

The Passy Press®

Letter to the Editor

From: Willis Sargent <wsargent@undisclosed.com>

Date: Friday, October 4, 2013 at 9:43 AM

To: Nicolas Gardiner "enpg@thepassypress.com"

Dear Sir,

I went back to the Webb article and reread it. Webb certainly made the case that the President had acted on his own when it may have been much wiser to have gained Congressional approval. Interesting that with respect to Syria the President was criticized more for asking for Congressional approval, rather than for striking, which was expected because his red line had been crossed.

With respect to John Cogswell's article I have a few reactions:

1. I don't think our government is "broken", but we seem to be at a watershed where the country is struggling with the issue of whether we want to become more of an European entitlement state, trying to level society by taking from the more successful and giving to the less successful, or whether we have faith that a faster developing society can provide more benefits in the long run to the less successful. I have great faith that the latter is superior, but that over time the pendulum will swing both ways.
2. No Exemptions for Congress and No Special Benefits: I think John is unrealistic in thinking that amending the constitution can solve these problems, which are very real. First you couldn't get such amendments passed, and clever folks will always find a way to feather the nests of themselves and friends. A hard digging outspoken press would be much more helpful in eventually setting the standard that we all want.
3. Timely Budgets: The executive branch does create a budget, but without agreement between the parties Congress is not about to approve the proposed budget. No amendment can force agreement.
4. Public Voting: This seems to be directed against earmarks primarily, which have already gained much unfavorable publicity and fallen somewhat out of favor. John seems to suggest that everything should be voted on individually and votes made public. There are so many tens of thousands of individual elements in legislation that I think John's suggestion is just not practical.
5. To my way of thinking, John is reacting to manifestations of very real problems, but it does not seem to me that constitutional amendments

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are the solution to these problems. That's not to say that we should not seek to improve the political process. How could we best do that? In my humble opinion, the first place to start is to break the gerrymandering of representative districts at both the federal and state level. It seems that California has taken a reasonable start in this respect. I wish that there were a clear constitutional basis for solving the problem of over representation of the extremes, right and left. With so many representatives from the extremes it is much harder to forge compromises, and it's the lack of compromises that makes the government appear "broken".

Let me know when the time is right for some mention of the Passy Press in the class notes, such as what was suggested below.

Bill

Bill is a former defense analyst, corporate manager, and software entrepreneur and now serves as a Commissioner of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.