

America's Greatness – Principles of Liberty in Action
By Dustin Dobson

What is it that has made America so great? **“We on this continent should never forget that men first crossed the Atlantic not to find soil for their ploughs but to secure liberty for their souls.”** Robert J. McCracken Those that founded America fled religious and political tyranny. It was not like they moved to some booming economy with lots of safety nets and goodies. They simply wanted the choice of how to worship, the opportunity to be something other than what society told them e.g. a baker as their fathers before them, to pursue what they deemed would bring them the most happiness. In other words they sought liberty, they wanted to choose for themselves rather than have another choose for them.

Those that sailed past the Statue of Liberty came to a country of unbelievable freedom and opportunity. America truly is the greatest country the world has ever known. We believe that the American form of government, a Constitutional Republic, is the greatest force for good in the world, but this is **only true if, the objectives of and guarantees in, the Constitution and Bill of Rights are REAL and UPHELD!** Only if we recognize this and only if the people we elect recognize this!!

The founders of the American government knew history. As far back as they could see all governments had certain features in common, such as a natural appetite for power, a passion to act upon peoples' lives, a will to live, resources of self-perpetuation and longings for grandeur. The founders of the American government did not attempt to formulate this law of inner compulsion. What they did was to create a government that could not obey such a law if one existed.

In order to ensure that the fruits of their efforts would endure and that independence would be retained for future generations, these wise founding fathers scribed a document **delineating the principles of government most likely to preserve the rights of the people.** The Constitution of the United States of America went on to be **ratified by free men. Free men wrote the Constitution, it did not grant them freedom.**

To understand the Constitution we must first understand why it came into being; its objective or purpose. The colonies threw off a tyrannical king in a beautiful and succinct document called the Declaration of Independence. The founders simply wanted to construct or institute a government that would not allow them to suffer under such rule again.

In order to protect individual freedom and for NO other purpose was our government established. The ONLY legitimate role of the government is to protect individual freedom.

We hold these Truths to be self evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from among the Consent of the Governed... [The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776] Thomas Jefferson took 17 days to write the Declaration of Independence, most of which was spent on the first two paragraphs. No wonder it is filled with insight, eloquence, and brevity. It is full of, and builds off, what is known as natural law.

What is natural law? It has been described as the rules of right conduct, as true law. True law is right reason in agreement with nature. It is referred to a true law because it is unchanging, eternal, and universal. You need not look outside yourself for an expounder or interpreter of it.

So examples may help illuminate the topic:

Unalienable rights which I will elaborate on shortly.

Habeas corpus or “you have the body” is a writ that allows a person to seek relief from unlawful detention. In essence, you own yourself not some lord, duke, or king.

Right to bear arms you have the right to protect yourself, your rights, and your things.

No taxation without representation

Justice by reparation or paying for damages.

Concepts of **limited government, separation of powers, and checks and balances** are all based on natural law.

“No man has a natural right to commit aggression on the equal rights of another, and this is all from which the laws ought to restrain him.” Thomas Jefferson

You do not have a right to do wrong! To do wrong is predicated upon taking a right of another. You do not have the right to take another’s right. To have a right means you are protected by law. How could the law give you the right to take the right(s) of another equal? This is masterfully answered by Frédéric Bastiat in “The Law”. One is left to wonder why people just can not get what Frédéric Bastiat so eloquently spelled out in a brief 55 page essay. I’m going to read it again and invite you to do the same. It is a masterpiece of beautiful timeless concepts that flow together with awe inspiring simplicity and logic. <http://mises.org/books/thelaw.pdf>

You are **equal** and therefore free of a superior person dictates, such as a king’s “divine decree”. This is a natural law. **It is a part who you are. It is as much a part of you as your head, shoulders, knees, and toes.** This is what inalienable means.

An atheist and a believer can both agree that something of mass tends to go towards something else with mass. We call this natural law, gravity. Neither party has to agree on the source of the law nor how it got there. It is clearly evident to both parties that it exists and what it is. They both agree that if you jump up, you will fall back to the earth.

