

# Melton For Congress 2002

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*Welcome to the Jeff Melton for Congress Website!  
People Over Profits!*

Even Newer News: Jeff's new trifold flyer is online. Please download, print, and pass to your friends. Get [the front side here](#) and [back side here](#). Also, please let us know if you would like printed flyers, bumperstickers, a t-shirt, or yard signs!

Latest News: Jeff is on the ballot, thanks to partisan politics. After Jeff's ballot status was challenged, the election commission couldn't agree whether to enforce the challenge. The Republicans voted to keep him on; the Democrats to kick him off. So, Jeff remains on the ballot. Too bad that it took greed to enforce democracy, but at least Indiana's ninth district will retain its ONLY corporate-free Congressional candidate! Look/listen for Jeff in the League of Women Voters' 9th District candidates debate on Louisville's Channel 3 on Oct. 14 at 7pm Louisville time, and on Bloomington's WFHB radio Oct. 1 at 5:30pm Bloomington time.

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My name is Jeff Melton. I am a social psychologist, educator, political activist, parent, and member of the [Monroe County Green Party](#). I am the 2002 [Green Party](#) candidate for Congress in [Indiana's 9th District](#). As a Green Party member, I am committed to the fundamental Green Party values of grassroots democracy, social justice, ecological wisdom, and nonviolent conflict resolution.

For a quick overview of where I stand on specific issues, [click here](#). For a comparison of my views with incumbent Baron Hill's, see our [campaign flyer](#). For an overview of why I am running and why I believe the Green Party is important, keep reading this page.



Jeff Meets Ralph Nader.

I am running in part because I believe voters who share Green values deserve to have choices on the ballot that represent their views, rather than being forced to either vote for a "lesser evil" or not vote at all. Democrats who say progressive third party candidates who run against them are "spoilers" and shouldn't run are, in my view, betraying their lack of support for grassroots democracy. Part of grassroots democracy involves being free to choose candidates who truly represent one's views.

Although there often are significant differences between Democratic and Republican candidates, there are important similarities between the Democratic and Republican parties that lead us to believe an alternative to the two-party system is needed.

First, big money -- cash from large corporations and wealthy individuals -- dominates both major parties. In the 2000 Presidential campaign, for example, there were [more than 65 multinational corporations](#) that each contributed at least \$50,000 to *both* Gore and Bush, including HMOs, tobacco companies, agribusiness, military contractors, oil companies, pharmaceutical companies, banks and brokerage firms, and insurance companies. Both parties raised over \$100 million

in corporate "soft money" contributions. Bush and Gore each raised well over \$100 million in direct campaign contributions, compared to approximately \$6 million by Green Party candidate Ralph Nader (who, unlike the other candidates, took no corporate or PAC money).

My Democratic Party opponent, incumbent Baron Hill, has played this corporate money game to the hilt, taking in contributions from such well-known corporate giants as [General Electric](#), Philip Morris, WorldCom, RJ Reynolds, Microsoft, AOL, Boeing, General Dynamics, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Ford, Federal Express, UPS, Tyson Foods, Procter & Gamble, Arthur Andersen, and Enron. I have never accepted a dime from any for-profit corporation, and I never will.

Democratic Party supporters are correct in pointing out that it is possible to run as a Democrat without being beholden to corporate money; however, particularly around election time, there is little criticism from within party ranks of those who are. In contrast, we Greens do not have to pull our punches when criticizing candidates who are on the corporate gravy train, because our party does not accept corporate contributions at all.

A second major similarity between the two major parties is that the majority of elected officials from both parties are not serious about genuine, or grassroots, democracy:

- Although a ban on "soft money" seems likely to pass, few politicians from the two major parties support reforms such as full public financing of elections that would deal in a truly effective way with the problem of corporate corruption of the political process.
- The Indiana state legislature recently voted virtually unanimously to pass a bill that shortens the time that third party candidates have to gather the petition signatures necessary to achieve ballot status. (Some legislators want to reverse that decision, but they are decidedly in the minority.) Indiana's onerous ballot access requirements resulted from a similarly widespread bipartisan consensus back in 1981, when John Anderson's Independent bid for President scared a lot of members of the major parties.
- The two major parties routinely exclude third party candidates from candidate debates. Few politicians from either major party spoke out against Ralph Nader's exclusion from the Presidential debates (and forcible exclusion from even being in the audience despite possessing a valid ticket). Recently, the Green Party candidate for Governor in Michigan was arrested for attempting to participate in a debate from which he had been excluded.
- Aside from members of the Congressional Black Caucus, not a single Congressional Democrat attempted to formally object to George W. Bush's illegitimate selection as President or the violations of the Voting Rights Act it involved. In order for a debate concerning the validity of Florida's electoral results to take place on the House floor, Senatorial support of the CBC's objections was required; no Senators did so.
- Few Democratic politicians in the states (such as Florida) that still prohibit former felons from voting have publicly supported overturning this prohibition, even though it has likely cost Democratic politicians millions of votes and countless elections--the 2000 Presidential election, of course, being one of them--over the years.
- It is questionable whether a significant number of Democrats will support abolishing the Electoral College, although that, too, prevented Democratic candidate Al Gore from becoming President.
- In Alaska, the Democratic Party strongly opposes a ballot initiative to enact [Instant Runoff Voting](#). (Interestingly, the Alaska Republican Party is on the right side of this issue -- it has joined a coalition of supporters that includes the Greens and other third parties.)

