

	<p>Make America *America* Again: A Bill of Democracy to Restore Our Republic</p> <p>Mike Forster, Palo Alto, CA https://www.mikeforster.net</p>
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A Bill of Democracy: 10 Amendments

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Preface

We the People of the United States, in order to further perfect our Union, strengthen Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, and secure the Blessings of Liberty and Democracy to ourselves and our Posterity, do propose this Bill of Democracy set of Amendments to our Constitution of the United States of America.

Our United States Constitution was written in 1787 and ratified in 1788. As part of the ratification process, many states demanded and were promised amendments - a "bill of rights" - that would document and guarantee the rights of individuals. James Madison proposed about 20 amendments, the House passed 17, the Senate passed 12, and numbers 3 through 10 became ratified by the states as the Bill of Rights in 1791. Number 2 of the 12 became the 27th Amendment in 1992.

The time has come for a new Bill of Democracy: a set of Amendments to address and resolve specific issues and weaknesses in our 238-year-old Constitution. Benjamin Franklin told Elizabeth William Powel that we had not a monarchy but "A republic, if you can keep it." Amendments such as these are necessary to "keep" our republic.

The amendments proposed below strengthen or clarify how our government was originally intended to operate, and how it should operate in the 21st century and later. These proposed amendments intend to address deficiencies that should be handled by changes to our Constitution, leaving out changes that should be handled by legislation. This set does not include other worthwhile amendments that could extend civil rights for citizens and residents of our country.

These amendments would also show our own United States citizens, residents, and immigrants - as well as the rest of the world - that we are serious about returning to our position as the "shining city on a hill", as a beacon of hope and freedom. (Matthew 5:14-16; John Winthrop 1630; Ronald Reagan 1989 and other presidents including Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, George H. W. Bush, Clinton, and Obama).

1 Separation of Powers Amendment

Summary: Each branch of the federal government - Legislative, Executive, Judicial - cannot delegate its Constitutionally-specified powers to another branch of government.

"The powers delegated by the Constitution to the government of the United States, shall be exercised as therein appropriated, so that the Legislative shall never exercise the powers vested in the Executive or Judicial; nor the Executive the powers vested in the Legislative or Judicial; nor the Judicial the powers vested in the Legislative or Executive."

This amendment would prohibit Congress, for example, from delegating authorities to the President explicitly given to the Congress in the Constitution. This would prohibit the President from the following: offensive military actions without authorization by Congress; setting tariffs; withholding funds and disbanding agencies lawfully authorized by Congress, and funds lawfully authorized by Congress from organizations such as universities, to promote other political goals; withholding or revoking security clearances from organizations such as law firms, sidestepping procedures and criteria authorized by Congress, to promote other political goals; ignoring laws and international agreements regarding immigration and asylum procedures; deploying ICE where they legally have no jurisdiction for certain specified actions; and other actions.

(This amendment was proposed by James Madison in May, 1789, as a possible 16th Amendment.)

2 Fair Representation Amendment (aka End Gerrymandering Amendment)

Summary: Congressional redistricting shall occur only once per decade and be drawn by non-partisan citizens commissions. Districts at all levels shall minimize geographic distortions. Congressional districts shall be enlarged to multi-member districts, with up to 5 representatives per district. Elections at all levels shall use ranked-choice voting.

"Section 1: Congressional districts shall be revised only once per decade, in the first year after the decennial census."

"Section 2: Within each of the several States, the District constituting the seat of government of the United States, and of the several Territories administered by the United States, the drawing of maps for the districts at all levels shall be performed by a non-partisan citizens commission."

"Section 3: Within each State, the boundaries for districts for the United States House of Representatives, and for state, county, city, and district legislatures, shall have: 1) populations of all resident persons that are within [3] percent of equality across districts; and a compactness within [3] percent of the minimum possible. Compactness is to be measured by [the ratio of a district's perimeter to its area]."

"Section 4: Each State that has more than one Representative shall establish multi-member congressional districts, with no more than five Representatives for each district, and with the number of Representatives for each district as equal as possible across all districts."

