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In the age of instant global communication and given the ability to travel anywhere in the country inside twelve hours, there is no reason whatsoever that politicians should be allowed to start campaigning more than a month before any given election.

Here's how I'd like to see it go:

Candidates begin their internal campaigning leading up to primary elections ~February. The primaries are then held in March, after which the candidates are required by law to stop campaigning and return to their goddamn jobs until October. This not only allows the people a breather from bullshit and obnoxious political ads, but it also forces the candidates to make their respective cases through the quality of their work during the intervening months (which would naturally be under scrutiny). Come October, the candidates are then allowed to begin campaigning again. They will hold an open-to-public debate at the end of each week. Any candidate found to be accepting or using additional campaign funds between March and October will be immediately stricken from the ballot and their party will not be allowed to select an alternate. This will encourage compliance. There will be no surprise VP announcements designed to create a last-minute swell of support, as the candidates will be required to declare their VP choices immediately following the primaries in March.

Additionally, any party that misses the registration deadline to be placed on the ballot in any state will bloody well not be placed on the ballot anyway just because they're so influential. I'm looking at you, Texas Republicans and Democrats (yep, both of 'em missed it and it probably won't matter.).