

# *Common Sense*

**A Book for Conservatives & Liberals  
& Moderates to Unite for an  
*Even Better America***



by an Oregonian physician

***Pass it on to others. Tell them to skim just the yellow highlighting to see if it's interesting.***

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This essay is dedicated to  
*The Pledge of Allegiance*  
&  
The Year-Round Meaning of The Fourth of July.

It is meant for all Americans, regardless of political affiliation.

It espouses *no* particular political party or candidate.

It is *not* about big government or small government.

It is about *uncorrupt* government.

It is about a better economy, a balanced federal budget, and jobs.

It is about saluting the courageous ideals of all our greatest generations—past and present.

It is about making our country even better than it already is.

It is about helping our country and all Americans to be yet more free.

It is about the surest way to end terrorism.

It is about *being an American*.

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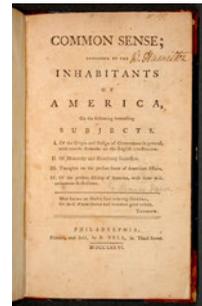
Dear Reader,

Many thanks for giving this book your time.

As many people tell me, there is perhaps too much hate, rage, and indifference in our country for us to come together as a nation in the way the book suggests. (And I see this all the time in my patients, when they tell me about the anger in their lives and their families.) However, for me, it was still important to write it.

Like me, if you give the book to others, you may find some people respond with defeatist pessimism or hurtful hostility, but pay them no mind. Arguing with them only feeds into their defeatism. Just nod your head and say, "You may be right," and recommend the book to someone else. If someone shows an interest in it, tell them what you think of it, or disagree with in it, and ask them for their thoughts and opinions too!

Also, please forgive my anonymity. The book is about its message, *not about me*. And there's a tradition in American history of such books being anonymously penned. When Thomas Paine published his 1776 pamphlet, *Common Sense; Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, on the Following Interesting Subjects*, he signed it "by an Englishman."



Sincerely,

an Oregonian physician

(from a smaller-than-average state, but still a believer in liberty and justice for all)

Oregon, July, 2014

PS: If you google "Granny D," you'll learn the New Hampshireite died in 2010, at age 100.

From age 88 to 90, she walked across America, over 3000 miles from the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, CA to the Capitol Building in Washington, DC—across deserts, over mountains, through blizzards—for campaign finance reform.

It's never too late to be a true citizen, or, as she put it, "raise a little hell."

# I

**We are all taxed without fair representation in the United States Senate.** This has always been a glitch in our proud country, even though *we were founded on fighting taxation without representation*. We've delayed fixing it, because we've been busy with other issues: whether to have the slave trade, whether to free the slaves, a Civil War, whether women can vote, a couple World Wars, a Depression, a Cold War, going to the moon, more wars, whether Republicans or Democrats are in power (politicians keep saying that's the only issue), drug wars, crime, immigration, more economic meltdowns, 9/11, health care ...

But some of the above issues were sometimes really just about this problem with the Senate, and it is now time to own this principal problem. The most egregious example happens to be in our nation's Capital. "TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION" reads across the bottom of most DC license plates. This is because DC residents have no representation in Congress. No senators represent DC. DC does have a delegate to the House of Representatives, but she isn't allowed to vote. But *DC residents pay taxes, and they die in our wars*. Some activists push for DC statehood, but DC tax payers are so overwhelmingly Democrat, that the Democratic and Republican parties stay at a standoff. Democrats like how DC statehood would give them an extra two votes in the Senate and an extra vote in the House of Representatives, and the Republicans don't like that. Both parties think that seats from DC might one day make the difference between which party controls Congress, especially the Senate. And so DC statehood never gets anywhere.

An extra vote in the House of Representatives usually wouldn't change the balance of power—it would be only one more vote to 435. But Senate seats can really matter. Two more senators to just 100 can totally change which party controls the Senate. So, sometimes people propose compromises: give DC a vote in just the House but not in the Senate, or give DC just a vote in the House and also give Utah an *extra* vote in the House (something Utah and DC have advocated in the past<sup>1</sup>), etc. But these compromises have never passed, and so DC remains stuck with "TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION."

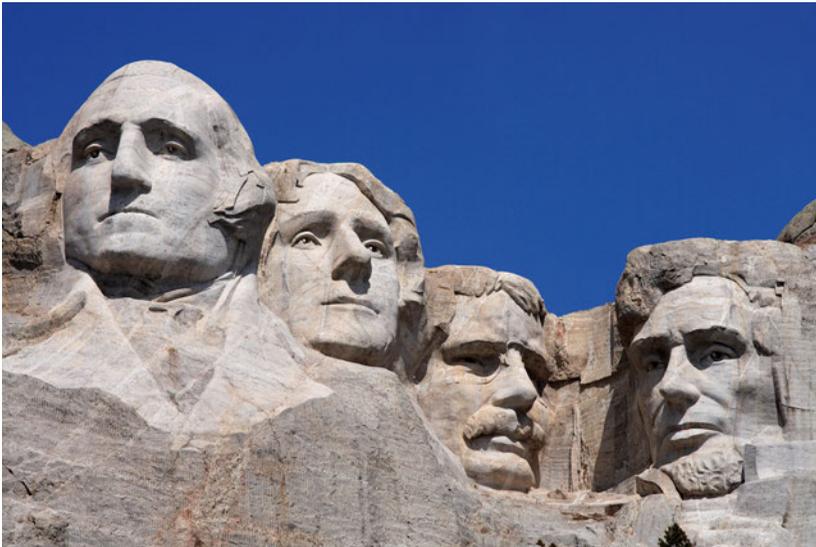
These compromises also forget the much larger issue of how

**the Senate is unfair for ALL tax payers in America, not just those in DC.**

Every state has a different population, and so tax payers in every state have a different level of representation in the Senate. For example, Vermont and Wyoming are the least populous states, with about 600,000 people each (and each has less than DC actually), and those tax payers together have four of the 100 senators in the Senate (300,000 people per

senator). California and Texas are the most populous states, with 38 million and 26 million people each, and those tax payers together also have four of the 100 senators in the Senate (16 million people per senator, *53 times as many* as for Vermont and Wyoming). And it goes on, affecting everyone. **The 30 smallest states have 25% of the population,<sup>2</sup> but they have 60 senators—60% of the representation, a filibuster-proof majority (60 or more votes).**

**This system is a leftover of how the original 13 colonies were so independently minded that they saw themselves as *separate countries*. They were uneasy with the “one nation” idea.<sup>3</sup>** (And it would turn out that they were also especially uneasy with the “one nation *indivisible*” idea.) **Many of the Founding Framers of *The Constitution*, including George Washington,<sup>4</sup> were against this system for the Senate at the Constitutional Convention in 1787.** (Thomas Jefferson, author of *The Declaration of Independence*, was out of the country as minister to France, but he was also against this system.<sup>5</sup>) They had put their lives on the line, in an eight-year Revolutionary War for human equality and freedom from tyranny—to try to create a just nation, *not this*. But some small states threatened to leave the Convention if they didn’t get an unfairly larger say, and so we got a system called the “Connecticut Compromise.”<sup>6</sup> (There were also other unjust compromises in *The Constitution*, which we have since worked to make right, like the slavery compromises,<sup>7</sup> but we have yet to do *anything* to right this one.)



Leaders of our Republic: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln

To some people, this is okay. It doesn't matter that Vermont and Wyoming voters have the same taxes but 53 times more representation than Californians and Texans. But, to people who care about justice and trust in America, this is a *problem*. Are we "The Jealous States of America" or The *United States* (and People) of America? This is not our Founders' motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, on our national seal, dollar bills, and all our coins: "Out of Many, One."<sup>\*</sup>

Some might say, "It's always been unfair like this, and so this must be the way things should be." But that something has always been wrong before doesn't make it right. Others might also say, "But in grade school weren't we taught we have a perfect system of government?" There's no such thing as perfect, and actually our system is just an old compromise some small states forced our Founders to accept. We can always improve.

Another way to look at this: the 22 smallest states have 12.4% of the population,<sup>8</sup> but they have 44 senators—able to filibuster all legislation if they want. Sometimes it's said small states need that or big states would oppress them. But consider how black people are a slightly higher percentage even, 13.1% of the population,<sup>9</sup> and yet there are only two black senators. Should we make sure the Senate is also always at least 44% black?<sup>10</sup> And then what about all the other minorities? Should we give them all extra-large says too? *In the end, maybe we should just leave the majority with no say at all, but still tax them—like the people of DC?*

## II

A real solution to how DC gets taxed without representation is to *pay attention to how we all need a just Senate*. A real solution is to elect our senators nationally, or in groups—*not state by state*. We'd still have 100 senators, but all of us (including DC) would vote for them *equally*—either in regions for groups of senators, or all of us for all the senators together (or really one third of them every two years). And now before anyone gets defensive ...

It's called *proportional representation*.<sup>†</sup> To some, this might seem too big a change to make; "unnecessary";<sup>11</sup> "too complicated"; "too many people to vote for at once";

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<sup>\*</sup> In 1956, Congress made "In God we Trust" our official motto. Our coins show both mottos—Founders' motto on one side and official motto on the other side. To learn more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_national\\_motto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_national_motto)

<sup>†</sup> Sometimes proportional representation gets loosely referred to as "a parliamentary system." However, that only means that a country's chief executive (the prime minister) is from the legislature (the parliament) and is not elected separately by the people—as in a presidential system, where the legislature is called a *national assembly* or a *congress*. A parliament can still be *non-proportional*—as in India, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Ironically, three of the four parts of the United Kingdom—Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales—*do* have proportional parliaments. But the "all-UK"/England parliament, Westminster, does not. For buffs on this, another twist is that Scotland's parliament, Holyrood, is now independent of Westminster.

“unwieldy”;<sup>\*, 12</sup> ... But it’s actually how over 70 countries elect their legislatures,<sup>13</sup> and we’ve supported it to one extent or another in the new constitutions of all the countries America has overcome since World War II,<sup>14</sup> such as Germany,<sup>15</sup> Japan,<sup>16</sup> Iraq,<sup>17</sup> and Afghanistan.<sup>†</sup> In other words, for more than half a century, we’ve helped other countries organize their legislatures this way—with our lessons on how to improve on our example of a Democratic Republic. We also need to get around to doing this *for ourselves*.

There are different kinds of proportional representation. All the types accomplish more complete representation for *all* voters. Some types are better than others, *but they all still mean that voters vote for the parties or candidates they believe in*. The most common system is that people vote for political parties, and the parties get seats according to their proportions of the national vote. (This is called the *party list* system.) People can also vote for who in their party would get to be in the seats their party wins (in a primary before the general election), or people can vote for parties and also vote for individual candidates from those parties at the same time. (This is called an *open list* system.) People can also vote for

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\* Sometimes the argument gets made that the countries that use proportional representation have unwieldy legislatures—with India as an example. But actually India mostly uses “winner take all” election districts, just like the US. (If you just barely win an election district, you win it completely. If you just barely lose in an election district, you lose the district completely, and the votes of everyone who voted for you are all “lost” and “wasted.”) And bureaucratic dead lock in India also has more to do with how government officials in India are rated as fairly corrupt. Corruption pervades every level of the system. Political deadlock also perhaps has a little to do with the large size of India’s legislature—another thing that can encourage factionalism. See the endnote for more information on these issues (#12).

† Iraq and Afghanistan are unfortunately mired in corruption. They are rated as having some of the most corrupt officials in the world, although they have actually been improving slightly here (see endnote #12).

As this book goes to press, it also appears Iraq may be dividing into three sectarian countries. The old bitter resentments are just too much between Kurd, Sunni, and Shia. However, Southern Iraq (Shia) and Iraqi Kurdistan will likely stay republics with proportional parliaments (see endnote #17).

Afghanistan also has its own issues. Along with the corruption problem, it somehow also got a problematic step towards proportional representation. Afghanistan uses a system called multi-member constituencies, and this works better when combined with a voting system called single transferable vote. However, it was somehow set up with single *non*-transferable vote, without party lists, and this can greatly fragment the vote when there are lots of candidates.

To explain this a little more, “multi-member constituencies” means that election districts don’t elect just one local representative by winner take all. Instead they elect multiple local members and those multiple top vote getters go to the legislature. (Illinois used this system for its state legislature for 110 years, from 1870 to 1980, combined with a somewhat outdated voting system called cumulative voting. It was ended by an initiative to decrease the size of the legislature.) Then, “single transferable vote” (also called *choice voting*) means that voters can rank their choices. If a voter’s first choice doesn’t get enough votes, then that voter’s vote goes to their next ranked choice. (Cambridge, Massachusetts uses this system to elect their city council.) But in Afghanistan, voters *don’t* get to rank their choices. *They only vote for first choices*. In the capital, Kabul, which has 33 seats, this system has caused problems. After the top few vote getters, most of the seats go to candidates who each get less than one percent of the vote. And then most of the candidates that people vote for still don’t get elected. Overall, *it’s a half measure to help every vote matter*.

But Afghanistan’s new legislature is still an amazing accomplishment. The country had not had representative government in over 30 years, and now more than a quarter of the representatives are women—**higher than the proportion of women in the U.S. Congress**. To learn more, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan\\_parliamentary\\_election,\\_2005#Electoral\\_system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_parliamentary_election,_2005#Electoral_system)

independent candidates, at the same time that they also vote for whole parties, and in rank-order of preference for both whole parties and independent candidates.\* In other variations, some candidates run regionally, others run nationally, and some candidates run both ways.

The different kinds of proportional representation can seem complex, but they remain simple for voters. You just vote for your values and beliefs—for the candidates or parties you believe in. *A lot of countries do it, and they do it easily.* All these ways of doing proportional representation have the same basic principle: *all votes count*, not just the majority votes, and *all votes count equally*. That’s the main thing to know, but to learn more about the different kinds of proportional representation, this is one web page that explains them very well:<sup>18</sup>

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy/BeginningReading/howprwor.htm>

### III

Right now in America, if you’re a Republican in a solid “blue state” or a Democrat in a solid “red state,” *your vote does not matter, and you are not represented*. Indeed, because 30 of our states have only 25% of the population, and *also because only majority votes count*, it’s really just over half those people (12.6% of the population) that decide 60% of the Senate.<sup>19</sup> This is part of why more than 40% of Americans don’t even bother voting.<sup>20</sup> There’s no point in voting. There’s all this hype that “every vote counts” and “your vote counts,” but people see through that hype. They know their votes don’t really count. So they don’t vote. And because they don’t vote, it’s just all the worse. Multiply the 12.6% of the population that decides the large majority of the Senate times the 60% of people that do bother to vote and you get just 7.5%. It’s crazy. This is democracy? This is America? And it still keeps getting worse. We also have to subtract how 23.5% of the population is under voting age,<sup>21</sup> and we

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\* You can have party lists and independent candidates in the same mix. This might seem a little complicated, but there’s an important tradition of independent candidates in American politics. Of course, one issue is that a single independent candidate doesn’t get seats in proportion to their percentage of the vote, because they are only one person. In a hypothetical proportional US Senate, since there are 100 Senate seats, if an independent candidate gets one percent of the vote, then they get a seat; otherwise they don’t get a seat. And if they get more than one percent of the vote, they still get only their own single seat.

Also, because an independent candidate (or a third party) might not break one percent of the vote in a Senate race, it’s a good idea to allow voters to rank the choices that they like. If a voter’s first choice doesn’t break one percent, then their vote goes to their next choice. Allowing voters to rank-order their choices is called *choice voting* (or single transferable vote—see the footnote on the previous page about Afghanistan). Also, another principle of choice voting is that if an independent candidate gets more than the one percent they need to get a Senate seat, then the extra votes for that candidate go to voters’ next choices. (Some might notice a question around which votes count as the extra votes. An averaging formula is used to distribute them to voters’ next choices.)

finally end up with less than 5.7% of the population that's deciding the controlling makeup of "our" Senate.\*

And while the Senate is what's most obviously unfair, our House of Representatives is also unfair—just not as much. It's true that the number of representatives each state has in the House is *weighted* to each state's population,† but the representatives in the House only "represent" the *majority vote* in each House district, and those districts get drawn to only favor one party or the other. And so the minority votes in each district don't count. This is known as gerrymandering—for a governor of Massachusetts in 1812 named Gerry, who drew an election district in the shape of a salamander to favor his own party.<sup>22</sup> Our two parties are always fighting to control state legislatures and state governorships, especially with the census every ten years, just so that they can gerrymander the US House to their advantage.<sup>23</sup>



The original "gerrymander" election district, in 1812 in Essex County, Massachusetts

The Senate and the House *both* have the problem that your vote only counts if you're in the majority. The House might seem too big for proportional representation, and the House also has an important tradition of local engagement with voters, but there's actually a form of

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\* A common concern is whether proportional representation would be unfair to rural areas, by creating fairness between the citizens of different states. But all our states also have both cities and rural areas, and *no state senate is organized like our federal Senate*. Our federal Senate is failing *both* rural and city citizens all across the country, and proportional representation would actually *increase fairness to both*. For example, small farmers could then vote together from all across the country for their own unique voices in Congress. The way our system works now, tax payers subsidize corporate agriculture, which *exploits and bullies* small farmers. To learn more about these injustices, see the documentary, *Food, Inc.* You can see a preview at <http://www.foodincmovie.com/>

† And sometimes this is presented as a reason that it's okay for the Senate to be unfair: "Since the House is more fair than the Senate, it's okay for the Senate to be unfair." But Common Sense tells us that injustice is still injustice, even if something else is even more unjust.

proportional representation that can really help with a large legislative body like this.\* It's called a mixed-member system, or "the German system." (We supported Germany in inventing it after World War II.) Half the members come from local geographic districts; the other half gets distributed *in groups* from regional geographic areas, so as to even out the party proportions of the total vote. This makes sure *there are locally-elected representatives who stay in touch with local voters*, and it also ensures *everyone's vote matters* in the total makeup of the House, no matter how much the two main parties gerrymander the districts. (For example, Maryland has eight representatives and right now only one is Republican—12.5%. But 27% of Marylanders are Republican,<sup>24</sup> and they are not fairly represented. A mixed-member system would even this out, so that everyone is represented.)

#### IV

There's also another way that proportional representation would make *our* Congress more truly represent us: by helping to end how special interests manipulate our legislators. There's a bumper sticker that says: "Invest in America. Buy a **Invest in America Congressman!**"<sup>25</sup> This is what our government is right now: **Buy a Congressman!** elected officials bought by special interests. And since most Americans can't afford to buy politicians, they don't get represented; only special interests get represented.<sup>26</sup> But we still get taxed, and it's just more taxation without representation. It's also all a repeat of how, a century ago, giant monopolies like Standard Oil took over our economy and our government, and how President Theodore Roosevelt had to break them up to get our country back.<sup>27</sup>



1904:  
Standard Oil monopoly<sup>28</sup>

Clockwise from left,<sup>29</sup> it has a hold on the US Capitol, a hold on shipping industries (upper left), a hold on a state capitol (right), is strangling people of other industries (lower right), and is also reaching for the White House (lower left). It is also spreading over the curved horizon to take over the world. Roosevelt initiated how the monopoly was finally broken up in 1911 into multiple companies, such as Exxon, Mobil, and companies now part of BP.<sup>30</sup>

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\* Although there is an argument for the House being made smaller anyway, so that all the members can know each other personally and work together congenially. See endnote #12 for more about this issue.