Likewise, all of humanity is created equal is a natural law! Whether you agree with the Founders and me that a Creator authored such law or not is irrelevant. **Freedom is your birthright, the birthright of all of humanity!** Now regardless of what another decrees it can not override this natural law. You are **not free because some piece of paper says you are free**, likewise you can not lose your freedom because a piece of papers says so. Certainly, you may have lived in Russia without freedom, but this was not your intended natural state; therefore force, or the threat of force, must have been used to suspend your natural right during the entire duration of usurpation! Without coerce and force, unnatural laws are not upheld.

“Government is not reason; it is not eloquent; it is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.” George Washington

“It is error alone which requires the support of government. Truth can stand by itself.” Thomas Jefferson

If congress made it unlawful for the moon to rise or the sun to set, would there be continual light? Some things God has set in motion and He has set you to be free! Our rights are ours by virtue of our humanity, and if our rights come from our humanity then no law, no proclamation, no executive order, no edict, no command, no piece of legislation that no one has read, can take those rights away!

Another example of natural law or principle of freedom is “the proper role of government is protect equal rights, NOT provide equal things”. Ergo cash for clunkers, bailouts, welfare, “universal healthcare”, and numerous other government handouts are contrary to nature and freedom. Remember, the government can not give you something unless they take it from someone else. Put another way, for everyone that gets something for nothing, there is someone that worked for something that got nothing....we used to call this theft...now we

call it “a bail out,” “a program,” “government aid.” The bottom line is, there is no such thing as a **FREE lunch to a FREE people...those that believe in such nonsense are not a FREE people!** Wanting to keep your own money is not greed and spending another’s money is not compassion, it is theft.

Thomas Jefferson said "**A government big enough to give you everything you want, is big enough to take away everything you have.**"

You might have heard that “for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”. In social or political terms, every action has a consequence. What occurs when we go against this natural law? "**The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools.**" -- Herbert Spencer, (1820-1903) British author, economist, philosopher

In the language of engineering, we wish our system to have feed back mechanisms or loops. An easy example is a thermostat; we use to reach the desired ambient temperature. We adjust the control up and expect the furnace to be fired up. We adjust the control down calling for cool air and get it. Feedback loops allow an input to be associated with a subsequent output. If the output is desired, we would conclude that input is desirable and therefore more preferred although we might try small tweaks for further optimization. If the consequence(s) of the input or action is undesirable, we would seek to mitigate the damage, reduce the likelihood of repeating, etc. This is a natural law – self evident.

Currently, our government seeks to obfuscate the consequences from individuals such that dependency increases even while the awareness of cause-effect decreases. In many cases, this unnatural governance goes so far as to give us improper feedback. It tells us what we should feel or think. How we should respond to their meddling. In essence, this is why communism, socialism, central banking/planning does not work as well as freedom! Our form of government wishes to put the most “planning” on the individual, then the family, then community, the county, the state, and finally the federal government...in that order. Notice how the consequences are kept as close to the individual as possible. Consequences should fall on the actor or acting authority.

Call it survival of the fittest, a survival mechanism, or whatever; people will in general seek their own self interest first. Our form of mutual governance allows for everyone to do just that with the best possible results. The beauty of the American experience is that it sets up to allow this as long as it does not interfere with another’s ability to choose. I agree not to run your life as you agree not to run mine. I agree not to burden you with my consequences as you agree not to burden me with yours. You are sovereign to act and not to be acted upon, like some inanimate object.

Note that governments are **instituted**. The people come first and then establish forms of government another example of natural law. Just like “**Property does not exist because there are laws, but laws exist because there is property.**” Frédéric Bastiat

Now if the power is “**derived**” from the individual, it is obvious that a government should never have a power that an individual does not have granted by natural law. Unjust powers or usurpations come by force in order to suppress natural rights and gain control. Usurpation occurs whenever a person, entity, government takes a right away from an individual or grants itself a right that an individual does not have.

