

Remarks on the Constitution

by U.S. Representative Ron Paul, M.D. (R-TX)

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The U.S. Constitution is the most unique and best contract ever drawn up between a people and their government in history. Though flawed from the beginning, because all men are flawed, it nevertheless has served us well and set an example for the entire world. Yet no matter how hard the authors tried, the inevitable corrupting influence of power was not thwarted by the Constitution.

The notion of separate state and local government, championed by the followers of Jefferson, was challenged by the Hamiltonians almost immediately following ratification of the Constitution. Early on, the supporters of strong centralized government promoted central banking, easy credit, protectionism/mercantilism, and subsidies for corporate interests.

Although the 19th Century generally was kind to the intent of the Constitution, namely limiting government power, a major setback occurred with the Civil War and the severe undermining of the principle of sovereign states. The Civil War profoundly changed the balance of power in our federalist system, paving the way for centralized big government.

Although the basic principle underlying the constitutional republic we were given was compromised in the post-Civil War period, it was not until the 20th Century that steady and significant erosion of the constitutional restraints placed on the central government occurred. This erosion adversely affected not only economic and civil liberties, but foreign affairs as well.

We now have persistent abuse of the Constitution by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Our leaders in Washington demonstrate little concern for the rule of law, liberty, and our republican form of government.

Today the pragmatism of the politicians, as they spend more than \$2 trillion annually, creates legislative chaos. The vultures consume the carcass of liberty without remorse. On the contrary, we hear politicians brag incessantly about their ability to deliver benefits to their districts, thus qualifying themselves for automatic re-election.

The real purpose of the Constitution was the preservation of liberty. It's not the Constitution that gives us our freedom; that comes from the Creator. But if we cherish freedom, the Constitution is needed to keep the power seekers from usurping that freedom and to hold government in check.

But our government ignores this while spending endlessly, taxing, and regulating. The complacent electorate, who are led to believe their interests and needs are best cared for by a huge bureaucratic welfare state, convince themselves that enormous federal deficits and destructive inflation can be dealt with another day.

The answer to the dilemma of unconstitutional government and runaway spending is simple: restore a burning conviction in the hearts and minds of the people that freedom works and government largesse is a fraud. When the people once again regain their confidence in the benefits of liberty—and demand it from their elected leaders—Congress will act appropriately.

The response of honorable men and women who represent us should be simply to take their oaths of office seriously, vote accordingly, and return our nation to its proper republican origins. The results would be economic prosperity, greater personal liberty, honest money, abolition of the Internal Revenue Service, and a world made more peaceful when we abandon the futile policy of building and policing an American empire.

No longer would we yield our sovereignty to international organizations that act outside of the restraints placed on government by the Constitution.

The Constitution and those who have sworn to uphold it are not perfect, and it's understandable that abuse occurs. But it shouldn't be acceptable. Without meticulous adherence to the principles of the rule of law, minor infractions become commonplace and the Constitution loses all meaning.

Unfortunately that is where we are today. This nonsense that the Constitution is a living, flexible document, taught as gospel in our government schools, must be challenged. The Founders were astute enough to recognize the Constitution was not perfect and wisely permitted amendments to the document—but they correctly made the process tedious, and thus difficult.

Without a renewed love for liberty and confidence in its results, it will be difficult if not impossible to restore once again the rule of law under the Constitution.

I have heard throughout my life how each upcoming election is the most important election ever, and how the very future of our country is at stake. Those fears have always been grossly overstated. The real question is not who will achieve a partisan victory. The real question is will we once again accept the clear restraints placed on the power of the national government by the Constitution.

Obviously the jury is still out on this issue. However, what we choose to do about this constitutional crisis is the most important “election” of our times, and the results will determine the kind of society our children will inherit. I believe it's worthwhile for all of us to tirelessly pursue the preservation of the elegant Constitution with which we have been so blessed.