Proportional representation helps solve this special-interest problem by making our government more fully representative, so that all citizens have a say, instead of most of us having *no say*. Small states were just our country's first special interests. But ideally, we would also combine proportional representation with publicly financed campaigns. (To learn more about this, see this 15-minute video at: <http://www.publiccampaign.org/video>) Theodore Roosevelt also asked for this from Congress, in 1905, but Congress never passed it.<sup>31</sup>

And now special interests have hijacked our country again. They were the real root cause of America's recent banking and economic meltdowns, and for decades they have cannibalized our economy for themselves.<sup>32</sup> They are why we may be stuck with 6% unemployment for years to come and also with continually more people giving up even trying to find work,<sup>33</sup> and they are why more than one in seven Americans are on food stamps.<sup>34</sup> Yet they still forced the American People to bail them out. Special interests also hold our health care hostage, and they did all they could to corrupt the effort to reform medical insurance. An example is how the insurance industry spent \$700,000 *per day* lobbying Congress<sup>35</sup> and extorted a bill that requires everyone to get insurance—a huge windfall for that industry.<sup>36</sup> However, medical insurance will remain so expensive that not everyone will be able to comply (despite aid programs to help), and the Congressional Budget Office (the CBO—a *nonpartisan* investigatory office of Congress<sup>37</sup>) says at least 30 million Americans will still remain *uninsured*.<sup>38</sup> Special interests continually steam roll our government like this, extorting welfare handouts of all kinds from the American People.



Present Day:  
Special interests  
steam roll  
Congress

Cartoon by Barrie  
Maguire, for the  
“Don’t Get Rolled”  
campaign by the  
nonpartisan reform  
organization,  
Public Citizen

Congress is always having grand theatrical debates, with long speeches vilifying the other party. But these debates are often not real. The speeches are just read off talking points

from the lobbyists who've given the most money. These false debates are meant to distract us and to try to fool us, because they are often just between legislation that serves the special interests or *no legislation at all—which also serves the special interests*.<sup>39</sup> This kind of theater is what the medical-insurance debate was. *Special interests have set up the system so that they always win either way.*\* And this fraudulent theater is only getting worse. In 2010 and 2014, the Supreme Court struck down many of the limited rules on political spending by special interests.<sup>40</sup> But proportional representation, combined with public campaign financing, can help get our country back again.

Some of our elected officials have themselves been fighting hard for better government—at least with campaign finance reform—so that they can concentrate on *servicing the American people*, instead of spending all their time racing for money from special interests for their next campaign. Our best people in Congress want change, and we all need to help them create a Congress that will serve the American People, and all the American people—fairly. You can help create that kind of Congress, by simply talking and *listening* about these issues with your friends, family, and colleagues—your fellow voters. Consider passing this book onto them. Tell them what you disagree with in it, and *listen* to what they think.

## V

If you're not sure that anyone else would welcome this message, keep in mind that *most Americans already know that there's something really wrong with our government*. Numerous polls show that more than 70% of Americans think our country is headed in the wrong direction<sup>41</sup> and that Congressional approval is in the low teens!<sup>42</sup> A Rasmussen poll in 2009 showed that 83% of Americans are very concerned about corruption in our government.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, there's an international organization, Transparency International, which rates most of the countries in the world by how corrupt they are. *In 2013, out of 175 countries rated countries from least corrupt to most corrupt, the USA was number 19 as uncorrupt, tied with Uruguay.*<sup>44</sup> Not bad maybe, but *this whole book is about how we can do better, much better*. Another Rasmussen poll in 2009 showed that, if asked, 57% of Americans think we should

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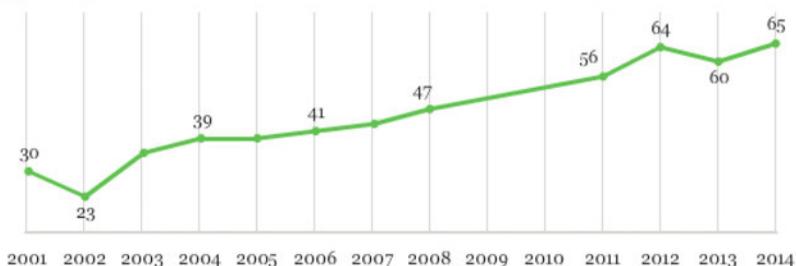
\* Some brave politicians try to change this culture, and they try valiantly (Some are cynical and don't bother) However, whoever we elect to office has an impossible battle. Once they are elected, they find they have no choice but to play along with this system that they are now a part of. It's either that or get completely isolated and accomplish nothing at all. Consequently, no matter how principled they are, or wise or savvy or charismatic, or even how many favors are owed them, or even just how plain nice they are, they still have to work inside this system—a system which ruthlessly blames and punishes any politician who tries to change it. *But the People can change the system*

just completely replace everyone in Congress, with another 18% are undecided.<sup>45</sup> And another Rasmussen poll in 2012 showed 43% of Americans think we should just choose Congress randomly from the phone book, with 19% not sure.<sup>46</sup> But, instead of replacing all the people in Congress, just so that new people can get corrupted by the old system, why not replace the corrupted *system* with a much more honest system? It's the *system* that's the real issue, and Americans know this. Gallup polling asks Americans just this question, and the number of us dissatisfied with our system of government *keeps climbing*. As of 2014, it's 65%.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Americans' Dissatisfaction With U.S. System of Government and Its Effectiveness*

Please say whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with our system of government and how well it works.

■ % Very/Somewhat dissatisfied



GALLUP®

## VI

Electing our Senate or our House in these new ways would each take a new Amendment to our Constitution, and that's a challenge, because the usual way that Constitutional Amendments get proposed is by a vote of two thirds of the Senate and the House. Unfortunately, this is something many members of Congress are unlikely to do, since they only know how to get reelected the old way. They'd be scared that they wouldn't be able to get reelected under a new system—and *getting reelected is their first priority*. But persistent encouragement can help them realize that to propose such an Amendment is the right thing to do—that it's better to be remembered for honesty and justice than for corruption.

There might also be other obstacles to fair and proportional representation—mostly from our two main parties. Both of course have long blocked campaign finance reform, but also, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Democratic Party felt particularly threatened by proportional representation and bitterly opposed it in city councils.<sup>48</sup> And the two parties

might oppose it again now, because their ability to lead would now matter more than their ability to just barely win in each election district, and they might fear that the other party would do better under a new system. (Such a move by either would make it the party of fear.) They also might oppose it, because third parties would probably also be able to get some seats under this system, and our two main parties *hate* third parties. Third parties, even though they tend to be just a minority, do a lot to keep main parties honest. If you don't have third parties, the main parties don't have to bother being honest. It's a lot like how that some people buy Corona beer has a huge effect on keeping prices reasonable from the Anheuser-Busch and MillerCoors beer conglomerates.<sup>49</sup> There are many third parties and independent politicians in the USA, but there are only two independents currently in all of Congress, out of 100 Senators and 435 voting representatives.<sup>50</sup> It should be a little higher than that. Right now, according to Politifact, the independent, Pulitzer-Prize-winning, fact-checking organization, at least a quarter of the statements by members of either political party are basically false.<sup>51</sup> Having a few more independents and third-party representatives in Congress can help change this.\*

Some of the less-populous states might also oppose a Fair and Just Senate—any from conservative Alaska to liberal Vermont. But states that choose to oppose a Fair and Just Senate will also be choosing to be, let's say it, *hesitant* states—like some of the small states in 1787. (Rhode Island didn't even show up at the Constitutional Convention in 1787,<sup>52</sup> and it was also the last state to ratify *The Constitution*.<sup>53</sup>) And special interests who oppose a Fair and Just Senate will try to tell small states that they need to keep their unfair advantage, that they can't trust a fair and just *system*, that they need to behave like insecure and selfish states. They'll try to tell us that *our* principles of equality and justice in *The Declaration of Independence, The Preamble to The Constitution, The Gettysburg Address, and The Pledge of Allegiance* should all be *ignored*.

It's important to be ready for this, to be ready for the selfish and insecure to monger fear of fairness and justice. But fear mongering is easy to recognize. *The only reason for people to monger fear of fairness is that they're unfairly taking advantage of their fellow Americans.* And if that's what they are doing, they should stop it. It's people like that who are the corruption in America. This book is a message to the corrupt that they have better selves—that they can *serve America*.

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\* Another issue is how some people might consider some of these third parties to be “extremists” It's sometimes argued that it's good how our current system silences minority voices, because it “keeps out extremists” Extremists are a problem, but plenty of *Americans with “fringe” opinions also pay their taxes, and they also die in our wars. They deserve a voice too* Also, allowing “fringists” their fair, proportional share of representation in a Republic can help them speak out more calmly and be a responsible part of our country *This deflates extremists' ability to recruit*

## VII

Because of the deep problem of corruption, and how easily it can creep back into any new election system, term limits on Congress may also be a good idea. Indeed, a Gallup poll in 2013 found that 75% of Americans support term limits.<sup>\* 54</sup> Incumbent senators win over 80% of the time; incumbent representatives, over 90% of the time—way too often. Special interests fund the campaigns to keep *their* politicians in power.<sup>55</sup> The politicians then use *our* tax dollars to feed their special interests—partly by bringing “pork” to their home states, like the “bridge to nowhere.”<sup>56</sup> Earmark pork might be good for some, but it adds to a culture of unproductive government spending that’s driving the rest of our country into bankruptcy. **It’s a part of why we have a national debt of over \$17 trillion—over \$55,000 per citizen.<sup>57</sup>** And many of our Founders, including Thomas Jefferson and George Washington,<sup>58</sup> felt that homesteading on political offices is not how to run a government. Term limits are not a perfect solution though, and one problem to keep in mind with them is that they don’t solve how politicians quickly learn to manage their votes so as to maximize their post-Congress payoff: the lucrative industry and lobbying jobs that come after “public service.”<sup>59</sup> **Also, term limits can force good people who’ve finally become legislative experts to leave Congress just when they can do the most good,** but later in this book is a suggestion that may help offset this.

## VIII

The corrupt and the fear mongers will also try to say that proportional representation is too complicated, that it will only confuse American voters, that Americans aren’t smart enough to understand it. They’ll tell us to not believe in ourselves. But proportional representation is easy for voters: you vote for your values and beliefs. **If we can teach it to other countries, we should be able to learn it ourselves.** *Indeed, we owe this to ourselves and to our Republic.* And we also owe it to our troops, because they fight and die for democracy and justice—for us and for the whole world. We owe it to *all of them, past and present,* because their sacrifices are not forgotten, because we honor what they did and they do for us.<sup>†</sup>

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\* **75% of the People support it, and Congress has done nothing** Just your tax dollars at work

† Just a few of the many very inspiring films that poignantly show the sacrifices of our troops—*regardless of controversy over our wars*—include *Taking Chance* (with Kevin Bacon, about escorting a fallen soldier home from Iraq), *Return With Honor* (presented by Tom Hanks and PBS, on survivors of the Hanoi Hilton in Vietnam), and the majestically-inspiring WWII epic series by documentarian Ken Burns, *The War*



AGNES  
SEP 24 1900  
MAY 28 1977  
WIFE OF  
RDM  
FRANCIS  
HILKIN  
USN

ROY  
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K  
LUCKY  
PFC C  
05 ENGRS  
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WORLD WAR I  
SEP 1893  
FEB 1957

WILLIAM R  
BICKMAN  
RENNING  
CPL  
MAY 29 1891  
79 549  
WORLD WAR  
MAY 22 1951  
RGR 1155

LYDIA  
O'NE  
JAN 1 1906  
FEB 1 1967  
WIFE OF  
EMIL R O'NEALS  
NSR

JAMES  
RAYMOND  
MAN  
ALASKA  
SGT  
US MARINE  
WORLD WAR II  
MAY 15  
1915

## IX

But all the above tactics and deceptions might still prevail against the People. Our own Senate and House will likely use these tactics to refuse to propose Amendments that would end their corruption. **But the Founding Framers gave us another way to propose Amendments, in Article V of *The Constitution*: by two thirds of the states calling for a Convention to propose Amendments.**<sup>60</sup> This might be a better idea anyway, because then the states could each send to the Convention their best state leaders and also their best political scientists and philosophers. This is what the Founding Framers were really—philosopher leaders. They were people like Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. George Washington presided over them and always asked for their counsel:



Thomas Jefferson<sup>61</sup>  
author of *The Declaration of Independence*,  
*Philosopher of Freedom*,<sup>62</sup> founder of The Library of  
Congress and The University of Virginia, long a mentor  
to James Madison, 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of State, farmer scientist,  
3<sup>rd</sup> President



Benjamin Franklin<sup>62</sup>  
founder of The University of Pennsylvania,  
scientist, inventor, diplomat, political theorist, soldier,  
only person to sign all 3 documents creating the USA<sup>64</sup>  
(*Declaration of Independence*, *Treaty of Paris*, *Constitution*),  
most senior delegate to Constitutional Convention—at age 81



Alexander Hamilton<sup>65</sup>  
economist, Federalist philosopher,<sup>67</sup>  
1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of the Treasury, who **firmly believed in  
not exploiting that office to get rich off the People**<sup>68</sup>  
(nor in becoming a banking CEO first, and then exploiting  
that office), Captain of only unit from Revolutionary Army  
that's still currently in US Army ("Hamilton's Own")<sup>70</sup>



James Madison<sup>66</sup>  
main political philosopher and Framers of  
*The Constitution* and *The Bill of Rights* Amendments,  
with emphasis on *checks and balances in government*,  
advocate of *population-weighted representation*<sup>69</sup>  
although this only succeeded with House of Representatives,  
4<sup>th</sup> President



The General who helped make it all possible,<sup>71</sup>  
president of the Constitutional Convention in 1787,<sup>72</sup>  
1<sup>st</sup> President of The United States of America

## X

Sending scholars and philosophers from the states to such a Convention (called an “Article V Convention”\*) would help the discussion about the best way to set up proportional representation. They could also help a Convention discuss and propose other Amendments for *Fair and Uncorrupt Representation*, like:

- **Public Campaign Financing.** A Fair Elections Act keeps getting introduced in Congress, but it has yet to pass. A Constitutional Amendment might be a better approach. The idea is that people could still run for Congress by selling themselves to special interests (some people feel that still has to be allowed), but this idea would also allow people to run for office using only small donations and limited public financing. Candidates would qualify by raising a set number of small donations from the community and also agreeing to not raise any large contributions. Once qualified, they would see their on-going small donations matched four-to-one by public funds. Qualifying for public funds like this would allow a candidate to present themselves as “certified as not beholden to special interests”—a huge advantage over candidates who choose to take the other road. To learn more, see: <http://www.publiccampaign.org/fair-elections-now-act>

Also, there’s a very clever People’s movement for stamping money and bribery out of politics called **The Stamp Stampede**. Check it out (and it’s totally legal to stamp money like this, as long as you’re not selling anything and also avoid stamping over the serial numbers and Treasury/Federal Reserve seals): <http://www.stampstampede.org/>

- **Term Limits for both the Senate and the House.** In 1947, Congress proposed term limits for the Presidency—with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment<sup>73</sup>—but it didn’t occur to them to also propose term limits for themselves. That’s why an Amendment for term limits for the Senate and the House really needs to be proposed by a different body than the Senate and the House. This is another reason why we really need to call an Article V Convention.

- Switching to a **National Popular Vote for President.** Our current system of electing “our” President, the Electoral College, 93% of the time actually has had the same result as the popular vote anyway,<sup>74</sup> but the problem with it is that it makes most Americans votes for President irrelevant. Only the voters of our 11 swing states decide our Presidents, and those voters get most of the campaign visits.<sup>75</sup> The rest of us vote just for fun really—in “blue” or “red” states where the outcome is a foregone conclusion. Since at least 1944, large majorities of the American People have wanted to get rid of the Electoral College,<sup>76</sup> and large majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans all prefer a Popular Vote.<sup>77</sup> But a small minority always claims that it’s either too hard to count all our votes nationally or that getting rid of the Electoral College would violate the rules our Founders set down. However, actually our Founders never intended the Electoral College to be the current system of winner-take-all in each state; the electors of each state were each supposed to exercise independent judgment.<sup>78</sup>

Ironically though, this is one issue where an Article V Convention may not be necessary technically. Something called the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is slowly gaining momentum and is past the halfway point it needs. **The media hardly discusses it:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Popular\\_Vote\\_Interstate\\_Compact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Popular_Vote_Interstate_Compact)

- Using **Instant-Runoff/Ranked-Choice Voting in a Popular Vote for President.** This reform allows people to *rank* their choices for President: their first choice and then other

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\* Some, who oppose an Article V Convention, refer to it as a “Constitutional Convention,” or even derogatorily as a “Con Con,” but America’s Constitutional Convention only happened once, in 1787. An Article V Convention is an Amendment Proposal Convention, *under our Constitution*.

candidates they like also. If no candidate gets at least 50% of the People's first-choice votes, then the last-place candidate gets their votes redistributed to voters' next choices. This continues until someone has a majority (greater than 50%).<sup>\*</sup> This online video explains it very well (3 min, 10 secs): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqblOq8BmgM>

- Requiring **Voter Consent**/**"None Of The Above; For A New Election"** on ballots. If this option ever receives a majority, it means *the People do not consent to the election*. The candidates were all too corrupt, and a new election has to be done.<sup>†</sup> **The chance for a candidate or even an entire party to lose to "none of the above" is a huge incentive for them to deliver—to serve the People.**<sup>‡</sup> To learn more about this, see: <http://nota.org>

- **Every American Citizen has a right to a vote that matters, and matters equally.** Actually all the above Amendment suggestions just follow from this idea.

- **Other Ideas?**

*The Preamble to The Constitution* begins with, "We the People."<sup>79</sup> With an Article V Amendment Convention and the above reforms, we can make our whole *Constitution* more truly about "We the People," more truly, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "*OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE*" (*The Gettysburg Address*)<sup>80</sup>.



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<sup>\*</sup> Instant runoff voting allows "spoiler" candidates to still run for office to try to make our country better. For example, in the 1992 presidential election, many Republicans were angry at Ross Perot for "splitting" the Republican vote (However, Democrats voted for him too, and it's not clear the Republicans would have won otherwise. See: <http://www.leinsdorf.com/perot.htm> ) Even though he lost the election, his emphasis on the national debt forced the government to actually start paying it off for a while.

<sup>†</sup> A new election might be required within say six months. It would be a call to new candidates that this is their chance to break into the system. **It's important to specify a process of what to do until a new election can be organized**, and possibilities include having the people currently in office stay on temporarily. For the office of President, another option is to have Congress elect a temporary person in the meantime.

<sup>‡</sup> Of note, "none of the above" ballot choices can also be combined with allowing voters to rank choices in **both instant runoff voting for President and choice voting for Congress**. For example, a voter might want their first choice to go to "none of the above." However, it's most likely that that wouldn't get a majority vote (unless corruption had gotten even worse than it is now). **That voter can still rank the candidate or party that they would prefer next, if they can't have "none of the above."** Ranked/runoff voting like this is also maybe a better way for Congress to vote between different versions of legislation.