A village of freemen each acting within the natural rights has noticed something. Each is spending a fair amount of time patrolling their property against a neighboring village. Additionally, we someone does cross the line of the rights of another; it takes awhile to gather the defenders of the law. They need a sheriff so they decide together to form a government and hire a sheriff. A short while later, they notice that preparation and training to fight fires is pretty time consuming and costly too, they need a fire chief. They consent to alter their

government by hiring a full fire department. Time goes on and one neighbor notices that his neighbor to the right has 2 cars and only uses one. He makes the astute observation that his neighbor to the left has no car. He believes this is easily solved so takes his neighbor's spare car and parks it in the drive way of the "poor" neighbor. The "poor" neighbor thinking this is a gift is elated and somewhat shocked when the true owner accuses him of theft. The sheriff is called in. The neighbor of "misconceived philanthropy" is read his rights and hauled off for a trial by jury. The car is returned to its rightful owner. Why the story? It is clear he took a right he did not have and then acted upon that belief. He broke the law. All governmental power is derived from the individual. The government can not have a power that an individual does not naturally have. It is unlawful for you as well as your government to steal from one to give to another. There is compassion, there is progress, and there is charity in practicing these principles. **"History has shown the good of the whole is best served when the whole is fixated on maximizing and preserving individual liberty!"** Dustin Dobson. Not as Bill Clinton stated **"We can't be so fixated on our desire to preserve the rights of ordinary Americans..."** But as Garet Garrett said, **"In principle, I believe that the less we act upon the lives of others for good or evil — the less the better."**

The 8 "ancient principles of freemen" in Declaration of Independence

1. sound government based on self-evident truths – so obvious, so rational, so morally sound that their authenticity is beyond reasonable dispute.
2. government based natural law; on the law of nature and of nature's God
3. equal in rights and before the bar of justice
4. unalienable rights of individuals, that is they can not be taken away or violated without offending the author of natural law. As opposed to "vested" rights by statute that can be altered or eliminated.
5. life, liberty, pursue whatever course of life in search of happiness, peace, and property so long as it does not invade the rights of others.
6. the most basic reason for a community or a nation to setup government is to assure its inhabitants' rights are protected and preserved.
7. It follows that no office or agency of government has any right to exist except with the consent of the people.
8. If by malfeasance or neglect government fails to protect those rights OR if government itself violate those rights, then it is the right and duty of the people to regain control and set up a government to better serve the people.

Of course we know that Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776. The signers **mutually pledged "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."** It was first read publicly July 8th in Philadelphia to cheering, bell ringing, and all night celebrating...clearly an **oppressed people knew the value of freedom!**

To understand what the founders were thinking and their intent it is necessary to read not only their writings, but what they were reading and talking about. Libraries included, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Richard Hooker, Edward Coke, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, etc. I strongly suggest that we learn to pray as they prayed to receive inspiration as the indicated they did.

"When the people fear the government you have tyranny, when the government fears the people you have liberty." Thomas Jefferson **"We are now vibrating between too much and too little government, and the pendulum will rest finally in the middle"** Thomas Jefferson This is called **"the balanced center"** between ruler's law and no law, or tyranny and anarchy. You need the powers of government to be limited and just strong enough to overcome anarchy and protect individual rights, while restrained enough to avoid tyranny. In 100% tyranny the ruler becomes the law...interestingly the same occurs with anarchy with every man being his own law, or rather replacing the law. Peaceful stable governments operate according to law not the whims of men. **"We must have a government of laws and not men"** John Adams

The original contract with America....well not exactly. The Constitution was not the first attempt by freemen to establish a government. The first US Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, left central government very weak and states vigorously independent. Federal government had no executive, no judicial system, no power to tax, and no power to enforce its decrees. The first attempt was off balance attempting to avoid tyranny and favoring limited governance too much. Its objective was the same as the Constitution, to protect, ensure, and promote the individual's liberties, which is the only legitimate reason and role of government. So as you'd expect many of its valuable principles made it into the Constitution we now have.

May 25, 1787 the Constitution Convention started surrounded by chaos. Unity dissipated and secession being considered with states quarrelling over boundaries and resources; they considered each other as foreign countries. It was a time of uncertainty and turmoil with French and British armies at borders, deep depression with runaway inflation, and other crises.

