If you’re like me, you’re really frustrated with politics these days! As a college student, I feel that I don’t have a voice because of all the money flooding into political campaigns!

Did you know that the 2016 elections cost over $7 billion? The rich campaign donors who dominated the election are now driving a political agenda that rejects the Paris Climate accord; puts young immigrants, Dreamers, at risk; continuously raises college tuition and student debt; incarcerates more Americans than any other country, and encourages hatred and bigotry.

So yes, I’m frustrated for sure. But at the same time, I feel hopeful that we can change things – that students can have a voice. There’s a growing outcry from millions of Americans, young and old, who are fed up with way things are going. It’s time to take back our democracy from the unfair power of wealthy donors, and give it back to the people.

How do we do that? By electing politicians who listen to the people who elect them, not to their donors. By funding campaigns so that candidates can spend time with and depend on voters, not lobbyists. By ensuring that everyone, including students, can register and vote.

The amazing thing is that laws that strengthen our democracy in these ways already exist! Take voting for example. Illinois and nine other states have *Automatic Voter Registration,* where every citizen can vote without going through a complicated registration process. Thirty-three states allow citizens to vote early – before the designated “official” voting day. And Congress is considering making Election Day a holiday, so everyone can make it to the polls.

And laws changing the way campaigns are funded are also being implemented. In states like Connecticut and Maine, and cities like New York, Los Angeles and Seattle, public campaign financing systems mean that ordinary citizens, not just the wealthy, can afford to run for office. No longer dependent on rich donors for funding their campaigns, even young people can run and win.

So while many of my friends and I are angry at the enormous political power of money, we are working to change that. We’re getting involved in a new cause - the cause of creating a real democracy with campus organizations like Democracy Matters.

We’re helping to pass laws that remove barriers to voting, and that change campaign financing and open up the political system to everyone. We’re going to get the big money out of politics and people back in. We’re going to create a government that is truly of, by, and for the people – all the people. Join us!