These reforms are reasons to consider sharing this book with someone else. You can just print out the free online pdf and leave it on your coffee table for anyone who is interested. To print it out go to: <http://CommonSenseBooklet.com> (If you want to help convince the author's wonderful spouse that the five years of weekends on this book was all worthwhile, you can also purchase a copy—print or ebook—but you can also just download the free pdf.) Eventually it may get passed to someone who will decide to run for your state legislature—to vote for your state to be one of the two thirds calling for an Article V Convention, or to enact reforms like this on just the state or local levels. Actually, maybe one of those People is you?

## XI

There would probably be many challenges to an Amendment Convention. Some will try to tell us to fear what a Convention might propose—that it might propose ideas by “radical crackpots and special interests,” instead of ideas supported by the People. Perhaps you find a couple of the ideas in the list above to be “too crackpot”? But remember, all these ideas are only ideas, and every Amendment proposed by an Article V Convention has to go through a separate ratification process by three fourths of the states. (It takes 38 states to ratify each Amendment.) Only Amendments that the People are ready for would get ratified.

Each idea would have its own national discussion, and that national discussion would be a part of the Convention's discussion, and then the national discussion would continue throughout the ratification process for each Amendment. Even if a Convention actually proposed “crackpot” amendments that were not wanted by most of the People, such amendments could not get ratified—for that very reason. Also, even if somehow three fourths of the states did actually ratify “crackpot” amendments, the People can also then vote new candidates into office and demand new Amendments to rescind the possible mistakes of a previous ratification process (like how the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment<sup>81</sup> repealed alcohol Prohibition by the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment<sup>82</sup>). *The People have the ultimate power here, and that's what the Founding Framers intended. It's the process of democracy and our Republic.*

Many people might worry that an Article V Amendment Convention might go into divisive areas which will clearly continue to remain controversial for years to come—areas which can arouse primitive rage and acting out in people. These are issues like the death penalty, where it's going to continue to take our society some time to come to a consensus—where polls show that no one has enough support to change the status quo. (A Gallup poll in October, 2013 showed 60% support the death penalty and 35% oppose it, supporting the status quo to allow states to use it if they choose.<sup>83</sup>)

The same is true of abortion. Because the country is so evenly divided on the issue, we don't have to worry about a Constitutional Amendment to change the status quo. Polls show that neither people who are prolife nor people who are prochoice have a majority.\* Nor does either the prochoice or the prolife side have a three-fourths supermajority of 38 states.† Neither side would be able to pass an Amendment to either further prohibit or further protect abortion.§, 84

And the same goes for trying to change the Second Amendment.85 With the continuing spate of school shootings in America, there is a lot of support for certain kinds of rules to increase gun safety.‡, 86 However, there is not support for changing the principle of Americans owning guns. A Pew survey in May 2013, found 48% of Americans feel protecting the right of Americans to own guns is more important than controlling gun ownership, and 50% feel the latter is more important.87 Neither side can change the Second Amendment with that.

For the delegates to an Article V Convention, it's obvious that there's no point in trying to propose Amendments in these areas, because they couldn't get ratified.

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\* Gallup tracks the abortion issue annually and has found the number who are prochoice or prolife to have stayed fairly steady over the last 15 years. In May 2014, it was 47% prochoice and 46% prolife—almost exactly the same for each side: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1576/abortion.aspx>

† With how it's the states that ratify Constitutional Amendments, it can also be worth checking, if we have the polling data, whether 38 or more states line up on either side. In 2005, a series of polls done in each state by SurveyUSA, found that in 13 states prolife outnumber prochoice, in 36 states prochoice outnumber prolife, and one state was tied. *Neither side had 38 states favoring their position.* See: <http://www.survevusa.com/50State2005/50StateAbortion0805SortedbyProLife.htm>

‡ There hasn't been another *state-by-state* survey done since the above in 2005, but, again, the Gallup survey above suggests that the national numbers have stayed pretty steady over the last 15 years, and a *regional* study by the Pew Center in 2012-2013 shows that perhaps up to 15 states are prolife—about the same as what SurveyUSA found in 2005, and, again, neither side has 38 states: <http://www.people-press.org/2013/07/29/widening-regional-divide-over-abortion-laws/>

§ In the midst of all the strife, debate, and tragedy over abortion, a detail that often goes unspoken is that what has lowered abortion rates most dramatically worldwide—including in the US—is increasing access to contraception. Abortion rates are now at their *lowest* in 40 years.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion\\_statistics\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion_statistics_in_the_United_States) See the endnote for more info (#84)

Research also shows that *not* disparaging contraception can be *combined* with programs that encourage youth to make their own decisions about their future, abstinence, and seeing sexuality and parenthood as sacred. Often it's felt we cannot combine available contraception with respecting abstinence, that they contradict each other. But the problem with not finding creative solutions to this dilemma is that abortion rates stay higher—even in countries that make abortion illegal. See the endnote for details (#84)

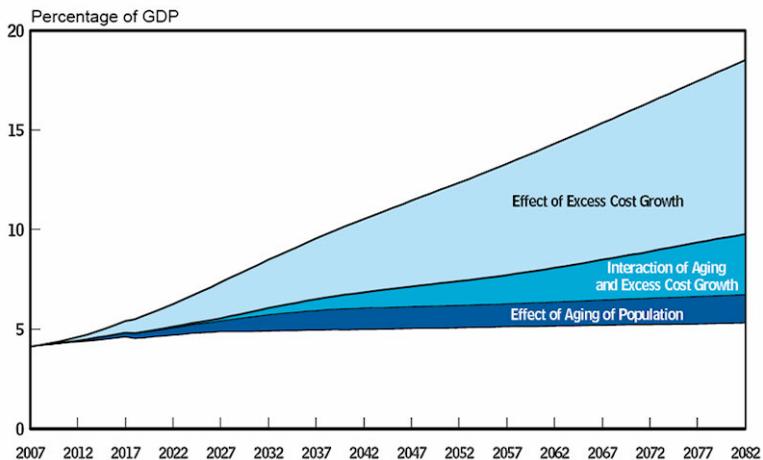
Another issue to be aware of is that forcing pregnancy also has a cost in human life. The data from our own states has shown that forced pregnancy leads to higher crime and homicide rates 20 years later: unwanted children become adults who hate themselves and hate society, and destroy other people's lives and families. See the endnote (#84)

‡ A survey published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in 2013 found that bans on gun ownership for people convicted of domestic violence were supported by 74% of all Americans, 74% of gun owners, and 62% of members of the National Rifle Association (but this is already federal law, since 1996, though difficult to enforce universally—"the Lautenberg Amendment") Universal background checks before all gun purchases were supported by 89% of all Americans (and other polls show similar numbers), 84% of gun owners, and 74% of members of the National Rifle Association (See the endnote, #86)

## XII

Health care is probably also like this. It's too controversial for even an Article V Convention to take on, and nothing could get ratified. Health care is something that desperately needs fixing, and **special interests sabotaged efforts to control the biggest problem: rising costs.** By 2020 medical care will cost \$5 trillion, almost \$2 trillion more than it costs even today.<sup>88</sup> The writing for our current medical system is on the wall. **Medical care is on a course to bankrupt our economy and our country by itself.** Medical insurance by tax payers is more than half of our medical care, with programs like Medicare and Medicaid, and Medicare is already headed towards insolvency, with depletion of the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund by 2026.<sup>89</sup> **And this insolvency is *not* just because our population is aging; it's mostly because the cost of *everyone's* medical care is rising, as shown in this graph below** from Wikipedia and the Congressional Budget Office.<sup>90</sup>

### Projected Federal Spending on Medicare and Medicaid (% GDP)



- It is the rate of spending per individual that will have the most impact, rather than the *quantity* / demographics of an aging population.
- "Excess cost growth" refers to the extent to which the increase in health care spending for an average individual exceeds the growth in per capita GDP.
- "Interaction..." refers to effects of excess cost growth and the aging of the population, which result in greater growth in spending than would result from either factor separately.
- "Aging of population" refers to demographic shifts, such as an increasing average population age and life expectancy.

Source: Congressional Budget Office

\* For a very concise summary on *why* medical costs are rising, see the online documentary by the nonpartisan organization, Mad As Hell Doctors, *Health, Money, and Fear* (48 minutes): <http://www.ourailinghealthcare.com/>

Costs are so out of control that the US Census tells us that in our first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, because of medical care, household incomes dropped *every year*—the worst drop since record keeping started 60 years ago. Employers actually increased their payments to labor by 25%, but medical care ate up all that increase and more, because, from just 2000 to 2008, the average cost of health care premiums had more than doubled (going from \$6,000 to over \$12,000 for a family of four).<sup>91</sup>

At the same time, despite all this medical spending, we have lousy health. We are less than 5% of the world's population,<sup>92</sup> and we spend 40% of the world's health-care dollars,<sup>93</sup> but we are 35<sup>th</sup> in life expectancy.<sup>94</sup> When compared to our neighbor, Canada, even our wealthiest and most educated do *no* better on health scores.<sup>95</sup> And data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control<sup>96</sup> showed that, before the new medical-care law, the lack of health insurance caused almost 45,000 Americans to die prematurely each year.<sup>97</sup> The new law decreases the uninsured by about 45%,<sup>98</sup> and so we can expect at least 24,000 people are still dying prematurely due to no health insurance. This is eight 9/11's a year, *every year*. With a lost job, anyone of us can become one of those 24,000 each year. *It is economic terror.*

And currently medical bills are the number one cause of personal bankruptcy—affecting almost 2 million people in 2013.<sup>99</sup> The new health care law is surely decreasing this, but 75% of the people who've gone bankrupt due to medical bills actually *had medical insurance*.<sup>100</sup> The endless copays and deductibles for something like cancer cost so much that it still drives you under—making it meaningless to even have medical insurance. (And many of us, 40% of Americans actually, including many doctors such as this doctor writing this, *can't even understand* the endless “deductibles” paperwork of their medical bills.<sup>101</sup>)

In the end, we are the *only* country in the world that sees expensive “sick care” as a right (you can always go to any ER, even if you can't pay) but that does not see *basic health care* as a right (unless you're in prison, on kidney dialysis, over 65, or a veteran). But if we tried to say *only this* in a proposed Constitutional Amendment—“in a country this rich, basic health care is a human right” and have the Amendment say *nothing else*—the primitive rage and misinformation from special interests would be mind boggling.

As desperate as things are, there are so many special interests (including certain doctor specialties) who want to keep things the way they are for as long as they can, and it's so easy to spread misinformation about something as complicated as medical care, that it's still impossible to turn things around. **It's just a political loser to even try.<sup>102</sup> There's no point. So anyone who is worried that an Article V Convention might try to do something to truly solve health care doesn't need to fret. Even if a Convention did actually propose something—no matter how minor—it could easily be shot down in the ratification process.**

### XIII

Remember, the delegates to an Article V Convention would be *people who want it to succeed*. They would be people who want to be there, who are invested in it. They would not want to obstruct it by trying to “hoodwink” the American People (they’d know that wouldn’t work anyway), because they wouldn’t want to create resentment. Going to a Convention like this is a state leader’s dream and it’s also a university political scientist’s dream. It’s the ultimate Convention to bring knowledge to *fruit*, and *it’s our country’s highest legislative body*. It’s the honor of a lifetime. Delegates will want to avoid activating divisive issues that could make a Convention fail.\* *But Just and Uncorrupt Representation is not a divisive value. It’s a value that brings us together, because it’s why our country was founded in the first place.*

Ultimately to fear an Article V Convention is to fear our own Republic. *It’s to fear ourselves. We have to believe in our Republic. If we don’t believe in it, our country’s leadership in the world is finished. It’s over.* People opposed to fairness and justice—small in number, but with load megaphones—will fiercely try to monger fear of an Article V Convention. They’ll say *anything* to try to spread fear. *They’ll think they have nothing to lose by lying*: “There’s nothing to stop a runaway Convention from completely abolishing our Constitution!”, “There’s nothing to stop it from making all abortions completely legal and free everywhere forever!”, “There’s nothing to stop it from making all abortions completely *illegal* everywhere forever!”, “There’s nothing to stop it from imposing Icelandic health care!”, “It’s the first step to right-wing fascism!”, “It’s the first step to left-wing communism!”, and on and on. *Untrue.*

*It’s Common Sense that none of those things would happen—because Amendments have to be ratified. The People have to consent. The people we send to an Article V Convention have a greater check on them than the people we send to Congress and the White House.†*

### XIV

However, there *used to be* one divisive “values issue” where some used to say a Convention would try to change the status quo: gay marriage.<sup>103</sup> But it’s now a nonissue for an Article V Convention. In the past we might have asked, why do gays even want to get

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\* To all the activists out there, *remember that acting too soon on a very divisive issue can just make it fail and fester all the longer. It can set a cause back.* This is something for *both* sides of divisive issues to be aware of. It can be better to work on patiently talking and *listening* with friends, family, and colleagues about what’s right. This way, when change does finally happen, it’s real and lasting change—*based on a new consensus*. It’s not just temporary change that arouses resentment and backlash.

† *The closer and closer we get to convening a Convention, the more constant mentioning this may need*

married? Perhaps half of straight marriages end in divorce,<sup>104</sup> and almost 20% of straight marriages include physical violence.<sup>105</sup> Gay people may not be able to do any better. Another question is why do straight people want to keep gay people from getting married? One often argued reason is that they feel that gay people being able to marry would somehow threaten or undermine straight people's marriages, but what's been used in advertising against pro-gay-marriage proposals is that gay marriage might be discussed in schools.<sup>106</sup> This might help gay teenagers feel comfortable coming out, and this scares some parents, either because they hate gay people and fear they might have to hate their own children, or because they worry that if their children are openly gay then they will have to deal with all kinds of prejudice throughout their lives. The debate is reminiscent of how many states used to ban mixed-race marriages into the 1960s,<sup>107</sup> or how 150 years ago there was a huge frenzy to persecute Mormons who raised their families in plural marriage. There are still Mormons who practice it today, and, when such parents are responsible, *consenting adults, and not underage*, we largely leave them in peace now.<sup>108</sup>

So where do *the People* stand on gay marriage? Polls on the issue<sup>109</sup> have varied of course, depending on how one asks the question: for/against, against but for civil unions or certain hospital-visitation and estate-tax rights, etc. A Gallup poll in May, 2014 found 55% of all Americans (including 78% of those under age 30) support gay marriage, and 42% oppose it.<sup>110</sup> Looking at the issue state-by-state, as this book goes to press, 19 states allow gay marriage and 31 states make it illegal.<sup>111</sup> (Interestingly, in some of the states where it's illegal, polls show the voters now actually support gay marriage.<sup>112</sup>) Neither side has 38 states.

## XV

It's important to realize that the when we see the corrupt monger fear of a Convention, it's because they want our government to stay corrupt and *unfair* and *unjust*, and they'll do anything to try to keep it that way. The media may even try to fan fear, with commercial TV stations giving lots of coverage to the fear mongers. The commercial news media often try to make controversies into more than they really are, because their ratings can be a higher priority than truly informing the public. But we can't allow the fear mongers to hold our country back. They can only stop us if we allow them to make us fearful. It's really only fear alone that can keep us from moving forward. But that's all. Ultimately, as was said by Theodore Roosevelt's cousin, President Franklin D. Roosevelt: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." *Common Sense often takes courage.*

Others might also say that the idea of an Article V Convention is just too strange, too novel. “We all take American history in high school, but who ever heard of that?” **But our Founding Framers put it into our Constitution, because they thought we would need it. They knew our Congress itself might become exactly the thing holding our country back** and that we would need another way to propose Amendments.

We have notes on the proceedings of the 1787 Constitutional Convention (mainly taken by James Madison, but also others<sup>113</sup>), and we know George Mason (at right—a bas-relief from the U.S. Capitol Building) was a Founder who argued for the clause in particular. He said that without the clause, “No Amendments of the proper kind would ever be obtained by the people, *if the Government should become oppressive, as he verily believed would be the case*” (emphasis added).<sup>114</sup> Thomas Jefferson was abroad as minister to France at the time, but he approved of the clause. **Indeed, there’s evidence that Jefferson felt an *automatic* Convention every 20 years might be a good idea.**<sup>115</sup>



James Madison was a main person who advised caution, although he was *not* opposed to a Convention option, and he helped finalize the clause’s wording. For one thing, he pointed out that “difficulties might arise as to the form” a Convention might take.<sup>116</sup> And he is right. A Convention will have to decide its own rules of order, committees and conferencing and voting procedures, methods of resolving conflicts between difficult personalities, etc. Article V does not spell this out for them, and the delegates will have to *collaborate* like adults. Indeed, Article V is a challenge to all Americans—conservatives, liberals, and moderates—to have a national discussion about how to make our country even better, and to boldly challenge each other to do just that. This was the process for how the People of our country decided to make our country independent in the first place. When the American Revolution happened, all the People talked with each other about where they stood, whether they believed in liberty and freedom from tyranny, and whether they were ready for change. It was a national discussion—over dinner tables and tavern tables, in churches and markets, and in town halls and city halls.<sup>117</sup> This book is about how it’s time to our honor our Founders’ vision to do that again now.

But Madison also had one other concern: Americans would find it so thrilling to take ownership of their Republic that they would then try to invoke Article V over and over and over again. He worried this would “in great measure deprive the government of that veneration, which time bestows on every thing, and without which perhaps the wisest and freest governments would not possess the requisite stability.”<sup>118</sup> We have now waited over

200 years to finally invoke Article V, and “veneration” for the federal government is not in good shape these days. Imagine Madison were here today. Would he say the following to us? “Nahh, it’s still not time yet. You should wait longer.”

Also, while we have long waited to invoke an Article V Convention and the idea might seem strange and forgotten to us now, it has actually been advocated many times before. In 1911, we came within two states of triggering one.<sup>119</sup> It happened with how reformers were trying to change how, at that time, senators weren’t even elected by popular vote in their home states; they were elected by state legislatures (and really by the party bosses that controlled those legislatures with bribery<sup>120</sup>). It took the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment to *The Constitution* to change this, finally proposed by the Senate in 1911 and then ratified in 1913.<sup>121</sup> The Senate at first refused to propose such an Amendment. (Again, senators often first care only about getting reelected. They feared that if the very way to get elected was changed, they wouldn’t know how to manipulate the new system to get reelected.) And so reformers fought for an Article V Convention, and that prompted the Senate to finally propose the Amendment itself.<sup>122</sup> And that’s very possibly what would happen today too. **Just pushing for a Convention is the best way to prompt Congress to do the right thing.**

And actually the idea is already on the table again. **25 states are currently calling for an Article V Convention.** (34 form two thirds of the 50 states, and so it would take nine more to complete the call.) These 25 states are part of a reform effort, going on for decades, for an Amendment to force the federal government to balance its budget. The states that have done this have worried that a Convention might go into other areas besides a Balanced-Budget Amendment, and so many have also added clauses to their calls that they want the Convention to only consider a balanced budget.<sup>123</sup> But several state supreme courts have affirmed that it’s up to a Convention itself what Amendments it would propose and how.<sup>124</sup> When the Founding Framers met for the Constitutional Convention in 1787, they engaged in a true democratic process of thinking thoroughly about *how different changes affect each other and need to be proposed together*. That’s also what an Article V Amendment Convention is meant to be—a thoughtful and considered exercise in how to make our country even better.