This second attempt moved the boundary of federal government by adding powers. In an effort to compensate for moving that direction, powers were separated both vertically and horizontally.

Vertical – clearly divided responsibilities and political authority between the state and the federal government. The purpose was to coordinate, NOT consolidate, these two levels of government, state and federal. James Madison **“The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the state governments are numerous and indefinite.”**

Horizontal – separation of powers among three major branches of government – the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. Each branch can not function without the other two.

“The two enemies of the people are criminals and government, so let us tie the second down with the chains of the Constitution.” Thomas Jefferson

"A wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government." - Thomas Jefferson.

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Constitution signed on September 17, 1787. The main objection of the 3 that did not sign was the absence of a bill of rights which came later to get ratification.

The US has the oldest written Constitution. Now there are 125 in writing; showing that the beacon of hope and liberty is worthy of both use and emulation the world over. Our Constitution is also the first to be conceived by more than 1 to 4 people, most of time not representatives of the people.

In the words of Thomas Jefferson, **“If a nation wishes to be ignorant and free, it wants what never has been and never will be.”** Elected officials and the citizens that elect them are usually well-meaning and patriotic, but lack the Founders’ wisdom. They have never taken the opportunity to study the Founders’ political philosophy or their concept of prosperity economics (Adam Smith). It is imperative to secure these liberties through awareness and study.

The Constitution is the Founders’ formula for a free and prosperous America. I suggest a careful reading of **“The Making of America”** which is a distillation of their letters, essays, compilation of thoughts and readings.

Preamble: The Purpose

The Constitution tells you its' purpose in the preamble and sets forth six main purposes of good government.

*We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect **union**, establish **justice**, insure domestic **tranquility**, provide for the common **defense**, promote the **general welfare**, and secure the blessing of **liberty** to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

Article I: The Legislature

Not subjected to any federal law unless it has been approved by a majority of the people's representatives. All law comes via congress.

Usurpations: "legislating from the bench", executive order, administrative law via regulatory agencies, presidential agreements/obligations with foreign power should handled via treaties approved by the Senate.

Article I, section 2: The structure of the House of Representatives

Article I, section 3: The structure of the Senate

Article I, section 4: Congressional Elections and Convene Once Each Year

Article I, section 5: Internal Operations of Congress

Article I, section 6: Compensation for Congressmen and Doubling Up on Government Jobs.

Article I, section 7: The Procedure for Law Passing

Article I, section 8: The **States Delegate 20 Powers to Congress** (personal opinion clause 5 is pressing issue today)

Article II: The Executive Branch

Limited to six areas.

Interesting to note that we ended up with one president although a council of 3 or several was considered.

Merits of Electoral College heavily debated with ballots cast 60 times.

Article III: The U.S. Supreme Court – Guardian of the Constitution

Founders assigned to the federal system of courts **eleven different types of disputes**.

Keep the states and the officers of the federal government within the boundaries of the Constitution.

"The meaning of the Constitution is fixed when adopted, and it is not different at any subsequent time.

The object of construction, as applied to a written Constitution, is to give effect to the intent of the people in adopting it." Justice Thomas Cooley

"Formerly its business was to say what the law was, according to the Constitution; if people did not like the law they could change it, only provided they changed it in a lawful manner by amending the Constitution. Now the Supreme Court undertakes to say what is justice, what is public welfare, what is good for the people and to make suitable inflections of the Constitution. Thus law is made subordinate to the discretions and judgments of men, whereas the cornerstone of freedom was that the government should be a government of law, not of men." Garet Garrett

