

Article V vs. Polarization: The Next Fight

October 31st, 2023

Polarization is ruining our country because it is weak and corrupt and makes decisions the people don't like. Article V was put in the Constitution to preserve our "Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness" and fight Polarization.

Our people and their state legislators can't fight because they are lied to and don't understand how they can throw an uppercut. They receive no help from journalists, consultants and think tanks who won't fight for Article V, as they futilely continue to fix a shattered window. They don't tell the people their state legislators have more power than the federal government - that they can impose term limits, fiscal limits, and age limits on Congress, require approval of our national budget by two-thirds vote or lose their benefits including the right of reelection.

Before you place a bet on this fight, let's take a look in the ring with Polarization and Article V standing in opposing corners suffering with butterflies, wondering who will hit the floor and reflecting thoughts going through their heads including the following:

Weakness of Human Nature

The only way governmental power can be exercised is by the decisions of ordinary people elected or appointed for that purpose. These decisions are subject to human nature with its vagaries and weaknesses. The Framers were greatly concerned over these weaknesses and the possibility that abuse of power could result in tyranny. While they believed elected persons would work together to do the best they could, the Framers, as a check, included Article V in the Constitution to make changes to bring them together. The best remedy is to change our methods of decision-making by *process amendments* to the Constitution rather than to argue over policies.

Process Amendments

The benefit of *process amendments* (e.g., like the majority rule or the filibuster rule) is that they reflect how decisions are made and not what the decisions should or should not be. In his *Law, Legislation and Liberty, the Mirage of Social Justice* (1976), F.A. Hayek said: "... agreement on means can to a great extent be achieved precisely because it is not known which particular ends they will serve."

Polarization is Ruinous

The consequences of polarization are best stated by the pre-Socratic philosopher Protagoras (ca. 490-420 B.C.):

Fearing that our whole species would be wiped out, [Zeus] sent Hermes to bring reverence and justice to human beings, in order that these two would adorn society and bind people together in friendship. *Plato's Protagoras, 322c.*

Duties Implicit in the Constitution

Madison put it this way:

The aim of every political constitution is, or ought to be, first to obtain for rulers' men who possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue, the common good of the society; and in the next place, to take the most effectual precautions for

keeping them virtuous whilst they continue to hold their public trust. *Federalist Paper No. 57.*

Poor Leadership

Political leadership requires the making of policy and the making of policy requires predictions. The more reliable the predictions the better the policy. How good are our leaders at predicting? Professor Philip E. Tetlock tells us that our average experts in making long term predictions (more than a year) are “as accurate as a dart-throwing chimpanzee.” Tetlock has also determined from extensive research that of all those who are in the business of making short term predictions, only 2% of them “stand out ... as superforecasters”. With 535 senators and representatives in Congress, let’s keep our fingers crossed that we have at least 11 superforecasters that have influence and that their recommended policies are adopted and continuously reviewed with “updating and self-improvement”.

Our “leaders” today are not superforecasters. They are convinced their reelection is essential to the good of the country. They hide behind Polarization – the scourge of our nation. They have abandoned truth, justice and freedom as their core values in favor of power and self-interest.

Group Leadership

Our federal leaders do not work together but stick with their parties. Hamilton reminded us that “Virtuous leaders resist this spirit of faction by working together.” *Federalist Paper No. 15*

Media Lies

Mainstreet media journalists take sides, refuse to publish the whole truth and fail to understand that most of them are not superforecasters. They have broken the rules of journalism and darkened the light of truth expected by the people who view journalism as one of our greatest institutions to safeguard our nation. They thrive on poor predictions and behave like chimpanzees.

Loss of Reverence

Our political parties hate each other. In his epic, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue* (2014), Classical and Philosophy Professor Paul Woodruff at the University of Texas said:

Why write about reverence? Because we have forgotten what it means. Because reverence fosters leadership and education. Most important, because reverence kindles warmth and friendship and family life and because without reverence, things fall apart. In fact, you will never see a “*working*” political process without reverence among its leaders.

Decentralization Required

Today's leaders cannot properly do their work unless they work together, debate the issues and learn what powers to reserve and what powers not to exercise. Stanford Professor Stephen Haber said:

Centralized political systems tend to engineer the absorption of new technologies from the top down. When these societies absorb technologies, they do so in fits and starts, and ultimately fall behind. The further they fall behind the harder it is to successfully transition to a modernized economy.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping, during a May 2022 speech to Navel Academy graduates, showed us the consequences of centralization when he said autocracies will rule the world because democracies can't keep pace with rapid change.

Runaway Debt

Everyone knows our debt is equal to \$100,000 per person in the country and nobody knows what to do about this? Any solution will take leaders working together.

Imbalance of Powers

The “political bands” that hold us together are weak and challenge our people to rebalance them. Our failure to rebalance them will push us toward revolution or tyranny.

Fear of Change

Many believe that a convention of the states under Article V would risk the value of the Constitution. Yet, the risk to our republic by runaway federal debt is greater. The citizens of our 50 states have elected 7,383 legislators. They were elected in competitive elections and are those men and women who manage the state legislatures. In 1788, there was a total of 1,648 delegates “chosen in each state by the people thereof, under the Recommendation of the Legislature”, who assented to and ratified the Constitution. The men and women who manage our legislatures today are surely entitled to as much trust as the Framers gave them in 1788.

Conclusion

If Polarization is asked about the forthcoming fight, it will look at you with glazing eyes filled with fear and distance.

If Article V is asked whether it can beat Polarization, it will say, “Ring the Bell!...Make My Day!”

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