One might wonder if some of the legislatures of these 25 states might try to recall their calls for a new Convention. Actually, the list originally got as high as 33,<sup>125</sup> but, as of 2014, a bunch had for now rescinded their calls: Arizona, Idaho, North Dakota, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Wyoming.\*<sup>126</sup> These state legislatures were

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\* However, there is some debate over whether “rescissions” are possible, and some states have also rescinded a call and then made a new call. See the endnote for details on these two issues (#126)

targets of fear mongering that *our* Article V Convention would “abolish”<sup>127</sup> *our* Constitution and *our* Bill of Rights. But a few new states have also signed on and the list is now at 25.\*

It’s not news that it’s up to a Convention to discuss and decide on what Amendments to propose (and only *propose*), and these are the 25 states which *so far* have let their calls continue to stand:

Alabama	Florida	Louisiana	Nebraska	Pennsylvania
Alaska	Georgia	Maryland	New Hampshire	South Dakota
Arkansas	Indiana	Michigan	New Mexico	Tennessee
Colorado	Iowa	Mississippi	North Carolina	Texas
Delaware	Kansas	Missouri	Ohio	Washington

It’s now up to every state to reconsider the meaning of an Article V Convention (that we are a Republic of, by, and for the People) and whether they are ready to make a fearless call for how our country needs this.

## XVI

A required balanced budget for the federal government is a complicated issue, and it’s because it’s so complicated that we need an Article V Convention to work on it. It’s clearly not something Congress can get right by itself, and it’s extremely hard to wrap our heads around the kind of problem our national debt is. You have folks who say the sky is falling tomorrow, and other folks who say that, well, right now, it’s not a big deal.

In some ways, things aren’t as bad as they used to be. When we were in the midst of two wars, tax cuts, Wall Street bail outs, etc., it looked like the sky might be falling on the federal budget *now*. But, things have come to look a little less gloomy. The annual federal budget deficit has dropped five years in a row, with a dramatic drop from 2013 to 2014. In 2013, it was \$680 billion, and for 2014 it’s on course to be \$492 billion.<sup>128</sup>

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\* Without the rescinded calls, we would be within one state of calling a Convention. Nevertheless, there is an argument that a Convention should have *already* been called. Despite agreement that a Convention decides for itself what Amendments to propose, it’s also felt by many that a Convention can only be convened when 34 states all do the exact same kind of call (for a Balanced Budget, Term Limits, or even a General Call). But states have done different kinds of calls, and, when combined, these calls have sometimes totaled more than 34 states—even if only combining *General Calls for a Convention* (where an issue isn’t specified) *with the calls for only one particular kind of Amendment*. Consequently, there have been two lawsuits that a Convention should have already been called (the Walker law suits). See endnote #125 for more details on this, with details about the compilation of all Convention calls by the organization Friends of the Article V Convention (which you can also learn about directly at <http://foavc.org/>) and also details on the Walker law suits (which you can also learn about directly at <http://www.article5.org/>).

However, the Congressional Budget Office tells us that the annual budget deficit will begin rising again in 2015, and keep climbing, to about \$1 trillion per year by 2022. And this is just the *annual* deficit. The total national debt keeps rising, as long as there is any deficit at all and we are not paying off the debt. In 2007, our national debt was 35% of our gross domestic product (GDP)—meaning we “could have paid it off” if we had added an additional tax to all goods and services in this country for a year at 35%. But, with the course we’re on, in a decade, in 2024, we’ll be at 78% of GDP.<sup>129</sup> We should note that it’s been worse in the past actually. After World War II, we were briefly over 100% of GDP. However, back then most of our debt was at least owed to Americans. *But steadily our national debt has changed to being owed abroad*, going from 5% owed abroad in 1970<sup>130</sup> to close to half owed abroad today—with China as our biggest foreign creditor.<sup>131</sup> This money leaves our economy, and it puts other countries more in charge of *our* economy. Also, even the money that’s borrowed domestically has a price on our economy, because it can lead private investors to switch their investments to just government bonds instead of new companies and projects.<sup>132</sup>

Now, some people say we can just “grow out of” this. But the General Accounting Office (the GAO—another *nonpartisan* investigatory office of Congress<sup>133</sup>) has said **this is not a problem we can grow out of, unless we have *double-digit* economic growth for the next 75 years—which is basically impossible.**<sup>134</sup> The former Federal Reserve Chair, Ben Bernanke, has said the same thing.<sup>135</sup>



In addition, all this debt has interest payments. Now, currently, interest rates are low. They are low enough that there’s ironically an argument to be made that now is the time to actually take on more federal debt to rebuild our decaying physical infrastructure, partly just because physical infrastructure is key for the kind of vibrant economy it takes to have the tax revenue to pay off a gigantic national debt. Visitors to China are routinely blown away by the top-notch infrastructure China is investing in.<sup>136</sup> It makes our infrastructure look like the urban decay of a dying civilization. Taking on debt to invest in the future and revitalize our economy can be a good thing—like how it can be a very worthwhile investment in the future for an individual to take on wise student loans or a wise home mortgage.

But, if we do a temporary burst of borrowing like that, to invest in our future, *it has to be temporary*. Because, *even if we don’t do a burst like that*, just the interest on our national debt is going to quadruple in dollars in a decade (and triple in terms of GDP),<sup>137</sup> and it was already \$416 billion for 2013.<sup>138</sup> And once interest rates eventually rise again, it will climb even more steeply. All this interest is money that is not invested in our country’s future. Over the years,

it can add up to a massive amount of money that *could have been used for other things*. And if our children and grandchildren are also busy paying back principal on our national debt, in addition to the interest, that's also money they are not able to invest in *their* children's future. In the end, this is all a tax on them—*taxation without representation*.

## **We tax the future born.**

So how do we solve this?

The proposals written so far for a National Balanced-Budget Amendment generally only emphasize: “Total outlays for any fiscal year shall not exceed total receipts for that fiscal year.”<sup>139</sup> These proposals never say anything about the Common Sense responsibility to pay down at least some of our national debt, so that our children don't inherit as much of a burden. And Common Sense also tells us that the ideal fiscal policy isn't to balance a budget over just a year, but to balance it over longer periods of time: **to build up surpluses in times of economic boom and then use those surpluses in times of recession, in order to protect jobs and keep our economy thriving—“saving for a rainy day.”** But all that takes fiscal discipline, and that's not possible with how bribery politics dominates our Congress.

To properly manage a national budget also takes more than just Common Sense. It also takes a Smart understanding of how government debts and surpluses interact with changes in employment, inflation, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). **To balance the federal budget inside every fiscal year would intensify swings in all those indices and spin our economy out of control.**<sup>140</sup> But our politicians rarely know much about economics, and consequently the proposals written by politicians so far for a Balanced-Budget Amendment don't include any understanding of these economic perils, much less just the idea of “saving for a rainy day.” A Balanced-Budget Amendment really needs the help of *real* economists, as well as real political scientists, to explore it and write it—in an Article V Convention. A thoughtful Convention, with scholarly help, can properly write into our *Constitution* how the People expect our government to practice *Common Sense and Smart* fiscal discipline.

There is also another issue that has to be considered at the same time.

**How did we get here in the first place? Our massively complicated tax code is a huge part of it. Special interests have lobbied and campaigned for thousands upon thousands of loop holes and convoluted rules that only their own legions of accountants and tax lawyers can understand.**<sup>141</sup> It leaves the rest of us just pulling our hair out every April 15<sup>th</sup>. This has made the People of America increasingly skeptical that we have a fair and just tax code. In 1944, almost 90% of Americans thought the tax code was fair. As of 2013, that number was just

55%.<sup>142</sup> Taxes are the price of civilization, and most of us don't mind paying them, but we expect them to be fair and just.

Lots of misinformation has been disseminated about our tax code, and it's very easy to do this with how complicated it is. We sometimes hear that many people don't pay any federal income tax at all, and that's technically true, especially in a recession, but the picture is more complicated. As the legendary billionaire, Warren Buffett, has pointed out, anyone with wage income has to pay taxes to help the federal Social Security and Medicare for our current retirees.<sup>143</sup> If you combine that with state and local taxes, even people in the bottom 20% of income have to pay about 17% of their income in taxes. As you go up the income ladder, you gradually pay a higher percentage, peaking at 30+% for the people in the 95<sup>th</sup>-98<sup>th</sup> income percentiles.<sup>144</sup> If you're in that group, the idea is that somehow you got a bigger share of the benefits of civilization—maybe because you worked harder than everyone else, made better choices, or just got lucky—and so you are obliged to help more to pay for civilization.

But *then a funny thing happens* at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile. People in the top 1% (people who make at least \$394,000 a year<sup>145</sup>) *then pay a little less*—about 29%.<sup>146</sup> They still pay a larger dollar amount on average, *but they pay a lower percentage*. Then the people in the top 0.1% (people who make at least \$1.9 million a year<sup>147</sup>) pay even less, and the people in the top 0.01% even less<sup>148</sup> (the top 1% of the top 1%, the top one in ten thousand of us—making at least \$10 million a year<sup>149</sup>). Warren Buffett calculated his own tax rate at about 17.4%, *far below any of his employees*,<sup>150</sup> and the *nonpartisan* fact-checking organization [Politifact.com](http://Politifact.com) largely confirmed Buffett's analysis.<sup>151</sup> And this is all while the rest of us are just trying to deal with the rising price of groceries. And Warren Buffett is not alone actually. *Many wealthy people think this is not right and think they should pay a larger share.*<sup>152</sup> In the end, a Rasmussen poll in June, 2014 found that 67% of *all* Americans think our economy is unfair to the middle class<sup>153</sup>—and we don't even talk about the working class anymore. *But ultimately, in a way, even people who make \$5 million a year just help subsidize those at the super top.*

Now, sometimes the argument is made that this public subsidy of the super rich at least helps increase total economic growth, even if it leaves the rest of us behind. However, a study by the third (and most confidential) of the three *nonpartisan* research arms of Congress, the Congressional Research Service,<sup>154</sup> has found this claim to *not* be the case: “The reduction in the top tax rates appears to be *uncorrelated* [italics added] with saving, investment, and productivity growth. The top tax rates appear to have little or no relation to the size of the economic pie.”<sup>155</sup>



These tax breaks for the super rich started to come into our tax code in the 1970s,<sup>156</sup> and since then there has been a huge concentration of net worth to the super rich. Today, the bottom 40% of us have *no* personal net worth (debts cancel out any assets), and 85% of the personal net worth of *all* Americans is in just the top 20% of us.<sup>157</sup> Then half of that 85% is actually just in the top 1% of us, with more than half of that again in just the top 0.1%, and then more than half of *that* again in just the top 0.01%—the top one in ten thousand.<sup>158</sup> The same is presumably true for the top 0.001% too—the top one in one hundred thousand of us. There are only about 3,000 people in all of America in that last category, and coincidentally, per the United States Federal Election Commission, in 2012, just 3,318 people donated 93% of all the money to all U.S. Super Political Action Committees<sup>159</sup>—the ultimate lever for controlling the policy decisions of “our” representatives in Congress.<sup>160</sup> We might as well call this top one in one hundred thousand “the Super-Political-Action-Committee donor class”—or just “the political donor class.”<sup>161</sup> And, in the end, only they have a say in our tax policy. The *average* American has *no* say. (That’s even been shown scientifically—that we have no say, a “statistically non-significant” say.<sup>162</sup>) *It’s taxation without representation all over again, and this injustice has poisoned our sense of being Americans together. We don’t trust each other, and we’re defensive with each other. This distrust is tearing up the fabric of our country and our Republic, and we need to act.* A 2013 Rasmussen poll found that 77% of us think Americans are getting ruder.<sup>163</sup>

We desperately need an Amendment of some kind to lay ground rules on how to address this manifold, complicated disaster, and it needs to be properly designed. For example, just *one idea* for the possible wording of such an Amendment might be: “Congress shall create a just and fair *and simple* tax code, and budget receipts and outlays, so as to follow responsible fiscal policy, to save surpluses in times of economic boom, to be used for deficits in times of economic recession, so as to keep unemployment low, keep the economy thriving, and not bequeath unreasonable debt to future generations.”

The Amendment might also create an independent body, say a Council of Budget Economists—or just “Budget Council.” It would give Congress fiscal policy guidelines—whether to run a deficit or a surplus and by how much. The Council would ask Congress for longer than one-year budgetary planning, and it could veto Congress’s budgets and tax laws: send Congress back to do them again. Both Congress and the Council would ask each other to answer questions before each other in public hearings. Our *Constitution* is based on checks and balances like this between the branches of government. In essence, the Council would serve as Congress’s fiscal conscience, because Congress clearly needs one. (This would be

just like how the Supreme Court serves as our government’s legal and Constitutional conscience.) The Council would also represent the future born—who clearly need representation of some kind.\* It would be similar to how the Congressional Budget Office has a Panel of Economic Advisors,<sup>164</sup> but this Council of the Budget would have real authority, not just expertise that gets ignored.

This Council would be separate from the Federal Reserve Bank.† It would have maybe fifteen economist members. They would serve long terms—perhaps 30-year terms, staggered—to shepherd us through the long ups and downs of the economic business cycle. The most senior member at any time could be the “Council Chair.” They would get alternately appointed every two years by a proportional Senate and House—in a way that gives each party caucus a rotating say in each new appointment, based on their average share of representation over the years. For example, if Republicans averaged 51% of the Senate and House seats over 30 years, they would get to appoint 8 of the 15 Council members appointed over those 30 years. When members don’t complete their terms, replacements would get appointed proportionally again, and caucuses would get credit for “lost say” in members leaving early.§

It’s important that the Council members have long terms and that they be appointed, rather than elected, otherwise they may sacrifice the economy to buy votes and campaign contributions.‡ Also having them appointed means that members just have to be excellent economists; they don’t have to also be skilled political schmoozers in nationwide elections—in the same way that Supreme Court justices are supposed to be excellent jurists only, not also oily politicians. **However, every four years there would also be a national “confidence vote” on the Council by the People. If the Council doesn’t get more than 50%, it has to be completely reappointed. It would be directly accountable to the People.**

If all this sounds too complicated, remember, what’s really complicated is defaulting on our national debt. But this is just a random idea by a non-economist and non-political scientist. **An Article V Convention would propose a much, much better idea.**

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\* Personally, the idea reminds me of the Jedi Council in *Star Wars*

† “The Fed” is similar in how it’s *not made up of vote-buying politicians*. Created to manage the monetary-system part of our economy, it arguably needs more transparency in how it runs and more fairness in how it’s appointed. Perhaps a similar process might be used for appointing it as in the following proposal here—of caucuses rotating appointments to the Council?

§ This is a different model from how we’re used to our President making all political appointments. The problem with that system is that the President can represent *just majority rule*. This alternate system of having party caucuses rotate appointments also gives the minority a *fair say*. Ideally the caucuses would also choose their appointments by instant-runoff/ranked-choice voting—for true indirect representation.

‡ One of our biggest mistakes is how we put politicians in charge of keeping the economy stable—people who are far too willing to sacrifice our long-term stability for short-term gains, just to get reelected. *They buy now. We pay later.*

## XVII

But a Fair and Just Senate is still perhaps the most challenging to ratify of all the suggested Amendment proposals in this book—even more challenging than a Fair and Just House Amendment.<sup>§</sup> (And it’s because it’s the hardest Amendment to ratify, that it paves the way for all the other Fair and *Uncorrupt Representation* Amendments proposed here.) For this kind of Amendment, there’s a special hurdle in the process that *The Constitution* specifies for ratification. Article V of *The Constitution* normally requires three fourths of the states to ratify a proposed Amendment. However, if you read the fine print, **an Amendment that changes how Senate representation is organized only applies to states that consent to such a change:** “No state, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.”<sup>165</sup> In other words, the small states at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 understandably anticipated a reform effort like this, and they required that the Amendment process be a little trickier here.

**The solution is straightforward though: after three fourths of the states ratify an Amendment for proportional representation for the Senate, it would likely get set up in a “rolling” fashion. It would gradually apply to more and more states as they consented, but it would not apply to states that did not consent.** In other words, 76 senators would get proportionally elected from DC and the 38 states required to ratify the Amendment. **The remaining 12 states would still have their two senators each—just for them—unless and until each one also consented to the Amendment.** There might be some states that consent later after a very long time—maybe years, maybe decades, maybe a century, maybe even longer.\* **Some may choose to never consent.** They would still have no more of an outsized share of Senate representation than they already have right now. **(But maybe they could still volunteer to take on that extra share of paying back the national debt? Only if they want to.)**

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<sup>§</sup> A Balanced-Budget-And-Fair-Taxation Amendment may be easier to ratify by itself, but **arguably it cannot succeed unless at least some of the other reforms here also get ratified.** And so its *authentic* passage is actually perhaps the hardest. **Our whole government** needs to be more representative and less corrupt before the appointment of a Budget Council can happen in a way that will serve the best interests of the country—instead of just the best interests of special interests.

\* A similar social process also occurred with other Amendments—of some states also adding their blessing long after official ratification had happened. An example is the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, abolishing slavery. The Amendment was ratified in 1865, the same year it was proposed—when Georgia became the 27<sup>th</sup> state to ratify it (27 were three fourths of the 36 states in the Union at that time). But the remaining nine states also ratified it eventually, to make it unanimous. Six more states ratified it within five years, by 1870. Then it took another 30 years until Delaware became the 34<sup>th</sup> state in 1901. Then, another 75 years until Kentucky was the 35<sup>th</sup> in 1976. Then, after another 19 years, Mississippi became the last state to ratify—in 1995, 130 years after the Amendment was proposed (ironically, Mississippi also didn’t finalize the paperwork until 2013): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteenth\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

The same thing happened with the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, affirming women’s right to vote. It was ratified in 1920, the year after it was proposed. But all the remaining states also ratified it eventually. Mississippi was the last one—in 1984, 65 years after the Amendment was proposed: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteenth\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

## XVIII

The corrupt, the selfish, and the insecure might still be able to stop us—but only for now. Even if a Fair and Just Senate Amendment doesn't get ratified, having just one of the other Fair and Uncorrupt Representation Amendments suggested here get ratified is a huge improvement. And even if none of them get ratified: just that we speak *and listen*, for ourselves, for everyone, and for our children—and that we do so *with calm reasonableness*—paves the way for our children's lives to be better. It leaves them with what will be an even happier and even more dignified country, and even a happier and more dignified world—one in which we will wish we could have grown up ourselves. We can be proud of bringing our children into the world that we will leave them.

Just *dialogue* like this is a huge improvement over the bitter gridlock that we have now. And, eventually, once enough People become fully aware of corruption and taxation without representation in America, and once they show the *courage to act for America*—then a Fair and Just Senate and all the other parts of Uncorrupt Representation will happen. If we don't make it happen, then we will have inspired our children to try to make it happen. And if they don't manage to make it happen, then we will have still inspired our grandchildren or great grandchildren to try make it happen. It's only a matter of if and when the American People are ready to have an even truer Republic. *When we are ready, it will happen.* By just talking *and listening* about these issues with people, you become a reason *why* such readiness eventually happens—even if you are long dead by the time it happens.