"Section 5: To avoid costly runoff elections, each State shall apply ranked-choice voting for all United States Senate, House of Representatives, state, county, and local elections."

Gerrymandering enables the two main political parties to predetermine election outcomes by choosing their voters rather than the voters choosing their candidates. It also enables the two main political parties to prevent the election of candidates from other parties. It also tends towards the election of more extreme left or right candidates, since each candidate needs only to please the voters in his or her party. It contributes to cynicism about elections and the government on the part of voters. All of this undermines the principle of "government by the people".

3 No immunity for the Government Officers Amendment

Summary: No criminal immunity for any officers of the United States, including the President and Vice President. A one-third quorum of the House of Representatives can force Articles of Impeachment to be drafted and voted upon. A President cannot pardon himself or herself. No person convicted of a felony can be elected or appointed to a federal office.

"Section 1. No officer of the United States, including the President and the Vice President, or a Senator or Representative in Congress, or appointed officer requiring confirmation by the Senate, shall be immune from criminal prosecution for any violation of the clauses of this Constitution or of otherwise valid Federal law, nor for any violation of State law unless the alleged criminal act was authorized by valid Federal law, on the sole ground that their alleged criminal act was within the conclusive and preclusive constitutional authority of their office or related to their official duties, except for Senators and Representatives acting pursuant to the first clause of the sixth section of the first article."

"Section 2: With the sponsorship of one-third or more of the Representatives in the House, Articles of Impeachment will be drafted, for roll-call vote by all members of the House."

"Section 3. The President shall have no power to grant to himself or herself a reprieve or pardon for offenses against the United States."

"Section 4: No person who has been convicted of a felony in violation of a federal, State, District, or territorial law, shall be elected to or appointed to any federal office."

Basic principles of our Constitution, American law, and common practice include: all persons must be treated equally, under the law; no person is above the law, holding government officials to the same standards as private citizens; and no person in our United States should be able to act with impunity with unchecked power.

This amendment will negate the immunity protection decision in Trump vs. U.S.

(This text is similar to the text of <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-joint-resolution/193/text>.)

4 Natural Persons and Transparent Political Donations Amendment

Summary: Corporations are not people, money is not speech, limits political donations, protects freedom of the press.

"Section 1: The rights and privileges protected and extended by the Constitution of the United States are the rights and privileges of natural persons only. An artificial entity, such as a corporation, limited liability company, or other entity, established by the laws of any State, the United States, or any foreign state shall have no rights under the Constitution and are subject to regulation by the People, through Federal, State, or local law. The privileges of an artificial entity shall be determined by the People, through Federal, State, or local law, and shall not be construed to be inherent or inalienable.

"Section 2: Only natural persons may donate to campaigns for political causes, candidates for political offices, and political parties. In any two-year election cycle, donations by any one natural person to any one cause, candidate, or political party shall be limited to [\$10,000], indexed annually for inflation as determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The donors for all donations to political campaigns for political causes or offices, candidates for political offices shall be publicly disclosed; no anonymous donations are allowed."

"Section 3: Congress and the legislature in each State may regulate and enact systems of public campaign financing, including those designed to restrict the influence of private wealth by offsetting the raising and spending of money by candidates and others to influence elections with increased public funding."

"Section 4. Nothing in this amendment shall be construed to grant Congress, or several States, or the District constituting the seat of government of the United States, or the several Territories administered by the United States, the power to abridge the freedom of the press."

As Representative Pramila Jayapal (WA-07) has said, "Corporations are not people and money is not speech." This amendment intends to remove the excessive influence on elections of big money from corporations and rich natural persons.

This amendment would negate the Supreme Court decisions *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) and *SpeechNow.org v. FEC* (2010).

(Some of this language comes from a Senate and House proposed Constitutional amendments: <https://www.schiff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Citizens-Over-Corporations-Amendment.pdf>. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-joint-resolution/54/text>)

5 Direct Election of the President and Vice-President

Summary: The President and Vice President are elected by a majority of the individual voters across the nation. This eliminates the Electoral College.

