

# The Bribe

By Jack English

“Mr. Nussbaum, you are going to lose the election and there is nothing we can do about it,” Arnie Fabian said. Fabian was a well-known, highly sought after political consultant.

“What do you mean, I am going to lose? I have dreamed of becoming governor all my life!” Nussbaum banged his fist on the table. “There must be something I can do?”

“The only people voting for you are the people who vote the straight party line every time. They would vote for a ham sandwich if it was on our party’s ticket. I just cannot get anyone else to vote for you.”

“How many more votes do I need to win?” Nussbaum asked.

“You need another twenty-five or thirty thousand votes to win,” Fabian said.

“Look,” Nussbaum said, “if I sell my house in Haddonfield and my summer home in Margate, I can raise about \$1.8 million.”

“So?”

“What if I offer to pay anyone who votes for me \$50? I should be able to buy 36,000 votes!”

“They will put you in jail for that!” Fabian said.

“Why?” Nussbaum whined. “It is my money. Why can’t I do what I want with it? Why can’t I just pay everyone who votes for me \$50?”

“It does not matter if it is your own money. It is illegal, and I refuse to discuss it.”

Nussbaum fumed and fussed and grumbled into his coffee, then he looked up and said, “What if I say that when I am elected, I will give everyone \$5,000 as a... refundable tax credit?”

“Oh, well, as long as you use taxpayer money, it is legal. You are brilliant. You will be elected in a landslide!”

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**Don’t like this story? I guess it is not polite to tell the truth.**