## XIX

But some people might still say: “Well, actually Americans don't really believe in fairness and justice, and they don't really want to end corruption. They'll say they do, but they don't really.” You can tell them that maybe that's true—for now. They do have a point. For instance, in 2009, a Rassmussen poll showed that 42% of Americans believed that DC's delegate to the House of Representatives should *not* be allowed to vote—to still keep it the way it is currently. That's an exasperating number of Americans (though still a minority) who believe in taxation without representation for other Americans.<sup>†, 166</sup> It may make some of us

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\* “You can always count on Americans to do the right thing—after they've tried everything else”

— Winston Churchill

† Although, if people are given an *alternative* way for DC residents to have representation in the House, the percentage for still keeping the current system *does go down*—to 26%. See the endnote for details (#166)

want to ask them, “Why? Where is Freedom in that? Was our country founded on this? **Are we ‘The Land of The Free, Except for DC’?** Maybe that’s how it’s always been before, but does that make it right?”

But what would they say if we asked them a more direct question: “Should other citizens of America, besides you, have taxation without representation? Should other citizens of America, besides you, die in our wars without representation? Does that sound right to you?” ... Whatever they answer, you can prove that there’s at least one American who believes in justice for America. You. When you pass this book onto someone else, you show you are a believer in America.

## XX

Still, even though most Americans *already* know something is very wrong with our government, a lot of us have never thought about these ways of changing our government—particularly proportional representation. And so it might take a while to convince ourselves of the Common Sense here. For one thing, how is it that many of us have not known about proportional representation and these other reform ideas? Some of them have been around for a century, and America itself has been part of the lesson to other countries to make these changes. How could We the People not know about it ourselves? How could we have allowed taxation without representation to go on and on in America like this? *How could we have kept drinking the kool aid for so long?* We might say to ourselves: “It doesn’t make sense.” This is true. It doesn’t make sense. But it’s human nature to do things that don’t make sense, *and to do them for generations*. And if we don’t spread this knowledge, we’ll only continue to keep blindly doing what doesn’t make sense.

**But right now, this might seem so new that it might even feel like either choice could be the kool aid: taxation without representation or proportional representation.** If it’s still hard to feel sure which makes more sense to you, consider the following “thought experiment.”<sup>167</sup> Pretend you are in a universe, where, before you are born, you can choose what kind of America you will be born into, but you *cannot* choose *where* in America you will be born. You get two choices:

(choice a): You can choose to be born into an America with *unfair* and *unjust* representation. You might be born into Vermont or Wyoming and have really high representation in the Senate; you might be born into Texas or California with really low representation in the Senate; or you might be born into DC with *no* voting representation in either the House or Senate. **Most likely, you’ll be born into the 75% of America “represented” by only 40% of the Senate. And even then,**

wherever you're born, your vote will count only if you share the majority opinion in that state. If you have a minority opinion, you won't be represented. That will be part of why many people don't even vote anyway. That will be part of how corrupt special interests control *your* government. That will be part of how corrupt special interests force you to bail them out after they disrupt *your* economy. That will be part of how corrupt special interests tax *your* children into the ground.

(choice b): You can choose to be born into an America with Fair and Just Representation in the Senate. It won't matter where in America you're born, and it won't matter if you have a majority or a minority opinion where you happen to live, because everyone gets represented. Our government will be responsible to the People, the UNITED PEOPLE of the truly UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. Our government will be *more* ...

***“OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE.”***



A humble ordinary citizen,<sup>168</sup> who labored on flatboats<sup>169</sup> on the Mississippi River, and who had only 18 months of formal schooling, but who felt himself *equal to anyone*, and who *thought the same of everyone else*. He's been on the years now, and, birthday in 2009, four different with a different life on the version of these shows the small, one- in which he was born, in Kentucky in 1809 (The backs of the old pennies show the Lincoln Memorial, where—if you look very closely—you can see between the columns to his statue inside<sup>171</sup> See [the endnote, #141, for a closeup picture of this](#))



And there's also one extra point: whatever you choose is not just for yourself; it's also for *all your descendants*. Which would you choose? What would you want for your

children? **And the truth is, even though you're already born, *this is real*. You *do* get to make the choice. *Now*.**

And your choice won't just change America. It can change the world. You can be the reason for a new and better world. The People *peacefully* calling a Convention to propose Amendments to our Constitution is world-changing. The rest of the world can say: "Look to America if you want to see a country where the People have that much power to make their government better. Look to America to see *People* who courageously believe in their Republic."

Right now, the world doesn't look up to us the way they used to. A Gallup poll in 2001, just before September 11<sup>th</sup>, showed that 75% of Americans felt the United States rated favorably in the eyes of the world. In 2014 that number is 51%.<sup>172</sup> A Pew poll in December, 2013 showed 70% of Americans feel America is less respected by other countries than it was in the past.<sup>\*,173</sup> And the truth is many of us no longer look up to ourselves the way we used to.<sup>†</sup> For the last decade our country has struggled to believe in itself, but our country is *better than this*. **You can inspire the rest of America to believe in their country again, and inspire the world to believe in America again—even more than before September 11<sup>th</sup>—because you can make the United States of America all the more truly a symbol of a *real* Democracy, all the more truly a leader of the free world. You can make the United States of America all the more an inspiration of hope for all the people of the whole world and all the more what all America and all the people of the whole world *want* to fiercely protect.**

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\* And there are probably lots of mistakes that led to this loss of respect, but, in 2009, the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, Dennis Blair, testified that how Wall Street's crash led to a global recession was one big part of it. The crash "increased questioning of U.S. stewardship of the global economy and the international financial structure." See the endnote for details (#173)

† Indeed, as you listen to what others think of these ideas, you'll hear people who are depressive pessimists, people who say: "This is all stupid. There's no point in bothering to make our country better. The corrupt are too powerful and too smart, and they always find a way to wreck everything." Try to *just listen* to depressive pessimists (Nod; say, "I see your point"; etc.) It's tempting to argue with their defeatism, but that only encourages the defeatism. *Just listening* is far more powerful than trying to convince them. There's actually research on this process: arguing with a depressive pessimist infects everyone in a group with negativity, until the whole group gives up. (This infectious negativity happens in Congress all the time. Special interests encourage it.) To learn about this research, *listen online to [just the beginning](#)* of this episode of the National Public Radio series, *This American Life*, called, *Ruining It for the Rest of Us*. It's very funny: [http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio\\_Episode.aspx?episode=370](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=370)

*This is the paramount solution to terrorism.*



The Beacon for Democracy the World Over  
Saved from the 9/11 attacks by the courageous passengers and crew of *United 93*



The Columbine Memorial<sup>174</sup>

## Epilogue

This book is meant for Americans who believe in *citizenship*. If you believe in ending corruption; if you believe in liberty and freedom from tyranny; if you believe in justice for all; if you believe in government Of The People, By The People, For The People; if you believe in Common Sense, then consider showing this book to someone else. (See the front of the book for where you can download a free .pdf to pass on.) **Tell others to skim just the highlighted parts to see if they might find it interesting.** *Tell them what you disagree with in it, and listen to what they think too.*

When this discussion reaches the people of DC, it will tell them to call for Fair and Just and *Uncorrupt* representation for all of us, to strive for LIBERTY and JUSTICE FOR ALL—as is on the DC quarter and in our *Pledge of Allegiance*—and not for just themselves. It will tell

the people of DC that all America needs them, as *full citizens* of our Capital City and

Country. It will tell them to tell all America to join an enterprise to:

**save America.**

You are a part of this enterprise.

Are you ready?



*“Keep in mind our Constitution predates the Industrial Revolution. Our Founders did not know about electricity, the train, telephones, radio, television, automobiles, airplanes, rockets, nuclear weapons, satellites, or space exploration. There’s a lot they didn’t know about. It would be interesting to see what kind of document they’d draft today. Just keeping it frozen in time won’t hack it.”*

— *Ross Perot* (in the 1992 Presidential debates)<sup>175</sup>

*“I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered, ... institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy.”*

— *Thomas Jefferson*

From Panel Four of the inner walls of the Jefferson Memorial<sup>176</sup>





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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> To read the proposal that was in Congress for DC to get a vote and Utah an additional vote in the House of Representatives: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s160> A reason that Utah in particular had advocated this was that, at that time at least, it was the state closest in population to being eligible for another representative in the House (if another state were to lose a seat due to shrinking population) Another issue was that to give only DC a vote in the House would have made the total number of votes in the House an even number, 436 This meant it would be possible to have a tie vote in the House But if Utah got an extra vote too, then the total number of votes would have been odd again, 437

<sup>2</sup> State and DC populations for 2012 from United States Census Bureau State-population proportions calculated from same data: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> For a very accessible reference on how the original 13 colonies saw themselves as separate countries, see the six-hour PBS documentary series, *Liberty: The American Revolution* In particular, see episode six, “Are We to Be a Nation?”: [http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/liberty\\_episodes.html](http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/liberty_episodes.html)

As an aside, the series is fascinating history It could also help for us as Americans to know more about our older wars—the ones before the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Knowing about them could help us be wiser about the conflicts we send our troops into If we had known more about our own history, we might have been wiser about *how* we went into Vietnam and some of our other wars—wars which often put us in the midst of the civil wars of other countries

*The American Revolution was a literal Vietnam for the British Empire* The empire had the most powerful, most well-trained, and most equipped army and navy in the world (It was like our military today) They thought it would be easy to squash the American rag-tag Continental Army But the American Army wouldn’t fight them head on, and instead it fought a guerrilla war—losing battle after battle, but hanging on for eight years The British army won most of the battles, but it couldn’t win the hearts and minds of the American people Finally, the British People asked, “What’s the point? Why are we spending so much money on this?” *This is the same story that the country of Vietnam has for their war against France and the US* In 1945, Vietnam made a *Declaration of Independence from France, and it even used the same words as our own Declaration* They looked up to us, and we squandered that.

There are also other bizarrely similar parallels between Vietnam and the American Revolution In the South, the American Revolution was also a civil war between American rebels and loyalists—just like the war in South Vietnam, *where siblings from the same Vietnamese families sometimes fought on opposite sides—just like in the American Civil Wars* (For the South in America, the Civil War from 1861 to 1865 was really a repeat—a much bigger repeat—of a civil war we had already had during the Revolution) For another disturbing parallel, the American Revolution was also a part of a long process of colonists spreading west By 1890, in this process, the US had exterminated over 90% of Native Americans—with both guns and diseases (“Census Volume on the American Indian,” by Gary Sandefur, *Social Science Research Council Items*, June-Sept, 1990) This is unnervingly similar to how the Vietnam War spilled west into Cambodia and helped lead to the genocide there under the Khmer Rouge

But this is not to say we should never intervene in civil wars Sometimes intervening in a civil war has to be done in order to prevent further killing, and can sometimes be done without getting into a “quagmire”

PBS documentaries are gold mines for lessons from our own past history on how we might apply such finesse:

- There was the war that preceded the American Revolution, the French and Indian War That war trained George Washington and other revolutionaries, and it spread the philosophical seeds of independence and national identity among the American People See the PBS series, *The War that Made America*: <http://www.pbs.org/thewarthatmadeamerica/>
- The Native American resistance See the inspiring and moving PBS *American Experience* series, *We Shall Remain* You can watch it online for free in its entirety: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/>
- The source of the intense violence of our civil wars, **slavery, was in both the North and the South**, Despite its crushing cruelty, slaves resisted, and their resistance helped make our country what it is See the inspiring series, *Slavery and the Making of America*: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/>
- *The US-Mexican War* Before it, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and most of Colorado were part of Mexico We still reflexively treat Mexicans as conquered inferiors An irony with our ethnic tensions today is that this war began with US immigrants coming into Texas This war unified what was left of Mexico, but for the US it was a training ground for officers on both sides of the Civil War See the PBS *American Experience* documentary: <http://www.pbs.org/keras/usmexicanwar/>
- *The Civil War* See the renowned epic series by Ken Burns: <http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/>
- The American Civil War really kept going after it was over in name: “Reconstruction” The aftermath has long haunted our country See the PBS *American Experience* documentary, *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War*: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/>
- Vietnam See the landmark series, *Vietnam: A Television History* It was made in the 1980s, and more information has come out since then, but it is extremely well done and informative: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/>

<sup>4</sup> George Washington was part of the Virginia delegation to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 (and he was also elected president of the Convention) The Virginia delegation arrived at the Convention early with the Virginia Plan, developed by James Madison, and which advocated population-weighted representation for both the Senate and the House In the end, this

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idea only prevailed with the House of Representatives. Washington was also made president of the Convention, and on the podium he was silent about further speaking out for the Virginia Plan, but it was still the view he supported. See the 2010 biography of Washington, by the National Book Award winning author, Ron Chernow: *Washington: A Life*, page 533

<sup>5</sup> Jefferson wasn't at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, because he was the country's minister to France at the time, but he was sending James Madison books on political philosophy from France, and this helped Madison as the main drafter of our national Constitution, with The Virginia Plan. The Virginia Plan advocated population-weighted representation, for both the Senate and the House of Representatives. However, this idea only prevailed for the House of Representatives. (Population-weighted representation is different from proportional representation, in that, in population-weighted representation, the majority still takes all as the winner in each district; the minority in each district has no voice.) Like Washington, Jefferson did not speak out on the issue after the Convention, but it was still his belief that it was unjust for some voters to have more power than others simply by the fact of where they lived. See the book, *The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson*, by David Mayer (1994), page 61.

Both population-weighted and proportional representation also both take some mathematics to figure out how to apportion seats, and Jefferson helped pioneer these mathematical techniques. He invented a mathematical method called the Jefferson method, which is now a part of something called the D'Hondt method in apportioning seats in proportional representation. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%27Hondt\\_method#D\\_27Hondt\\_and\\_Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%27Hondt_method#D_27Hondt_and_Jefferson)

<sup>6</sup> To learn about the Connecticut Compromise, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connecticut\\_Compromise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connecticut_Compromise)

<sup>7</sup> This web site on American Government at the University of Louisiana is one particularly concise discussion on the slavery compromises in our Constitution:

<http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/~ras2777/amgov/slavery2.html>

<sup>8</sup> The 22 smallest states have 12.4% of the population. Calculated from United States Census Bureau data for 2012: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> African Americans are 13.1% of the population, per the United States Census Bureau estimate for 2012: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from: <http://leisureguy.wordpress.com/2009/08/09/equal-representation-except-in-the-senate/>

<sup>11</sup> If it's unnecessary, why does just 25% of the population have a filibuster-proof, majority rule over everyone else?

<sup>12</sup> See the footnote associated with this endnote: For more detail on India's national legislature, there are two houses. The lower house, the Lok Sabha, has most of the power and is elected via winner-take-all districts—just like the US. The upper house, the Rajya Sabha, is elected in a convoluted way. It's sometimes noted as an example of "indirect" proportional representation, because it's elected through choice voting by the members of the lower house of each state legislature. However, the state lower houses (the Vidhan Sabhas) are elected via winner-take-all districts, and this makes the Rajya Sabha proportionally representative of state legislators—but *not of the people*. Also, since the Rajya Sabha has much less power than the Lok Sabha, its seats function more to give corrupt favors to the otherwise unelectable and also to give a small voice to competent technocrats who aren't political campaigners. To begin learning about India's legislature: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament\\_of\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_India)

The track record of proportional representation in other countries is that it does *not* lead to political deadlock. (That's what our own system does.) *Coalitions of parties lead stable governments*. See: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy/BeginningReading/whatispr.htm>

On corruption in India and other countries, the nongovernmental organization, Transparency International, every year calculates the CPI—the Corruption Perceptions Index, with a ranking of most of the countries in the world from least corrupt to most corrupt. In 2013, out of 175 countries ranked, Somalia was the *most* corrupt in the world, followed by North Korea and then Afghanistan. Incidentally, Iraq was the seventh most corrupt. (But both Afghanistan and Iraq have been improving. In 2009, they were ranked as second and fourth most corrupt respectively.) India was in the middle of the pack at #94 least corrupt. Denmark and New Zealand were tied for *least* corrupt. (And both have proportional representation. Proportional representation does *not* cause corruption; it can help end corruption.) The USA was ranked #19 least corrupt, tied with Uruguay. To check out the Corruption Perceptions Index: <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>

On legislative size, India's lower house has 543 members. There's some reason to think that once a legislative house is too large for all the legislators to all know each other personally, it can be harder for it to work as an efficient team for a country. For more on how a team's ability to work well together depends on not getting too big, see the book, *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell. There's reason to think that groups work better if they don't go beyond the ability of the each person to follow all the inter-relationships of everyone else in the group. People in a group of 150 can have 10,000 different relationships with each other; in a group of 290—40,000 relationships. Evidence suggests that 150 (or 290 at most) is the maximum size for people who can work together congenially and efficiently. This is also called Dunbar's number.

To learn more about *The Tipping Point*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Tipping\\_Point\\_\(book\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tipping_Point_(book))

To learn more about Dunbar's number: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunbar%27s\\_number](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunbar%27s_number)

<sup>13</sup> For a listing of all the different kinds of national legislatures and voting systems in all the countries of the world, see:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table\\_of\\_voting\\_systems\\_by\\_nation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_voting_systems_by_nation) Many countries use mixed systems, and some countries use systems that are more non-proportional than proportional. Well over 70 countries use systems that are more proportional than not.

<sup>14</sup> Sadly, an irony here, with how we have supported democracy in countries we have overcome militarily, is how the US has also supported the covert overthrow of democracy, *sometimes with very unfortunate consequences for our own national security*. Just one example is how the US Central Intelligence Agency helped overthrow Iran's democratic government in 1953, in order to further oil interests (specifically the company that would later become BP). This installed a brutal

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dictatorship that caused Iranians to greatly resent the US, led to the Islamic Revolution that began in 1978, and led to all the consequences of that which the US has faced since—from the US-Iran hostage crisis of 1979-1981 to the current concerns over a hostile Iran and nuclear proliferation. To learn more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1953\\_Iranian\\_coup\\_d%27C3%A9tat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1953_Iranian_coup_d%27C3%A9tat)

<sup>15</sup> Proportional representation in Germany: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany#Government>

<sup>16</sup> Proportional representation in Japan. Proportional representation there is part of a larger system called parallel voting, where many seats are also elected by winner take all: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diet\\_of\\_Japan#Composition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diet_of_Japan#Composition)

After World War II, Japan got a new start in its government with a system that's fairer than only having winner-take-all election districts, but still a problematic system. Along with winner-take-all districts, Japan had what are called multi-member constituencies by single *non-transferable* vote. (This part is similar to what we supported Afghanistan in setting up.) But in the 1990s, Japan then improved on this by switching the single non-transferable-vote part of their legislature to true proportional party-list voting. (The winner-take-all districts still remain though.) For more information, see: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy/BeginningReading/whatispr.htm>

<sup>17</sup> Party-list proportional representation in Iraq: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi\\_legislative\\_election,\\_December\\_2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_legislative_election,_December_2005)

As this book goes to press, it also appears Iraq is dividing into three sectarian countries. The old bitter resentments are just too much between Kurd, Sunni, and Shia. However, Southern Iraq (Shia) and Iraqi Kurdistan will likely stay republics with proportional parliaments. To learn about party-list proportional representation in Iraqi Kurdistan:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan\\_Regional\\_Government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan_Regional_Government)

<sup>18</sup> This concise introduction to the different kinds of proportional representation is by Professor Douglas Amy of Mount Holyoke College, a leading scholar on proportional representation:

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/facultyprofiles/douglas.amy>

<sup>19</sup> Discussion of how few people actually elect our Senate based on this blog:

<http://leisureguy.wordpress.com/2009/08/09/equal-representation-except-in-the-senate/>

<sup>20</sup> More than 40% of Americans don't vote, even in presidential elections:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter\\_turnout\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_presidential\\_elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter_turnout_in_the_United_States_presidential_elections)

<sup>21</sup> 23.5% of the population is under 18: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qd/states/00000.html>

<sup>22</sup> To learn more about gerrymandering, see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrymandering>. This link is also the source of the cartoon, made in 1812 by Gilbert Stewart, of the original "gerrymander" election district.

