

In 1789, the United States had the US Constitution as the ultimate law of the land after the failures under the Articles of Confederation. After centuries of history, numerous Supreme Court decisions, a Civil War, and frequent debates on what it means to be an American, the US Constitution has continued to play an essential role in being the cornerstone that binds together our shared American institutions. The US Constitution is our promised inheritance as Americans and the framework of governance in the United States of America.

The US Constitution is the foundation in which all other law in the United States was and still is built upon. Any law that violates the core of American law is considered unconstitutional and therefore null and void. The US Constitution discusses central tenants behind the authority and legitimacy of our government. It upholds the ideas of federalism that allows states to exercise their own authority and limits the power of government by splitting it among three separate branches of government. The Constitution helped to establish the United States as a pluralistic model instead of a majoritarian model of democracy where even the minority in our country is reserved rights and a say in our governmental affairs, even as our democracy continues to remain responsive to the will of the majority. Unlike the United Kingdom's majoritarian democracy, which has all the powers vested in its legislature who then selects the Prime Minister and can pass legislation by simple majority vote that has the power to amend its unwritten constitution and can by majority vote abridge its bill of rights equivalent in the UK; the United State's pluralistic democracy affords the minority to still be represented in its government within the various state governments, its bicameral legislature, the presidency, or its judiciary (Blackburn, 2015). Our constitution's Bill of Rights also ensures that, even when the minority is out of power, those not in power can rest assured that they will be treated with the dignity and respect deserved of all persons. Our political system aims to balance the will of the majority with the rights that should not be denied of any citizen.

The US Constitution is our American inheritance as citizens of the United States. It is an age-old promise forged at the dawn of our nation's founding between our nation's government and the governed. It is a social contract promising the government's legitimacy in its authority to be our representatives in making the public's decisions and binds Americans to the laws under its jurisdiction that flows from our constitution, the trunk in which all law in the US is to be rooted. However, like any contract it needs to be defended from those who would ignore or violate it. Over the centuries we have seen the government ignore a Supreme Court ruling under Andrew Jackson, suspend habeas corpus during the Civil War, attempt to silence the freedom of the press during the Vietnam War, deny ethnic minorities of equal protection under the law for decades, the extra judicial killings of US citizens exercising their rights, which serve as a reminder to all US citizens not be passive in our responsibility to "defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America from all enemies, foreign and domestic" and serve our obligation to act as good fiduciaries for the United States and for the future generations of American yet to come (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). As Benjamin Franklin stated, we were given a republic if we can keep it. It is our responsibility to defend our constitution in the same way it defends us in order to ensure the proper operation of our constitutional republic (Beeman, n.d.).

The US Constitution has captured the imagination of the public and legal scholars as a document has survived the test of time, and evolving citizen expectations of their government. It proclaimed its promises of liberty, a democratically accountable government, and pluralism. Among those who heard this call were my grandparents who came as refugees when they faced political persecution in Cuba and made the United States their new home. I was stressed the importance of the freedoms that we take for granted in the United States. In my hometown of

Miami, there are many immigrants from the Caribbean and Latin America with stories of the lands they left that lacked the important safeguards that allow for a stable liberal democracy. We sometimes forget that not everyone has what we can take for granted as Americans. Though the American system of government has its faults, we do not expect our government to be perfect, but we do expect it to be fair to all that it represents. The US Constitution is not simply words on a page but the very idea of the relationship between the government and the governed and the values we hold dear as one United States of America.

References

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