"Section 1: The eligible citizens of the several States, the District constituting the seat of government of the United States, and of the several Territories administered by the United States, shall elect the President and Vice President. Each eligible citizen has the right to cast a single vote for two persons who shall have consented to the joining of their names as candidates for the offices of President and Vice President. No candidate shall consent to the joinder of his name with that of more than one other person."

"Section 2: The President and Vice President joined team that receives the most votes nationwide shall be confirmed as the President-elect and Vice-President elect. To avoid runoff elections, each State shall apply ranked-choice voting to the election of the President and Vice President."

This amendment would abolish the Electoral College method for finalizing the election for President and Vice President. One benefit would be increased voter turnout and engagement, because every vote in every state would count: the ballots of conservative voters in a typically blue state like California or liberal voters in a typically red state like Texas would be meaningful, rather than being overridden by each state's winner-take-all electoral college results. Other benefits would likely include: increased trust in the system, because the winner of the popular vote would be elected; and a focus on nationwide campaigns by candidates, rather than overemphasis on "swing" states.

(This wording is similar to that of a 1969 joint resolution:

<https://fedora.dlib.indiana.edu/fedora/get/iudl:2402061/OVERVIEW>)

6 Trust in Congress and Federal Officers Amendment

Summary: Members of Congress shall receive the same gross income and other benefits as do very senior civil servants. Justices, judges, and federal officers including members of Congress shall place their personal investments in a blind trust.

"Section 1: Each member of the House of Representatives and of the Senate, including the Speaker of the House, the Senate Majority Leader, and the House and Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, shall receive the same gross income and the same health, retirement, and life insurance benefits as [General Service Grade 15 Level 10 (GS-15 Level 10)] federal employees. Such members shall not receive lifetime pensions for their term(s) in Congress."

"Section 2: The President and Vice-President, each member of the House of Representatives and of the Senate, each federal appointee that requires Senate approval including Justices of the Supreme Court and federal judges, and their spouses or dependent children, must place their investments into a qualified blind trust to avoid possible conflicts of interest, during and for 180 days past their tenure in the federal government. The only exceptions allowed are investments in United States Treasury securities and in the federal retirement plan."

"Section 3: The President and Vice-President, each member of the House of Representatives and of the Senate, each federal appointee that requires Senate approval including Justices of the Supreme Court and federal judges, and their spouses or dependent children, may not create a business, operate a business, serve on a board of directors of any business, or be part of any day-to-day operations of a business while the officeholder is in office."

"Section 4: Any duly-nominated candidate for President or Vice-President shall submit to Congress and to the Director of the Office of Government Ethics the tax returns filed by or on behalf of the such candidate for: (I) the three most recent taxable years; and (II) each taxable year for which an audit of the return by the Internal Revenue Service is pending."

"Section 5: No officer of the United States government shall have his or her name affixed to any government or government affiliated building, ship, aircraft, or geographical feature while in office. No such officer shall have his or her name or likeness appear on a stamp, coin, or currency issued by the United State government until after death."

"Section 6: Violations of these provisions shall be subject to civil penalties as determined by laws enacted by Congress and signed by the President."

Elected and appointed officials are often referred to as public servants. That description implies that these officials should only be serving the public and not themselves beyond what would be expected of other public employees. This amendment should correct many of the real and perceived excesses of such officials, and contribute to restoring some measure of trust in these officials and our federal government.

(Section 3 is adapted from a bill proposed by Representative Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman. Section 4 is adapted from a bill proposed by Senator Elizabeth Warren.)

7 Right to Vote Amendment

Summary: Citizens, and only citizens, have the right to vote, and must have a valid government-issued ID to register to vote. Each state must ensure that every citizen has such an ID, at no cost to the citizen.

"Section 1: Each United States citizen of the several States, the District constituting the seat of government of the United States, and of the several Territories administered by the United States, at the age of 18 or older has the right to vote in every federal election, and in their residential state or territorial, county, local, and district election. The only exception is that a convicted felon cannot vote in any such election until that felon has completed the specified incarceration sentence, parole, or probation. Any person who is not a United States citizen cannot vote in any such election."