<sup>23</sup> Our two parties fight to control state legislatures and state governorships so that they can gerrymander the US House to their advantage, from *The Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior* (2008), p. 96

<sup>24</sup> Only one of Maryland's eight representatives is Republican, but 27% of Marylanders are registered Republican:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_party\\_strength\\_in\\_U.S.\\_states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_party_strength_in_U.S._states)

*This unfairness is routine, and more extreme examples occur.* In 1996, in Massachusetts, Democrats got 66% of the vote but *all* the US House seats; in Oklahoma, Republicans got 61% of the vote but *all* the US House Seats. See: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy/BeginningReading/whatispr.htm>

## Invest in America Buy a Congressman!

<sup>25</sup> Printed with permission by [bumperart.com](http://bumperart.com). Other bumper-sticker companies also make a similar sticker.

Also, know that if you put a bumper sticker on the *outside* of your rear *windshield*, instead of on your bumper, it's much easier to take off later, *without damaging your car*. You can use a glass razor scraper from your local hardware store. Do a search on "glass razor scraper" to see what they look like. Note that scraping off anything you tape to the *inside* of your rear windshield can damage your defroster.

<sup>26</sup> For an amazing online database on which special interests fund which politicians, see:

<http://www.opensecrets.org/>

<sup>27</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, the "trust buster": [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidency\\_of\\_Theodore\\_Roosevelt#Trust\\_busting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidency_of_Theodore_Roosevelt#Trust_busting)

<sup>28</sup> Standard Oil monopoly cartoon: "Next!" by Udo Keppler, 1904. Image from:

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Standard\\_oil\\_octopus\\_loc\\_color.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Standard_oil_octopus_loc_color.jpg)

<sup>29</sup> Key for the different parts of the 1904 painting of the Standard Oil octopus, "Next!" by Udo Keppler, is from:

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/power/text1/octopusimages.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Theodore Roosevelt's administration initiated the suit which culminated in the Standard Oil breakup:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard\\_Oil#Monopoly\\_charges\\_and\\_anti-trust\\_legislation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Oil#Monopoly_charges_and_anti-trust_legislation)

<sup>31</sup> Theodore Roosevelt endorsed publicly funded campaigns:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campaign\\_finance\\_reform\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States#First\\_attempts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campaign_finance_reform_in_the_United_States#First_attempts)

<sup>32</sup> "Campaign Contributions Stoked the Fire Behind Wall Street Meltdown," by Kristin Schaff, 11/21/08, essay winner for the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics. In particular, this essay very concisely summarizes how campaign contributions enabled the repeal of a Depression-era law known as Glass-Steagall, a law that was a firewall against the finance industry taking huge risks with our economy: <http://www.opensecrets.org/news/2008/11/essay-winner-campaign-contribu.html>

For greater detail on how special interests repealed Glass-Steagall, as well as a host of other ways that special interests cannibalized our economy, see:

The winner of the 2013 National Book Award for nonfiction: *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the United States*, by George Packer (2013). In particular, see pages 219-226 and 345-350.

*Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*, by Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson (2010).

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*The Payoff: Why Wall Street Always Wins*, by Jeff Connaughton (2012)

<sup>33</sup> Unemployment will hover at 6% for years to come, despite how the number of people even trying to participate in the labor force is expected to continually decline. See the February, 2014 report by the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan research office of Congress: "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2014 to 2024."

You can see a short slide summary here: <http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45077>

or the full report here: <http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45010>

<sup>34</sup> Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for 2013 notes 47.6 million on food stamps.

See: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

And more specifically: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/SNAPsummary.pdf>

At that time, the US population was 316 million, per the U.S. Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/popclock/>

<sup>35</sup> The insurance industry spent \$700,000 *per day* lobbying Capitol Hill in 2009, from data by the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics: [http://www.campaignmoney.org/HMO\\_insurance\\_spend\\_to\\_kill\\_reform](http://www.campaignmoney.org/HMO_insurance_spend_to_kill_reform)

<sup>36</sup> Medical insurance industry extorted a bill that required everyone to get insurance. To learn more about the political knife fighting involved in extorting this, see the PBS *Frontline* documentary, *Obama's Deal*, which you can watch online. The drug industry also extorted its own concessions, and both the insurance and drug industries had enormous experience with getting huge welfare handouts from the people, with the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill in 2003 (Medicare Part D). Both industries also knew they could hold medical care hostage, because they had shot down medical insurance reform before, in 1994:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/obamasdeal/>

<sup>37</sup> To learn more about the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office: <http://www.cbo.gov/aboutcbo/>

<sup>38</sup> The Affordable Care Act, by the time it's fully phased in, will still leave at least 30 million people uninsured. See the February, 2014 report by the CBO, table B-2, page 108: "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2014 to 2024":

<http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45010>

<sup>39</sup> For more info on how no legislation at all is a strategy of special interests, see: *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*, by Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson (2010), in particular page 43.

<sup>40</sup> The "Citizen's United" and "McCutcheon" Decisions of 2010 and 2014 have greatly increased how special interests can pour money into politics.

See: "Supreme Court Rips Up Campaign Finance Laws," by Deborah Tedford, National Public Radio, 1/21/10:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122805666>

And: "Supreme Court Strikes Down Aggregate Limits on Federal Campaign Contributions," by Adam Liptak, *The New York Times*, 4/2/14: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/03/us/politics/supreme-court-ruling-on-campaign-contributions.html>

<sup>41</sup> Numerous polls report that more than 70% of Americans are dissatisfied with our country's direction:

<http://www.pollingreport.com/right.htm>

<sup>42</sup> As of 2014, numerous polls put Congressional approval in the low teens: <http://www.pollingreport.com/CongJob.htm>

<sup>43</sup> 2009 Rasmussen poll that 83% of Americans are very concerned about corruption in our government:

[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/mood\\_of\\_america/mood\\_of\\_america\\_archive/importance\\_of\\_issues/government\\_ethics\\_edges\\_out\\_economy\\_as\\_top\\_issue\\_among\\_voters](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/mood_of_america/mood_of_america_archive/importance_of_issues/government_ethics_edges_out_economy_as_top_issue_among_voters)

<sup>44</sup> The US is number 19 as *uncorrupt*. See the Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International:

<http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>

<sup>45</sup> 2009 Rasmussen poll that 57% of Americans, *if asked*, think we should just completely replace everyone in Congress:

[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/general\\_politics/august\\_2009/57\\_would\\_like\\_to\\_replace\\_entire\\_congress](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/august_2009/57_would_like_to_replace_entire_congress)

<sup>46</sup> "43% Say Random Choices From Phone Book Better Than Current Congress," Rasmussen 2012:

[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/general\\_politics/february\\_2012/43\\_say\\_random\\_choices\\_from\\_phone\\_book\\_better\\_than\\_current\\_congress](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/february_2012/43_say_random_choices_from_phone_book_better_than_current_congress)

<sup>47</sup> As of 2014, 65% of Americans are dissatisfied with America's system of government. Graph printed with permission of Gallup, Inc. Copyright © 2014 Gallup, Inc. All rights reserved. The content is used with permission; however, Gallup retains all rights of republication. Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted January 5-8, 2014 with a random sample of 1,018 adults, aged 18+, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on this sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error is ±4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Poll published by Gallup at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166985/dissatisfied-gov-system-works.aspx>

<sup>48</sup> The Democratic party felt particularly threatened by proportional representation and bitterly opposed it in city councils in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. See this history by scholar Douglas Amy: <http://www.fairvote.org/?page=647>

<sup>49</sup> For more on how people who buy Corona beer have a huge impact on keeping prices reasonable from the Anheuser-Busch and MillerCoors beer conglomerates, see this podcast from the National Public Radio Series, *Planet Money*: Episode 438, "Mavericks, Monopolies And Beer," 2/23/13 (21 mins):

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2013/02/23/172724026/episode-438-mavericks-monopolies-and-beer>

<sup>50</sup> The only two independents in 2014 in all of Congress are Senators Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Angus King of Maine. To learn more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent\\_\(politician\)#Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_(politician)#Congress)

<sup>51</sup> While there may be differences in which party members lie more often, at least a quarter of the statements by members of either political party are "mostly false." This study of false claims made by both Democrats and Republicans, according to [Politifact.com](http://www.cmpa.com/study-media-fact-checker-says-republicans-lie-more/), was done by the nonpartisan Center for Media and Public Affairs at George Mason University, 5/28/13:

<http://www.cmpa.com/study-media-fact-checker-says-republicans-lie-more/>

<sup>52</sup> Rhode Island sent no delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia\\_Convention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia_Convention)

<sup>53</sup> Rhode Island was the last state to ratify The Constitution. New Hampshire was the ninth state to ratify, and this made The Constitution official, but the remaining four states still ratified it to make it unanimous. Rhode Island was the 13<sup>th</sup>. See:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution)

<sup>54</sup> 2013 Gallup poll that 75% of Americans support term limits:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/159881/americans-call-term-limits-end-electoral-college.aspx>

<sup>55</sup> For how often incumbents win reelection in Congress and why, see this chart by the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan organization that tracks money and corruption in politics:

<http://www.opensecrets.org/resources/dollarocracy/02.php>

<sup>56</sup> A YouTube video on the “bridge to nowhere” (1 min, 51 secs): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6q\\_0-krUo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6q_0-krUo)

<sup>57</sup> On how we have a national debt of over \$17 trillion—over \$55,000 per citizen—see this online debt clock. It’s an amazing counter of numerous indicators of our country’s indebtedness: <http://www.usdebtclock.org/>

<sup>58</sup> Many Founding Framers, such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, favored limited terms:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Term\\_limits\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Term_limits_in_the_United_States)

Indeed, part of what made Washington such a legend the world over was how he renounced power—turning in his commission as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army at the end of the American Revolution and also then setting a precedent of serving only two terms as President

<sup>59</sup> The post-Congress “payoff,” the lucrative industry and lobbying jobs that come after “public service.” Politicians call it “cashing in.” See *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the United States*, by George Packer (2013), in particular pages 163-171 and 282-295. This is a very nice summary of: *The Payoff: Why Wall Street Always Wins*, by Jeff Connaughton (2012)

<sup>60</sup> Article V of the *The Constitution* allows for two thirds of the states to call for a Convention to Propose Amendments:

<http://www.usconstitution.net/constam.html#process>

<sup>61</sup> To learn more about Thomas Jefferson: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson). There’s also an excellent three-hour documentary on him by Ken Burns. It also goes into how Jefferson was a slave owner and his very contradictory and ambivalent attitudes about whether African Americans are also “created equal”: <http://www.pbs.org/jefferson/>

<sup>62</sup> To learn more about Benjamin Franklin: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin\\_Franklin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Franklin)

<sup>63</sup> *Philosopher of Freedom*, a one-hour A&E documentary on Jefferson: <http://www.oldsies.com/product-view/2388FD.html>

<sup>64</sup> See this three-hour PBS documentary on Benjamin Franklin: <http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin/>

<sup>65</sup> To learn more about Alexander Hamilton: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Hamilton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Hamilton)

<sup>66</sup> To learn more about James Madison: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Madison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Madison)

<sup>67</sup> Madison was our smallest president ever—5’ 4” and only 100 pounds. But he was a brilliant philosopher president Ironically—for a small, shy, and nerdy president—he was married to a legendarily beautiful and charming first lady, Dolley Madison. He also surprisingly came into his own as a Presidential field leader of the troops and the People in the War of 1812, when our capital city itself was invaded and burned. To learn more about his role in that war, see the four-hour documentary by the History Channel, *The War of 1812*: <http://www.history.com/topics/war-of-1812>

<sup>68</sup> Hamilton was one of the principal authors of *The Federalist Papers*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federalist\\_Papers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federalist_Papers)

Born abroad in the West Indies, he didn’t think of himself as primarily a “Virginian,” or “from Massachusetts,” etc. He thought of himself as *an American*, and he was a strong advocate of the original 13 states to come together as a *single unified nation*. He is one of the people most responsible for that. See the two-hour PBS *American Experience* documentary on Hamilton, which you can watch online for free: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hamilton/>

<sup>69</sup> On how Hamilton firmly believed in not exploiting political office to get rich off the People, see the two-hour documentary, *Alexander Hamilton*, which you can watch online: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hamilton/>

Hamilton believed in this to the extent that he made a mortal enemy of the man to whom Jefferson almost lost the Presidency—Aaron Burr, who spoke openly about profiting off elected office. Hamilton helped Jefferson prevail over Burr and so made a bitter enemy of Burr. Eventually Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel. Hamilton was against dueling in general, but he didn’t feel he could decline, and so he died for his principles by participating in the duel but refusing to fire.

<sup>70</sup> James Madison was the main author of the Virginia delegation’s proposal at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the Virginia Plan, which formed the core of our Constitution. That plan advocated population-weighted representation for both the House and the Senate, but that idea only prevailed for the House. To learn more about the Virginia Plan:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia\\_Plan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Plan)

<sup>71</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery of the US Army, “Hamilton’s Own,” is the only unit from the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War that is still in the US army. See the PBS documentary, *Alexander Hamilton*, which you can watch online: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hamilton/>

You can also learn more about “Hamilton’s Own” here:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th\\_Field\\_Artillery\\_Regiment#1st\\_Battalion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th_Field_Artillery_Regiment#1st_Battalion)

<sup>72</sup> To learn more about George Washington: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Washington)

<sup>73</sup> George Washington was president of the Constitutional Convention in 1787:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia\\_Convention#The\\_Convention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia_Convention#The_Convention)

<sup>74</sup> The 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, which placed term limits on the Presidency:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty-second\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty-second_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

<sup>75</sup> The Electoral College 93% of the time actually has had the same result as the popular vote:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_presidential\\_election#History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election#History)

<sup>76</sup> The 11 “swing states”: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swing\\_state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swing_state)

<sup>77</sup> Since at least 1944, large majorities of the American People have wanted to get rid of the Electoral College: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/2140/americans-support-proposal-eliminate-electoral-college-system.aspx>

<sup>78</sup> A 2013 Gallup poll found 66% of Democrats, 63% of Independents, and 61% of Republicans all wanted to end the Electoral College: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/159881/americans-call-term-limits-end-electoral-college.aspx>

<sup>79</sup> In the original plan for the Electoral College, each elector from each state was supposed to exercise *independent judgment*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral\\_College\\_\(United\\_States\)#Original\\_plan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_College_(United_States)#Original_plan)

<sup>80</sup> To learn more about *The Preamble to The Constitution*:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preamble\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preamble_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

To read *The Gettysburg Address* online: <http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm>

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<sup>81</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment, which overturned Prohibition: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty-first\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty-first_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

<sup>82</sup> The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which started Prohibition: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eighteenth\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eighteenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

<sup>83</sup> On the death penalty, the status quo is to allow states to use capital punishment if they want to. A Gallup poll in October, 2013 showed 60% support the death penalty and 35% oppose it, supporting the status quo to allow states to use it if they decide to: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1606/death-penalty.aspx>

One question in this issue is whether certain criminals deserve death. Interestingly, many people who say yes to that also feel that the fact that the government also executes innocent people makes capital punishment not worth the risk. For more about how much we're learning about innocent people on death row, see the Innocence Project, which uses DNA evidence to try to exonerate the convicted innocent: <http://www.innocenceproject.org/know/Browse-Profiles.php>

This issue will take time for our states to work through. Eventually, our country may be able to come to some new model of criminal justice in general, towards a system that emphasizes *prevention, public safety, and healing*—rather than using taxpayer dollars to build prisons that serve as training academies for criminals. And sometimes these prisons are for corporate profit, which is perhaps another example of how Common Sense often gets forgotten. Corporate prisons have limited incentive to rehabilitate and prevent more crime. They make their own market and expand their profits by breeding more crime, so that tax payers have to spend more to contract with more corporate prisons. Perhaps that's an extreme interpretation, but see this blog and its information on corporate prisons:

[http://ncpc.typepad.com/prevention\\_works\\_blog/2007/08/corporate-amer.html](http://ncpc.typepad.com/prevention_works_blog/2007/08/corporate-amer.html)

An additional idea to consider is something like South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission—when victims are okay with amnesty as a way to come to truth and closure. See:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth\\_and\\_Reconciliation\\_Commission\\_\(South\\_Africa\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_and_Reconciliation_Commission_(South_Africa))

Rwanda has a Reconciliation Commission that further develops this model—as part of healing from the 1994 genocide: <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgjustice.shtml> It includes restitution towards victims by such acts as helping to rebuild their homes and communities. One way that Americans volunteer in Rwanda with this is through a Christian group called International Reconciliation Ministries: <http://www.newlifeirm.org/>

<sup>84</sup> **What has done the most to dramatically lower abortion rates worldwide is access to contraception.** See an Oct. 2003 report by the Guttmacher Institute (a research institute on reproductive health): *Contraceptive Use Is Key to Reducing Abortion Worldwide*. It has a number of remarkable graphs. For example, in Russia between 1988 and 2001, when access to contraception increased 74%, abortion decreased 61%: <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/tgr/06/4/gr060407.html>

Making abortion illegal is nowhere near as effective as contraception for lowering abortion rates. In fact, countries where abortion is illegal tend to also be the countries where abortion rates are highest (like Latin America—in countries like Brazil, Chile, and Peru), and countries where abortion is most legal tend to also be countries where abortion rates are lowest (like Western Europe—in countries like Germany and the Netherlands). The US is in between. See the 1999 report by the Guttmacher Institute, *Abortion in Context: United States and Worldwide*: [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/ib\\_0599.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/ib_0599.html) (In countries where abortion is legal, the data is based on direct statistics. In countries where abortion is illegal, abortion rates are estimated from records of how many women get prosecuted for having an abortion.) To learn more about where legal and illegal abortions are concentrated in the world, see: <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/sharing.pdf>)

We should also note that the US is a little more complicated in figuring all this out—because when contraception access first started to increase in our country, abortion rates also increased. But this later changed—as contraception access continued to increase, then abortion went into dramatic decline in the US. This has also been true in other countries. See "Relationships Between Contraception and Abortion: A Review of the Evidence," in the journal, *International Family Planning Perspectives*, March 2003. You can read the study online: <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2900603.pdf>

For the study that showed a remarkable program, that did not disparage contraception and encouraged youth to make their own decisions about their future and abstinence, resulted in teens delaying becoming sexually active: Jemmott, Jemmott, Fong, "Efficacy of a Theory-Based Abstinence-Only Intervention Over 24 Months: A Randomized Controlled Trial With Young Adolescents," *The Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, Feb 2010; 152-159: <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=382798>

For an excellent summary on how forced pregnancy leads to higher crime and homicide rates 20 years later, see the brilliant book, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores The Hidden Side of Everything*, by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner (2009), Chapter 4, "Where Have All The Criminals Gone?"