Article IV – Relations Between the States

Article 4 ensures each state provides a Constitutional Republic. Again, the objective of is to maximize individual liberty. States compete to provide the most liberty and cities within them. People can freely move from city to city, state to state with assured liberty everywhere. Now let's suppose that one state decides to solve education by method A, another state by method B, etc. Not only would the free individual be able to move to a state that more closely aligns to their views, values, but every state would then be competing. Providing 50 experiments of what works and what does not work. Other states could then freely adopt those

solutions that work the best. Now imagine if that same principle was taken down to the county or even the city level. Our form of government provides a way for consenting adults to form a socialist community if no ones rights are violated. You can see how powerful a uniting force that liberty is. Even very divergent ideals, values, objectives, etc can live in peace within its framework. All this provided that all individuals agree and follow its simple framework. The sovereignty resides in the individual, all power, choice, ownership, etc resides at the individual level. The individual agrees that it is in his/her best interest to preserve an environment of peace and liberty for all, the founders called it “general welfare”. The individual consents to give some of her power to a governing body of laws, not men, setup to ensure individual liberty is protected. It’s a contract!!

Article V – The Amending Process

2 ways to amend, but only the first one has ever been used.

Article VI – Federal Supremacy

Article VII – Ratification

Bill of Rights

To get the states to ratify the Constitution, the states were able to submit amendment suggestions. 189 were submitted and finally consolidated into the 10 provisions now know as the “Bill of Rights”.

Do you value:

Your right to think as you wish, to say what you think, to publish what you say?

Your right to worship as your conscience dictates and as you see fit?

Your right to protect yourselves, even against the government?

Your right to be left alone?

It did not just appear out of nowhere. The Normans oppression in England caused a rebellion and subsequent signing of the Magna Carta by King John in 1215. The struggle persisted from generation to generation. Introducing the English parliament and by 1628 the “Petition of Rights” for the abuses of Charles I. 1679 brought “The Writ of Habeas Corpus”. A few heads and dethronings later, in 1689, the English Bill of Rights was signed. In America, Reverend Thomas Hooker’s Constitution for Connecticut was the first written Constitution in America. The original Tea Party occurred. May 10, 1775 George Washington was originally made commander in chief not to declare independence but merely to protect their rights. Within 12 months the colonists went from loyal Englishmen to loyal Americans demanding independence. Thanks largely to the Kings actions and Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense”.

A First Amendment study is not complete without reading what the Founders stated regarding it particularly the “Northwest Ordinance of 1787”.

Second Amendment – one should know that the militia of a state is that body of citizens which, under law, can be called up by the governor or congress to protect the rights and security of the people.

Third Amendment – King George III’s infamous Quartering Act infuriated the colonists.

Ninth Amendment – Constitutional rights included not only the ones mentioned but all other rights besides!

Tenth Amendment – The powers (read 20 to congress, 6 to president, 11 to supreme court) not delegated to the United States by the Constitution belong to the people and other layers of government to which they consent to live under such as state.

Seventeen subsequent amendments – In my opinion 16th and 17th should be carefully studied. The first great turning was the amendment of the Constitution in 1913, giving the Federal government power to impose a progressive tax on all incomes. This is one of the cardinal points of the Communist Manifesto. Few had the vision to see that the Federal income tax would be used not for revenue only, but for the purpose of redistributing the national wealth.

Four score and seven years ago is long since passed, but we as our fathers are left to defend and promote our nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. I'm here to promote individual liberty by the best known means, a Republic limited by a written Constitution founded and forged in natural law!

In order to protect individual freedom and for NO other purpose was our government established. The ONLY legitimate role of the government is to protect individual freedom.

“This form of government, this level of freedom only resides with the moral, only haborers with the informed, is only retained by the vigilante.” Dustin Dobson So I plead with you - be moral, be educated, and be watchful!

I admonish everyone to get involved! **“Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you”** Pericles. **“Politics is the art of preventing people from taking part in affairs which properly concern them.”** Paul Valery DO NOT be prevented! **“Those who are not interested in politics will be forever ruled by those who are.”** G Edward Griffin I admonish everyone to get involved! You only have the rights you are willing to fight for.

Liberty nothing more is needed; nothing less is wanted!

“As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there's a twilight where everything remains seemingly unchanged, and it is in such twilight that we must be aware of change in the air, however slight, lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.” ~ Justice William O. Douglas

“Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves.” William Pitt, The Younger

Abraham Lincoln **“Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.”**

Voltaire **“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”**