"Section 2: Each eligible voter must show a valid government-issued ID to register to vote. As a civil right, each state shall protect that right by ensuring that every eligible voter has such a valid ID, at no cost or onerous hurdles to the voter. The United States Department of Justice shall ensure that each State satisfies this requirement."

This amendment acknowledges a widespread concern about the validity of only citizens being enabled to vote. This also protects the rights of citizens by making the states responsible for guaranteeing this right to vote is assured for all citizens.

8 Term Limits Amendment

Summary: Sets term limits for each Supreme Court Justice, federal judge, and member of Congress.

"Section 1: Each person serving as a Member of the House of Representatives shall serve no more than five two-year terms or 11 years, even if elected or appointed and serving in non-successive terms."

"Section 2: Each person serving as a United State Senator shall serve no more than two six-year terms or 14 years, even if elected or appointed and serving in non-successive terms."

"Section 3: Each person serving as Chief or Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court shall serve no more than 18 years in total, even if appointed more than once. Each person serving as a Judge of a federal court shall serve no more than 15 years in total, even if appointed more than once."

Term limits for Congress would have the following benefits: reduce the overwhelming political benefit of incumbency; generate more open-seat elections, thereby leading to a wider diversity of candidates and more competitive races; with a limited time in office, lawmakers would focus on immediate policy solutions rather than avoiding difficult issues to preserve their re-election chances; end "career politicians" who may become disconnected from their constituents after decades in office; and restore our Constitution's framers' vision of a "citizen legislature", a body of temporary public servants who bring real-world expertise and return to live under the laws they passed.

Term limits for the federal judiciary would make it likely that presidents of any party would be able to appoint justices, would better insulate the confirmation process from partisan gamesmanship, and promote a more diverse court that better reflects the public view. Per Chief Justice Roberts, "setting a term of, say, fifteen years would ensure that federal judges would not lose all touch with reality through decades of ivory tower existence. It would also provide a more regular and greater degree of turnover among the judges. Both developments would, in my view, be healthy ones."

9 Separation of Religion and Government Amendment

Summary: No government-associated organization shall favor nor disfavor one religion over any other. Clarifies the right for individual religious expression.

"Section 1: No federal, state, county, or local or educational government department or agency, nor any public or private corporations or organizations that receive government funding or contracts, shall express any favoritism of one religion over another, nor disfavor any one religion relative to any other."

"Section 2: No such agency or organization shall require or prohibit any personal expression of religion - e.g., prayer - by any employee, student, volunteer, or person associated with that agency or organization."

This amendment would clarify and strengthen the separation of religion and government, and reduce the likelihood of a theocracy taking hold in the United States. For example: If a school chooses to display the Judeo-Christian Bible's Ten Commandments, that school must also allow, without onerous legal or organizational barriers, comparable expressions of principles requested by other religions, such as some Islamic mandates, Buddhism's The Five Precepts, and others.

10 Pardons Limitations Amendment

Summary: Limitations on presidential pardons and subject to judicial review.

"Section 1: The President shall not have the power to grant pardons and reprieves to:

(1) the President's self; (2) any person, up to a third degree relation, of the President, or a spouse thereof; (3) any current or former member of the President's administration; (4) any person who worked on the President's presidential campaign as a paid employee; (5) any person or entity for an offense that was motivated by a direct and significant personal or pecuniary interest of any of the foregoing persons; or (6) any person or entity for an offense that was at the direction of, or in coordination with, the President.

"Section 2: There will be a Pardon Review Panel under the supervision of the Chief Justice of the United States that reviews and must approve all presidential pardons and reprieves by a majority vote. This Panel shall comprise three already-confirmed federal judges, appointed to this additional role by the Chief Justice."

(Section 1 makes full use of the text of H. J. Res. 13, January 9, 2025, proposed by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Levin.)