<sup>85</sup> The Second Amendment: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

<sup>86</sup> For the study on support for certain kinds of rules to increase gun safety: "After Newtown—Public Opinion on Gun Policy and Mental Illness," by Colleen Barry, Emma McGinty, Jon Vernick, and Daniel Webster, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, March 21, 2013, pages 1077-1081: <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1300512>

The CBS News/*New York Times* poll found similar support for background checks over 2013: from 92% in January of 2013 to 85% in December, 2013. See: <http://www.pollingreport.com/guns.htm>

To learn about the Lautenberg Amendment, a 1996 law banning gun ownership for people convicted of domestic violence: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic\\_Violence\\_Offender\\_Gun\\_Ban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_Violence_Offender_Gun_Ban)

<sup>87</sup> 48% of Americans feel protecting the right of Americans to own guns is more important than controlling gun ownership, and 50% feel the latter is more important. Pew Research Center, "Gun Control: Key Data Points from Pew Research," 7/27/13: <http://www.pewresearch.org/key-data-points/gun-control-key-data-points-from-pew-research/>

Also, a random quiz to consider: when parents who own guns think their kids don't know where the guns are, what percent of those parents are wrong? Answer: 39%. See: "Parental misperceptions about children and firearms," by Frances Baxley and Matthew Miller, *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, May, 2006, pages 542-547: <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=204929>

<sup>88</sup> The U S Centers for Medicare and Medicaid tell us that *by 2020 medical care will cost \$5 trillion, almost \$2 trillion more than it costs today.* See:

<http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/NationalHealthAccountsProjected.html> and then go to this report, table 1: <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/Downloads/Proj2012.pdf>

<sup>89</sup> Medicare is currently headed towards insolvency. Per the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid 2013 Boards of Trustees report, the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund will be depleted by 2026. Go to:

<http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/ReportsTrustFunds/index.html?redirect=/reportstrustfunds/> and click on: <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/ReportsTrustFunds/Downloads/TR2013.pdf> and go to page 27

<sup>90</sup> Data from the Congressional Budget Office (the CBO) shows that Medicare's and Medicaid's share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is rising continuously, *largely from medical costs are rising for everyone, not just because our population is ageing.* The chart is from Wikipedia and is from charts and data in the Congressional Budget Office report, "Accounting for Sources of Projected Growth in Federal Spending on Medicare and Medicaid," MAY 28, 2008. For the Wikipedia chart:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Medicare\\_and\\_Medicaid\\_GDP\\_Chart.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Medicare_and_Medicaid_GDP_Chart.png) For the CBO report: [http://cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/93xx/doc9316/05-29-sourceshealthcostgrowth\\_brief.pdf](http://cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/93xx/doc9316/05-29-sourceshealthcostgrowth_brief.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> The US Census tells us that in our first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, because of medical care, household incomes dropped *every year.* Employers actually increased their payments to labor by 25%, but medical care ate up all that increase *and more,* because, by just 2008, the average cost of health care premiums had more than doubled (going from \$6,000 to over \$12,000 for a family of four). Reported on the National Public Radio show, *Market Place*, 9/16/09:

<http://www.marketplace.org/topics/commentary/health-costs-hurt-incomes-bush-years>

<sup>92</sup> We are less than 5% of the world's population. Calculated from numbers for 2010, since that's the most recent that we have world-health care spending: 2010 U S Census 309 million:

<http://www.census.gov/popest/data/intercensal/national/nat2010.html>

2010 world population: 6.892 trillion per the Population Reference Bureau, a nonprofit that tracks world population issues:

[http://www.prb.org/pdf10/10wpds\\_eng.pdf](http://www.prb.org/pdf10/10wpds_eng.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> We spend 40% of the world's health-care dollars. Calculated from 2010 data. 2010 US health spending from the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the U S Centers for Disease Control: \$2.6 trillion. Go to

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus/healthexpenditures.htm> and then click on:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/abus/2013/112.pdf>

2010 world health-care spending was \$6.5 trillion U S per the World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs319/en/>

<sup>94</sup> We are 35<sup>th</sup> country in life expectancy, per the World Health Organization in 2013:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_life\\_expectancy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_life_expectancy)

<sup>95</sup> Regardless of education or income level, Americans have no higher health scores than Canadians. We actually do worse, except for the 20% most educated or the top 20% in income, who only score the same. See: "Comparing the health of low income and less well educated groups in the United States and Canada," by Ken Eng and David Feeney, *Population Health Metrics*, October, 2007. You can read the study online: <http://www.pophhealthmetrics.com/content/pdf/1478-7954-5-10.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> To learn more about the US Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/about/>

<sup>97</sup> Before the new health care law, CDC data showed that the lack of health insurance causes almost 45,000 premature deaths/year. From a study by Harvard researchers: "Health Insurance and Mortality in US Adults," by Andrew Wilper, Steffie Woolhandler, Karen Lasser, Danny McCormick, David Bor, and David Himmelstein, *The American Journal of Public Health*, December, 2009, pages 2289-2295. You can read the study online:

<http://pnhp.org/excessdeaths/health-insurance-and-mortality-in-US-adults.pdf>

This is a revision of how in 2002 the National Institute of Medicine estimated such premature deaths at 18,000 a year. That year the Institute pooled 130 studies and estimated the number of premature deaths from the lack of health insurance at 18,000 per year. You can read their report online, *Care Without Coverage: Too Little, Too Late*:

<http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309083435>

To learn more about the Institute of Medicine, part of the National Academies: <http://www.iom.edu/About-IOM.aspx>

<sup>98</sup> The new health care law decreases the uninsured by about 45%. See the February, 2014 report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, table B-2, page 108: "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2014 to 2024." This is expected to stabilize by 2018, when there will be 30 million uninsured instead of what would have been 55 million uninsured without the law (about a 45% drop). By 2024, there will still be 31 million uninsured, instead of what would have been 57 million without the law (still about 45% less). See: <http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45010>

<sup>99</sup> Medical bills are the number one cause of personal bankruptcy—affecting almost 2 million people in 2013. Study by NerdWallet Health, a division of the price-comparison website. It analyzed data from the U S Census, Centers for Disease Control, the federal court system and the Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation that promotes access, quality and efficiency in the health-care system. To read the study:

<http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/health/2014/03/26/medical-bankruptcy/>

<sup>100</sup> *75% of the people who go bankrupt from medical bills actually had medical insurance.* From a study by Harvard researchers, **including bankruptcy expert Elizabeth Warren**: "Medical Bankruptcy in the United States, 2007: Results of a National Study," by David Himmelstein, Deborah Thorne, Elizabeth Warren, and Steffie Woolhandler, *The American Journal of Medicine*, August, 2009. To read the study online: [http://pnhp.org/new\\_bankruptcy\\_study/Bankruptcy-2009.pdf](http://pnhp.org/new_bankruptcy_study/Bankruptcy-2009.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> 40% of Americans, including many doctors such as this doctor writing this, can't even understand the endless "deductibles" paperwork of their medical bills. See: "Preparedness of Americans for the Affordable Care Act," by Silvia

Barcellos et al., *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014 To read the study online:

[http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2014/03/19/132048811\\_full.pdf?html?sid=fabefa3d-19da-4f86-bf67-d65da6593589](http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2014/03/19/132048811_full.pdf?html?sid=fabefa3d-19da-4f86-bf67-d65da6593589)

<sup>102</sup> It's just "a political loser" to even try to truly reform medical care, particularly re the issue of rising costs. This is from an excellent radio documentary, which includes how physicians are also a part of the medical-cost problem: *More Is Less*, on the National Public Radio program, *This American Life*. To listen to it online (1 hr):

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/391/More-Is-Less>

*This American Life* also did a wonderful radio documentary on how the insurance industry is helplessly cornered into also driving up medical costs: *Someone Else's Money*. It includes a hilarious segment on the bizarre economics of pet insurance for hedge hogs (The U S 's human medical-insurance system is just as insane.) To listen to it online (1 hr):

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/392/Someone-Else-s-Money>

<sup>103</sup> For a general article on the issue of gay marriage: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex\\_marriage\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States)

<sup>104</sup> Perhaps half of straight marriages end in divorce: <http://www.divorcerate.org/>

<sup>105</sup> 20% of straight marriages include physical violence, from the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy:

[http://www.aamft.org/imsi15/content/Consumer\\_Updates/Domestic\\_violence.aspx](http://www.aamft.org/imsi15/content/Consumer_Updates/Domestic_violence.aspx)

<sup>106</sup> What's been used in advertising against pro-gay-marriage proposals is that gay marriage will be taught in schools, from *The Seattle Times*, 11/4/09, on the debate to legalize gay marriage in Maine, "Defeat in Maine a harsh blow to gay-marriage drive," by David Crary: [http://seattletimes.nsource.com/html/politics/2010196581\\_apusagmarriageanalysis.html](http://seattletimes.nsource.com/html/politics/2010196581_apusagmarriageanalysis.html)

<sup>107</sup> Anti-miscegenation laws ended with the Supreme Court decision, *Loving v. Virginia*, in 1967:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loving\\_v.\\_Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loving_v._Virginia)

It's also perhaps worth noting that there are parallels between apartheid against blacks and apartheid against gays. Indeed, part of South Africa's process of ending racial apartheid was to also eventually become only the second country outside Europe to protect gay marriage (the first was Canada): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex\\_marriage\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_South_Africa)

<sup>108</sup> To learn more about adult Mormon parents who quietly practice plural marriage today, and their personal and spiritual reasons for doing so, see the excellent four-hour PBS *American Experience* and *Frontline* documentary, *The Mormons*:

<http://www.pbs.org/mormons/>

<sup>109</sup> National polls on gay marriage: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_opinion\\_of\\_same-sex\\_marriage\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_opinion_of_same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States)

<sup>110</sup> A Gallup poll in May, 2014 found 55% of all Americans (including 78% of those under age 30) support gay marriage, and 42% oppose it: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/169640/sex-marriage-support-reaches-new-high.aspx>

<sup>111</sup> As this book goes to press, 19 states allow gay marriage and 31 states make it illegal:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex\\_marriage\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States)

<sup>112</sup> In some of the states where gay marriage is illegal, opinion polls show at least a plurality of voters support gay marriage. To check this, search Wikipedia for each state in the union with the phrases "same-sex marriage [state name]" or "LGBT rights [state name]". Such states include: AZ (49% for; 41% against), CO (61%/33%), FL (56%/39%), MI (54%/36%), NV (57%/36%), and VA (50%/42%)

<sup>113</sup> Notes on the proceedings of the Convention were mainly done by James Madison, but there were others who took notes as well. To see *all* the notes online: <http://www.usconstitution.net/constconnotes.html>

<sup>114</sup> George Mason argued, "No Amendments of the proper kind would ever be obtained by the people, if the Government should become oppressive, as he verily believed would be the case" (emphasis added). Quoted in *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, by James Kenneth Rogers, "The Other Way to Amend the Constitution: The Article V Constitutional Convention Amendment Process," vol 30 (2007), pages 1005-1022. To read the article online:

[http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30\\_No3\\_Rogersonline.pdf](http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No3_Rogersonline.pdf)

<sup>115</sup> Thomas Jefferson was abroad as minister to France at the time, but he approved of the Article V Convention clause. Indeed there's evidence that he felt an *automatic* Convention every 20 years might be a good idea. See the book, *The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson*, by David Mayer (1994), pages 295-296

<sup>116</sup> James Madison was a main person who advised caution, although he was not opposed to a Convention option. For one thing, he pointed out that "difficulties might arise as to the form" a Convention might take. See *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, by James Kenneth Rogers, "The Other Way to Amend the Constitution: The Article V Constitutional Convention Amendment Process," vol 30 (2007), pages 1005-1022. To read the article online:

[http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30\\_No3\\_Rogersonline.pdf](http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No3_Rogersonline.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> When the American Revolution happened, all the People had to talk about where they stood, whether they believed in liberty and freedom from tyranny, and whether they were *ready* for change. It was a national discussion over dinner tables and tavern tables, in churches and markets, and in town halls and city halls. See the six-hour PBS documentary series, *Liberty: The American Revolution*: <http://www.pbs.org/kca/liberty/>. A pamphlet called *Common Sense*, by an anonymous author, helped facilitate this process. (We later learned the author was Thomas Paine.)

<sup>118</sup> Madison worried frequent Conventions would "in great measure deprive the government of that veneration, which time bestows on every thing, and without which perhaps the wisest and freest governments would not possess the requisite stability." Quoted in the book, *The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson*, by David Mayer (1994), page 301

<sup>119</sup> By 1911, under just the rubric to suggest an Amendment for "Direct Election of Senators," 29 states had called for an Article V Convention—within two of the 31 required (two thirds of how there were 46 states at that time)

It's felt by many that a Convention can only be convened when two thirds of the states have done the *same kind* of call (Term Limits, Balanced Budget, a General Call, etc.), but it's also argued that any kind of call should count. For the list of 29 states, that did the call for "Direct Election of Senators," from Tennessee in 1861 (which also called at the same time for direct election of the President, along with some other proposals) to California in 1911, and also all the other calls that had been done up to that time, see: <http://foa5c.org/file.php/1/Articles/Amendments/Tables.htm#Table01>

Of note, there's some confusion in all the literature on the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment over just how many states by 1911 had called for a Convention re Direct Election of Senators. It's often cited that 30 states had called for it (meaning we came within one state of calling a Convention), and sometimes it's cited that 31 states had called for it (with the comment that this number was

within one state of the necessary threshold, but 31 states would have actually meant that a Convention had to be called already) As above, FOAVC's research of all Convention calls found 29 states; although it's possible a 30<sup>th</sup> state was somehow missed in their research of *The Congressional Record* in the National Archives and the National Records Administration

<sup>120</sup> Party bosses really controlled state legislatures in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with bribery See this article on the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment, from *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2008:

<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Amendment+17>

<sup>121</sup> To learn more about the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which made senators directly elected by the state citizenries, instead of by the state legislatures: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventeenth\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventeenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

<sup>122</sup> For how the states making calls for a Convention helped pressure Congress to propose the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment itself, See this article on the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment, from *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2008:

<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Amendment+17>

<sup>123</sup> For examples of clauses in Convention calls to only consider a Balanced-Budget Amendment: in a bill in Ohio, Ohio's "participants are permitted to debate and vote on only the proposed [balanced-budget] amendment" (see: [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/res\\_cfm?ID=127\\_HJR\\_8](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/res_cfm?ID=127_HJR_8) ); in a bill in Virginia, the bill states this call is for "the sole and exclusive purpose of a balanced budget" (see: <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?091+ful+SJ315> )

<sup>124</sup> The state supreme court decisions that an Article V Convention decides for itself what Amendments to propose include: Mississippi (1892) *Sproule v. Fredericks*, Iowa (1883) *Koehler v. Hill*, Virginia (1873) *Loomis v. Jackson*, Oklahoma (1907) *Frantz v. Austry*, and Texas (1912) *Cox v. Robison* From a web site which ironically argues against calling an Article V Convention: <http://www.sweetliberty.org/issues/concon/corpus.htm>

The group derogatorily calls an Article V Convention a "Con-Con," for Constitutional Convention, but that only happened in 1787, before we were truly a unified nation and even had a Constitution **An Article V Convention is an Amendment Convention, not a "Constitutional Convention"**

<sup>125</sup> For how the list originally got up to 33 states that had called for an Article V Convention under the rubric of a Balanced-Budget Amendment, from Delaware in 1979 to South Dakota in 1992, see the compilation of different kinds of calls by the organization Friends Of the Article V Convention ( <http://foavc.org> ) All Convention calls that were entered into *The Congressional Record* are listed in this table: <http://foa5c.org/file.php/1/Articles/AmendmentsTables.htm#Table01>

The group hired archivists to go through the National Archives and Records Administration to find the calls and they have also scanned images of them from *The Congressional Record* and posted them online:

<http://foavc.org/file.php/1/Amendments/index.htm>

(Of note, many comments elsewhere on the web refer to only 32 states having issued calls suggesting a Balanced-Budget Amendment, but they tend to leave out Washington state's such call in 1979.)

However, there have been many other Convention calls by states which have suggested other issues besides a balanced budget Some calls have just been general calls It's felt by many that a Convention can only be called if 34 states issue the same kind of call, although Article V does not state this This has been extended by some to mean that even General Calls for a Convention can't be combined with other kinds of calls, perhaps *only* because the 34-state threshold *would have already been met* if they were combined this way For details on this, see: <http://foa5c.org/file.php/1/Articles/AmendmentsTables.htm>

Consequently, there have been two lawsuits arguing that Congress should have already called a Convention: *Walker v. United States* (2000) and *Walker v. Members of Congress* (2004) To learn about these suits: <http://www.article5.org/>

<sup>126</sup> There is some controversy over whether it's possible for a state to rescind a call *The Constitution* doesn't say The organization, FOAVC, listed in the previous endnote, argues that since *The Constitution* does not specify rescission is possible, then it is not possible Nevertheless, we arguably still need a national discussion before calling a Convention—since so far it has only been a debate in state legislatures that most citizens have not known about *As a People, we need to own making our country even better, and we need to own it together* It would be difficult for an effective Convention to happen if one was just basically called out of the blue FOAVC has still thoroughly catalogued all the records they could find of rescissions For the states that have issued rescissions of their Balanced-Budget Calls for an Article V Convention, from Alabama in 1989 to Oklahoma in 2009, see the compilation of all calls and rescission attempts by FOAVC:

<http://foa5c.org/file.php/1/Articles/AmendmentsTables.htm#Table01>

There is also some confusion over which states have issued rescissions of calls suggesting a Balanced-Budget Amendment (or general rescissions of all previous calls—whether Balanced-Budget or otherwise) For example, Florida is one state that is often described as having rescinded its call (in 1988), but FOAVC documents that Florida then issued a new call later that same year—again with the suggestion for proposing a Balanced-Budget Amendment

There is some confusion around other states as well FOAVC found ten states to have rescinded their Balanced-Budget Calls and documents where these rescissions are in *The Congressional Record* (the states have to send their calls to Congress to tally): Alabama in 1990 (though reversed later—see below), Arizona in 2003, Idaho in 2000, Louisiana in 1992 (though reversed later—see below), North Dakota in 2001, Nevada in 1989, Oklahoma in 2009, Oregon in 1999, Utah in 2001, and Wyoming in 2001

However, an editorial in *Right Side News* in 2009 (which has run both articles vociferously opposed to an Amendment Convention and also articles supporting it; this article is one that's opposed) reports a different list of 11 states that have rescinded their Balanced-Budget Calls (one more than the 10 that FOAVC found):

<http://www.rightsidenews.com/200901133312/editorial/us-opinion-and-editorial/virginia-moving-to-a-new-constitutional-convention.html>

The list does not include Nevada, Oregon, and Wyoming (or Oklahoma, but that happened after this editorial was written), and it instead lists Florida, Georgia (though reversed later—see below), South Carolina, and Virginia That Florida then issued a new Convention call is discussed above There are details to be found on the latter three (Georgia, South Carolina,

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and Virginia), although these rescissions were perhaps not sent to Congress and entered into *The Congressional Record*. The editorial states Virginia issued a rescission in 2004 and was then considering reissuing a call in 2009. The proposed 2009 call is to be found in Virginia's legislative record (it did not pass): <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?091+ful+SJ315>

Details on South Carolina rescinding its call in 2004 can be found in an article in *The New American* (this article also vociferously opposes an Amendment Convention):

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/South+Carolina+rescinds+its+Con-Con+Applications-a0121447652>

Similarly, details on Georgia also issuing a rescission were also published in *The New American* later that same year: <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Georgia+withdraws+con-con+applications-a0116525575>

There are also other oddities. One is with Nevada. In 1989, it issued a general rescission, followed that same year by a new call for a Convention, with a suggestion of Congressional term limits, then again that same year a rescission of its call from 1979 suggesting a Balanced-Budget Amendment. Then, in 1996, Nevada issued a new call for Congressional term limits—a call which is written into Nevada's own state constitution, which appears to be even more complicated to try to rescind.

