than not, Congress reflects the nation that elected its members; all the contrary sentiments and cross-currents that characterize our communities come to rest on Capitol Hill. Ideally, that is where they should be reconciled. Congress has failed us repeatedly in this regard, but we need at least to recognize the magnitude of its challenge.

Still, this does not excuse what I consider to be Congress's chief failing: In the face of difficult problems, it has become timid. Its members don't like to make hard choices. So they

don't come close to living up to their responsibility to be a co-equal branch with the presidency.

They may criticize the president, but they also defer to him to set the agenda and to make policy. From national security and foreign affairs, to the nation's mounting debt, to entitlement reform, to the long-term economic dislocation that has led so many Americans to feel forgotten, Congress has had little impact.

Which is why it's not surprising that we face a third long-term crisis: People have lost confidence in the institutions of government. This has been building for at least two generations, stretching back to the Vietnam War. No matter how understandable this lack of trust might be, it is a serious problem. Restoring public confidence will take hard, sustained work, starting with high standards of conduct at all levels. Once public confidence is lost, it can't be regained through rhetoric, only through exemplary performance.

But this won't happen unless we address the fourth challenge: Our elections system needs reform. At pretty much every level, it's throwing democracy off-kilter. House districts have been gerrymandered to create so many safe seats that many members need only be responsive to their base. Our voting system is fragile and in

disrepair. We need to ensure the fairness, integrity and efficiency of our voting infrastructure and procedures – or risk undermining one of the cornerstones of our democracy.

Which is also threatened by our fifth challenge: the powerful and pervasive influence of money on the political process. Our system is awash in money. Many Americans feel money is what really runs Washington – as opposed to the ideas and principles we were taught in civics class. Despite efforts at reform, too many Americans feel they've become a political afterthought.

Yet if they have, it's not just money that's to blame. Too many of us have become disengaged from and indifferent to the political process. That may be changing at this moment, but as a historical trend, it's inarguable.

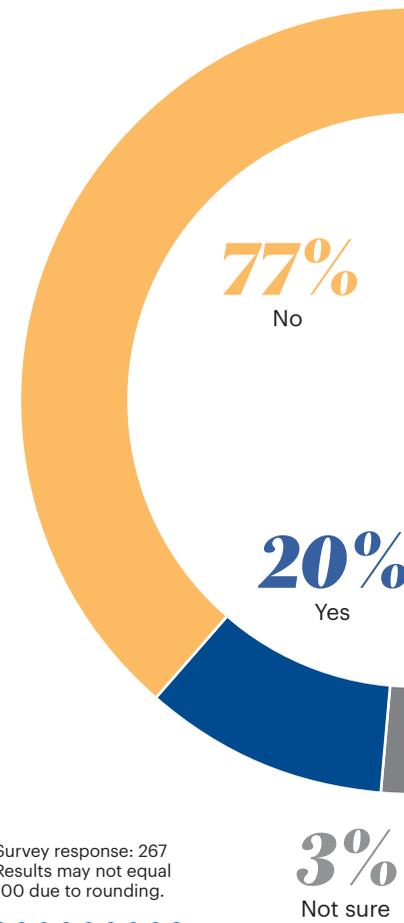
As citizens we have to learn to work with those who hold different views, forge common ground with them and hold our representatives to account – not alone for their political views, but for their ability to get things done. To make representative democracy work, we citizens have to up our game, too.

Lee Hamilton is a Distinguished Scholar at Indiana University's School of Global and International Studies and was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

► BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY

WE ASKED

SHOULD OHIO TEACHERS BE REQUIRED TO DO JOB SHADOWING?



THIS WEEK'S POLL

DO YOU KEEP EXTRA BUSINESS CLOTHES AT THE OFFICE?

DOUG BAILEY

A manufacturer's plea for bipartisan help on taxes, regulation

Ohio's manufacturers are optimistic. A recent survey of them found 60 percent are looking forward to expansion in 2017, putting the Buckeye State on target for six consecutive years of growth.

Among major players with investments in the pipeline are General Motors, Whirlpool and Navistar International. Anheuser-Busch proudly is a part of the economy with nearly 800 employees across the state and more than \$75 million invested here since 2012. Many smaller manufacturers have similar plans to invest and create jobs.

The situation in Ohio reflects manufacturing's central role in powering the U.S. economy. The manufacturing industry supports more than 18 million American jobs, and we expect the industry will need to fill 2 million jobs over the next 10

years. This growth delivers broadly shared benefits. Every dollar invested in manufacturing adds \$1.81 to the economy. From advanced medical treatments to green energy solutions to handcrafted bicycles to great beer – it's all manufacturing, all done in Ohio.

But U.S. manufacturing could do even more – and lift up more people – if policymakers can break through their partisan logjam and make progress on the issues that matter. For manufacturers, action cannot come soon enough on infrastructure investment, regulatory streamlining and comprehensive tax reform.

America's aging infrastructure is where bipartisan progress should be possible in short order. Most leaders agree a competitive manufacturing sector needs strong roads, bridges, tunnels, air and sea ports, and a modernized electric grid and

telecommunications system. Building that infrastructure would support all facets of our economy and put millions of people to work in the process.

On the regulatory front, manufacturers are simply looking to reduce the red tape that can slow down job creation and innovation. While the details can be politically challenging, the overarching goal of a more efficient economy should be one all can agree on and work toward.

Finally, comprehensive tax reform is an idea whose time has come. The last major overhaul of the U.S. tax code happened in 1986. It goes without saying the world has changed significantly in the intervening 30 years. While Ohio's manufacturers have innovated, expanded and adapted, the tax system hasn't kept pace and is making it harder for American companies to compete and create more

good jobs at home.

As I meet with area leaders of both parties to talk about how we can work together to increase wages, create rewarding careers and grow local economies, I hope to set an example that will resonate across the state and all the way to Washington, D.C.

The message I hope to send is simple: America's manufacturers are optimistic about the future and nowhere more so than in Ohio. With the right combination of American innovation, ingenuity and grit, combined with policymaking that puts the national interest ahead of partisanship, we can usher in an era of manufacturing growth that will benefit workers in this state and across the U.S.

Doug Bailey is vice president of industry affairs for Anheuser-Busch Companies Inc.