Bizarrely, despite the illegal maneuverings of the Bush campaign that got Bush (s)elected President and Democrats' feeble efforts to challenge them, many Democrats blamed Ralph Nader's presence on the ballot for Gore's loss. Even Workers World Party candidate Monica Moorehead received more votes than George W. Bush's razor-thin margin of "victory" in decisive Florida, but it was Ralph Nader and the Greens who got the blame for Gore's loss. Apparently, maintaining bipartisan dominance over the electoral system is more important to many Democrats than having a free and fair electoral process in which voters have a wide choice of candidates who are able to compete on a level playing

field.

A third major similarity between the two mainstream parties is that on many important issues, Democrats and Republicans tend to hold similar views. The often-discussed "[bipartisan consensus](#)" is a very real phenomenon:

- Many Congressional Democrats (Baron Hill among them) have joined their Republican colleagues in supporting "free trade" agreements such as NAFTA and the WTO that have cost the U.S. hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs and harmed the environment and workers' rights. Twenty-five House Democrats (including Hill) and 23 Senate Democrats joined their Republican colleagues recently in passing "Fast Track," which will grant George Bush authority to negotiate the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas with no input whatsoever from Congress.
- The California State Legislature (composed exclusively of Democrats and Republicans) voted *unanimously* a few years ago to deregulate California's electric industry. Electric rates subsequently skyrocketed to as much as ten times their former level, and power blackouts became routine.
- Socially conservative, authoritarian, or corporate-friendly judicial and cabinet appointees often face little Congressional opposition. For example, the Senate *unanimously* approved the nominations of staunchly anti-abortion Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson (famous for his Draconian welfare-slashing policies as governor of Wisconsin).
- The Democratic response to the Bush tax cut plan still contained hugely disproportionate benefits for the rich.
- Few Congressional Democrats support cutting the U.S. [military budget](#), which is more than six times that of the nearest competitor and accounts for nearly 40% of world military spending. In fact, the House recently voted 398-17 to *increase* this already bloated military budget by 10% to \$343 billion. The Senate voted *unanimously* (99-0) for this outrageous increase. Bush supports an even larger increase.
- Since well before the birth of the Soviet Union gave it the excuse of "fighting communism," the U.S. has engaged in military interventions abroad that have repressed struggles for democracy, social justice, and human rights -- not to mention ravaged the natural environment -- usually with some ulterior motive (e.g. control over oil or other valuable minerals coveted by U.S. corporations) in mind. There has seldom been more than token opposition from either party to such policies. The most recent example is the virtually unanimous vote in Congress to allow George W. Bush to wage a "war on terrorism" in Afghanistan, or wherever else he wished, with no Congressional oversight whatsoever. Only one member of Congress, Democrat Barbara Lee, voted against this abrogation of Congressional responsibility and green light for war. As is the case with the apparently impending U.S. war on Iraq, oil probably had a lot more to do with the Afghan War (Afghanistan is a preferred route for oil pipelines from the Caspian Sea) than fighting terrorism.
- There has also long been strong support from both Democrats and Republicans for providing military aid to repressive foreign governments. By far the largest recipient of U.S. military aid since 1967 has been Israel. Its military occupation and settlement of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (and the brutal policies it has pursued in the process) are clearly illegal under international law and have been unequivocally condemned by virtually every nation in the world except itself and its benefactor, the U.S. While both Democrats and Republicans are quick to support resolutions condemning Palestinian violence against Israeli civilians, virtually no member of Congress from either major party is willing to condemn the much greater Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians, demand Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, or stop subsidizing these policies with \$4 billion per year of our tax money.

No issue is more important today than our government's violence abroad (most recently in Afghanistan), which almost inevitably results in considerable harm to innocent people. Horrible as the events of September 11 were, they cannot serve as a justification for this ill-conceived and bloody so-called "war on terrorism," which even some [family members](#) of September 11 victims have condemned. [Reliable estimates](#) indicate that approximately 3800 innocent civilians were killed outright between October 7 and December 7 by US bombing, which is more than are now believed to have died in the September 11 attacks. Given that the bombing forced a drastic curtailment of international food relief

efforts to this war-torn and desperately poor country for several crucial weeks, it is likely that tens or hundreds of thousands more have died in the ensuing months.

If American terrorists committed a September 11-scale terrorist attack against another country and hid out somewhere in the United States, few if any Americans would tolerate "retaliation" from the target country that killed a much larger number of innocent Americans. The bombing of heavily populated areas, use of cluster bombs, and other aspects of the U.S. response to September 11 represent a willful disregard of civilian well-being and international law that is not an acceptable way to respond to terrorism. It is wrong -- and, one could argue, racist -- to adopt a cavalier attitude toward people's lives and well-being merely because they are from Afghanistan rather than the U.S., as our government has done. Multilateral police actions undertaken in accordance with international law and efforts to pay attention to root causes of terrorism (the Palestinian situation, poverty, state-sponsored violence, etc.) are both more respectful of innocent people's well-being and rights and far more likely to reduce terrorism than our government's illegal and destructive military actions. (To see some of my writings and speeches concerning September 11 and the aftermath, [click here](#).)

As we struggle for a better world, we must be clear about the nature of its current problems. Behind all that is wrong with our political and economic system -- the sellout mainstream politicians, the [corporate bailouts](#), the exploitation of workers, the worldwide despoliation of the environment and colossally wasteful energy policies, the corrupt electoral system, corruption in corporate boardrooms, etc. -- is the domination of our society by a wealthy, powerful few. Important decisions are made either by politicians who are for the most part bought and paid for by corporate cash or by corporate executives accountable only to their shareholders, not to the general public. Profits are the all-important bottom line behind the vast majority of the choices that are ultimately made. If we want a world in which our children and grandchildren can even survive, let alone prosper, we must fight with every ounce of our being for greater democracy, greater citizen power, in the workplace and in government. We must fight for grassroots democracy as if our lives depend on it, because they do. People over profits!