An article on a Balanced-Budget Amendment in Wikipedia notes that New Hampshire and Tennessee also rescinded their calls in 2010, but then they both reapplied—in 2012 for New Hampshire; 2014 for Tennessee. Alabama reversed its 1990 (or 1988?) rescission in 2011. The 1990 (or 1992?) Louisiana rescission and 2004 Georgia rescission were both reversed in 2014. In 2013, Ohio did a new call for the first time, as did Michigan in 2014. See:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balanced\\_Budget\\_Amendment#Efforts\\_to\\_bypass\\_Congress\\_through\\_an\\_Article\\_V\\_convention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balanced_Budget_Amendment#Efforts_to_bypass_Congress_through_an_Article_V_convention)

Ultimately, there obviously needs to be a clearer process for calling an Amendment Convention. The states and Congress clearly need a more specific process spelled out for them, and an Article V Convention might also propose an Amendment to this effect.

<sup>127</sup> This is one essay that claims that an Article V Convention would “abolish” *The Constitution* and *The Bill of Rights* and result in “total destruction” of the United States of America: <http://www.wnd.com/2008/12/83364/>

<sup>128</sup> In 2013, the annual federal deficit was \$680 billion, and for 2014 it's on course to be \$492 billion. Congressional Budget Office, “Updated Budget Projections: 2014 to 2024,” April, 2014:

[http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45229?utm\\_source=feedblitz&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=0](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45229?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=0)

<sup>129</sup> National debt will rise from 35% of GDP in 2007 to 78% by 2024. Congressional Budget Office, “Updated Budget Projections: 2014 to 2024,” April, 2014:

[http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45229?utm\\_source=feedblitz&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=0](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45229?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=0)

<sup>130</sup> In 1970, only 5% of our national debt was held abroad. See: *Red Ink: Inside the High-Stakes Politics of the Federal Budget*, by David Wessell (2012), page 138.

<sup>131</sup> Close to half our national debt is now held abroad—with China as our biggest foreign creditor. See this paper by the Congressional Research Service—another nonpartisan research arm of the United States Congress: “Foreign Holdings of Federal Debt,” by Marc Labonte and Jared Nagel, Congressional Research Service, June 16, 2014:

<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22331.pdf>

<sup>132</sup> Government borrowing can decrease private investment. For one detailed explanation on this, see this paper by the Congressional Budget Office, “The Long-Run Effects of Federal Budget Deficits on National Saving and Private Domestic Investment: Working Paper 2014-02,” February, 2014:

[http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45140?utm\\_source=feedblitz&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=0](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45140?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=0)

<sup>133</sup> To learn more about the Government Accountability Office, see:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government\\_Accountability\\_Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_Accountability_Office)

<sup>134</sup> The GAO says the national debt is not a problem we can “grow out of,” unless we have *double-digit* economic growth for the next 75 years—which is basically impossible. See this presentation by the Comptroller General (the head of the GAO—David M. Walker at the time) to the National Press Foundation on 1/17/08: <http://www.gao.gov/cghome/d08446cg.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> Former Federal Reserve Chair, Ben Bernanke, has said of the national debt, “We cannot grow our way out of this problem.” See:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_debates\\_about\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_federal\\_budget#Can\\_the\\_U.S.\\_outgrow\\_the\\_problem\\_3F](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_debates_about_the_United_States_federal_budget#Can_the_U.S._outgrow_the_problem_3F)

<sup>136</sup> Visitors to China are blown away by its top-notch infrastructure. See: *The Betrayal of the American Dream*, by Donald Barlett and James Steele (2012, 2013), page 258.

<sup>137</sup> Interest on national debt will quadruple in dollars and triple in GDP terms by 2024. Congressional Budget Office, “CBO's Projections of Federal Spending Over the Next Decade,” February, 2014:

[http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45087?utm\\_source=feedblitz&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=0](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/45087?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=0)

<sup>138</sup> Interest on the national debt was \$416 billion in 2013, per the U.S. Treasury:

[http://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/ir/ir\\_expense.htm](http://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/ir/ir_expense.htm)

<sup>139</sup> The political proposals written so far for a National Balanced-Budget Amendment generally only emphasize: “Total outlays for any fiscal year shall not exceed total receipts for that fiscal year.” For one example:

<http://rsc.scalise.house.gov/solutions/bba.htm>

<sup>140</sup> These are central principles of macroeconomics. For a short, general introduction to macroeconomics:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macroeconomics>

<sup>141</sup> To learn more about how the complexity of our tax code serves special interests, see:

*Perfectly Legal: The Covert Campaign to Rig Our Tax System to Benefit the Super Rich—And Cheat Everybody Else*, by David Cay Johnston (2003)

*Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*, by Jacob S Hacker and Paul Pierson (2010)

*The Payoff: Why Wall Street Always Wins*, by Jeff Connaughton (2012)

<sup>142</sup> Gallup polls on fairness of tax code: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161780/fewer-americans-view-income-taxes-fair.aspx>

<sup>143</sup> Anyone with wage income has to help pay for Social Security and Medicare for our current retirees: “Stop Coddling the Super-Rich,” by Warren Buffett, *The New York Times*, 8/14/11: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/15/opinion/stop-coddling-the-super-rich.html>

<sup>144</sup> Combined taxes—federal, state, and local—for different income percentiles from the organization, Citizens for Tax Justice Cited in “The one tax graph you really need to know,” by Ezra Klein, *The Washington Post*, 9/19/12:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/09/19/heres-why-the-47-percent-argument-is-an-abuse-of-tax-data/>

For table from Citizens for Tax Justice: <http://ctj.org/images/taxday2012table.jpg>

To learn more about Citizens for Tax Justice: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizens\\_for\\_Tax\\_Justice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizens_for_Tax_Justice) and <http://ctj.org/>

<sup>145</sup> People in the top 1% make at least \$394,000/yr: “Are You Rich Enough? The Terrible Tragedy Of Income Inequality Among The 1%,” by Phil DeMuth, *Forbes*, 11/25/13: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/phildemuth/2013/11/25/are-you-rich-enough-the-terrible-tragedy-of-income-inequality-among-the-1/>

<sup>146</sup> Combined taxes—federal, state, and local—for different income percentiles from the organization, Citizens for Tax Justice Cited in “The one tax graph you really need to know,” by Ezra Klein, *The Washington Post*, 9/19/12:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/09/19/heres-why-the-47-percent-argument-is-an-abuse-of-tax-data/>

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<sup>147</sup> People in the top 0.1% make at least \$1.9 million/yr: “Are You Rich Enough? The Terrible Tragedy Of Income Inequality Among The 1%,” by Phil DeMuth, *Forbes*, 11/25/13: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/phildemuth/2013/11/25/are-you-rich-enough-the-terrible-tragedy-of-income-inequality-among-the-1/>

<sup>148</sup> For how tax rates drop for those in the top 0.1% and 0.01%, see this report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service: “Taxes and the Economy: An Economic Analysis of the Top Tax Rates Since 1945,” by Thomas L. Hungerford, Specialist in Public Finance, Congressional Research Service, September 14, 2012:

[http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/r42729\\_0917.pdf](http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/r42729_0917.pdf)

<sup>149</sup> People in the top 0.01% make at least \$10 million/yr: “Are You Rich Enough? The Terrible Tragedy Of Income Inequality Among The 1%,” by Phil DeMuth, *Forbes*, 11/25/13: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/phildemuth/2013/11/25/are-you-rich-enough-the-terrible-tragedy-of-income-inequality-among-the-1/>

<sup>150</sup> Warren Buffett calculated his own tax rate at about 17.4%, far below any of his employees: “Stop Coddling the Super-Rich,” by Warren Buffett, *The New York Times*, 8/14/11: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/15/opinion/stop-coddling-the-super-rich.html>

<sup>151</sup> [Politifact.com](http://www.politifact.com) largely confirmed Buffett’s analysis:

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2011/aug/18/warren-buffett/warren-buffett-says-super-rich-pay-lower-taxes-oth/>

<sup>152</sup> Many wealthy people think this is not right, and think they should pay a larger share. See: *Perfectly Legal: The Covert Campaign to Rig Our Tax System to Benefit the Super Rich—And Cheat Everybody Else*, by David Cay Johnston (2003), page 2. For an article by one such person, besides Warren Buffett:

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/the-pitchforks-are-coming-for-us-plutocrats-108014.html>

<sup>153</sup> 67% of Americans think our economy is unfair to the middle class:

[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/business/general\\_business/economic\\_fairness](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/business/general_business/economic_fairness)

<sup>154</sup> To learn more about the Congressional Research Service: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congressional\\_Research\\_Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congressional_Research_Service)

<sup>155</sup> “The reduction in the top tax rates appears to be uncorrelated with saving, investment, and productivity growth. The top tax rates appear to have little or no relation to the size of the economic pie.” See: For how tax rates drop for those in the top 0.1% and 0.01%, see this report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service: “Taxes and the Economy: An Economic Analysis of the Top Tax Rates Since 1945,” by Thomas L. Hungerford, Specialist in Public Finance, Congressional Research Service, September 14, 2012, page 16: [http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/r42729\\_0917.pdf](http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/r42729_0917.pdf)

<sup>156</sup> These tax breaks for the super rich started to come into our tax code in the 1970s. See: *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*, by Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson (2010)

<sup>157</sup> [The bottom 40% of us have no net worth, and 85% of the net worth of all Americans is in just the top 20% of us.](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/rising-wealth-inequality-should-we-care/living-beyond-your-means-when-youre-not-rich) See: “Building a Better America—One Wealth Quintile at a Time,” by Michael Norton (Harvard University Business School) and Dan Ariely (Duke University Department of Psychology), *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, January, 2011, pages 9-12

Abstract available at: <http://pps.sagepub.com/content/6/1/9>

Full text available at: <http://www.people.hbs.edu/mnorton/norton%20ariely.pdf>

For a short *New York Times* article that summarizes the paper: “Living Beyond Your Means,” by Michael Norton, *The New York Times*, 5/20/11: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/rising-wealth-inequality-should-we-care/living-beyond-your-means-when-youre-not-rich>

<sup>158</sup> The top 1% own 40-43% of the personal net worth of all Americans. This article in *Forbes* puts it at 43%: “Average America vs the One Percent,” by Alan Dunn, *Forbes*, 3/21/2012:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/moneywisewomen/2012/03/21/average-america-vs-the-one-percent/>

This article in *Bloomberg Businessweek* puts it at 40%: “The Richest Rich Are in a Class by Themselves,” by Peter Coy, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, April 03, 2014: <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-04-03/top-tenth-of-1-percenters-reaps-all-the-riches> The *Bloomberg Businessweek* article also notes the top 0.1% have 21.5% of all personal net worth, and the top 0.01% have 11.1%

<sup>159</sup> Per the United States Federal Election Commission, in 2012, just 3,318 people donated 93% of all the money to all U.S. Super Political Action Committees. See the report by Demos and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group: “Billion-Dollar Democracy: The Unprecedented Role of Money in the 2012 Elections,” by Adam Lioz and Blair Bowie, January 17, 2013:

<http://www.demos.org/publication/billion-dollar-democracy-unprecedented-role-money-2012-elections>

<sup>160</sup> Super Political Action Committees are the ultimate lever for controlling the policy decisions of “our” representatives in Congress. See: “What’s So Bad About a SuperPAC? Or, how I came to love the (money) bomb,” by [Lawrence Lessig \(a nationally-known crusader for getting corruption out of politics\)](#), [Medium.com](#), June 4, 2014: <https://medium.com/@lessig/whats-so-bad-about-a-superpac-c7ebcf617b58>

<sup>161</sup> Phrase, “political donor class,” borrowed from: *Perfectly Legal: The Covert Campaign to Rig Our Tax System to Benefit the Super Rich—And Cheat Everybody Else*, by David Cay Johnston (2003), page 17

<sup>162</sup> That the average American has *no* say on tax policy, or really government policy in general, has even been shown scientifically. It’s called a “statistically non-significant” say. See: “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” by Martin Gilens (Princeton University Department of Politics) and Benjamin I Page (Northwestern University Department of Political Science), to be published in *Perspectives on Politics*, Fall, 2014: <https://www.princeton.edu/~mgilens/Gilens%20homepage%20materials/Gilens%20and%20Page/Gilens%20and%20Page%202014-Testing%20Theories%203-7-14.pdf>

<sup>163</sup> 77% of us think Americans are getting ruder: [http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/lifestyle/general\\_lifestyle/october\\_2013/77\\_think\\_americans\\_are\\_getting\\_ruder](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/lifestyle/general_lifestyle/october_2013/77_think_americans_are_getting_ruder)

<sup>164</sup> The Congressional Budget Office has a Panel of Economic Advisors. See: <http://www.cbo.gov/about/our-processes>

<sup>165</sup> Article V of *The Constitution*, on how to amend *The Constitution*:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article\\_Five\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution#Text](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_Five_of_the_United_States_Constitution#Text)

<sup>166</sup> In 2009, a Rasmussen poll showed that 42% of Americans believed that DC’s delegate to the House of Representatives should *not* be allowed to vote—as it is currently. *This is a little more complicated though.* When the question is asked in a different way, only 26% support keeping this current system for DC, and 40% support an alternate way for DC citizens to still get representation in Congress—giving DC’s residential areas back to Maryland, so that they could then be represented by [Maryland’s congressional delegation](#) (Then, 25% say just give the DC delegate a vote, and 9% aren’t sure.) See: [http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/general\\_politics/march\\_2009/40\\_say\\_give\\_washington\\_dc\\_to\\_maryland](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/march_2009/40_say_give_washington_dc_to_maryland)

<sup>167</sup> This thought experiment is an extension of what is sometimes known as “The John Rawls Thought Experiment,” for the American philosopher, John Rawls, who used it in his book, *A Theory of Justice* (originally published in 1971). This thought experiment is sometimes referred to with the concepts “veil of ignorance” or “original position.” To learn more:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veil\\_of\\_ignorance\\_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veil_of_ignorance_(philosophy))

<sup>168</sup> To learn more about Abraham Lincoln, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham\\_Lincoln](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln)

Or see the inspiring six-hour PBS *American Experience* documentary, *Abraham and Mary Lincoln: A House Divided*: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/lincolns/>

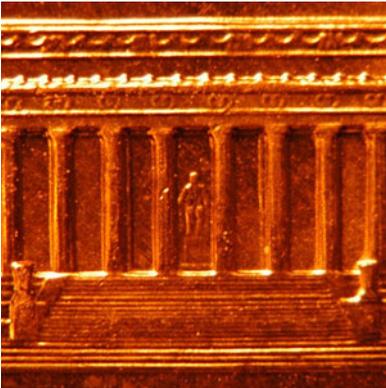
<sup>169</sup> Abraham Lincoln’s career included working on flatboats at one point. They used to be a main way to take freight down the Mississippi River. The boats were floated down to New Orleans, unloaded, and then taken apart for their lumber. The following picture shows a flatboat with steam boats in the background:



A Mississippi River flatboat: “Bound Down The River,” lithograph by Currier and Ives, 1870

<sup>170</sup> To learn about the new Abraham Lincoln pennies: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penny\\_%28United\\_States\\_coin%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penny_%28United_States_coin%29)

<sup>171</sup> If you look very closely at the Lincoln Memorial on the back of the old penny, you can see the statue of Abraham Lincoln between the columns (see copyright page of this book for image sources):



<sup>172</sup> A Gallup poll in 2001, just before September 11th, showed that 75% of Americans felt the United States rated favorably in the eyes of the world. In 2014 that number is 51%. See:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/167534/fewer-americans-think-obama-respected-world-stage.aspx>

<sup>173</sup> A Pew poll in December, 2013 showed 70% of Americans feel America is less respected by other countries than it was in the past: <http://www.people-press.org/2013/12/03/section-1-americas-global-role/>

And there are probably lots of mistakes that led to this loss of respect, but in 2009, the US Director of National Intelligence, Dennis Blair, testified that how Wall Street's crash led to a global recession was one big part of it. The crash "increased questioning of US stewardship of the global economy and the international financial structure." Testimony 2/12/09 before Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Annual Threat Assessment Hearing. Cited in: "US Standing in the World: Causes, Consequences, and the Future" Long Report of the Task Force on US Standing in World Affairs, American Political Science Association, September, 2009, page 7:

[http://www.apsanet.org/media/pdfs/apsa\\_tf\\_usstanding\\_long\\_report.pdf](http://www.apsanet.org/media/pdfs/apsa_tf_usstanding_long_report.pdf)

<sup>174</sup> There is a very touching brief video that is online, by the author of a brilliant book on the Columbine tragedy, Dave Cullen. The book is just called *Columbine*. The video captures both how the massacre was meant to terrorize the country on national television and also the inspiring dignity of the Columbine Memorial (2 min 51 secs): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BUR8u8a0Q>

Photo of The Columbine Memorial is by [Wikimedia.org](http://www.wikimedia.org) contributor Denverjeffrey and has attribution rights reserved. Photo is from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Columbinememorial.JPG>

<sup>175</sup> According to polls, Perot won the first of the 1992 Presidential debates partly with bold, Common Sense statements like this: <http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2009/4/19/720644/-All-This-Has-Happened-Before>

(An incidental quibble with Perot here is that the Founders actually did know about electricity—with Benjamin Franklin and his famous kite experiment. But what Perot really means here is electric *power* as pioneered by Thomas Edison. As a side note, Benjamin Franklin also helped edit and encourage Thomas Paine's 1776 pamphlet, *Common Sense*.)

<sup>176</sup> To read all four panels of quotes on the inner walls of the Jefferson Memorial:

<http://www.monticello.org/reports/quotes/memorial.html>

Panel one is from *The Declaration of Independence*: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men." Panel two is about freedom of religion. Panel three is about taxation without representation, freedom, and the injustice of slavery.

