

# A Better U.S. Constitution?

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{bot\_wrgoogle}Obviously the writers had the prejudices of the times they lived in. The lesson here is that we cannot create a perfect constitution that will stand the test of time. To think so is to think we have nothing to learn. Any document that is so important will need to be changed as we learn more and progress in our political and moral ideas.

Of course it could be dangerous to create an entirely new constitution, given the politics that would go into writing and ratifying it. Still, if we were to do so, what should it include? I can think of many changes that I would like to see, including an electoral process that is less based on geography and more on citizens political beliefs. In such a system, representatives would be elected not by districts but by voters across the country who share common political causes or goals.

But apart from the specific provisions throughout a new constitution, there is one important change that I would like to see right up front: A declaration of purpose and intent. The current document governing the United States is vague enough that there are many "gray" areas. The result is laws that may or may not be unconstitutional, based on differing interpretations. Differing interpretations are inevitable to some extent, but a clearer statement of purpose would resolve much of the confusion. An example follows.

## A New Constitution - Preamble

"The government of the United States has only the powers specified in this constitution, and may not do anything which is not explicitly authorized by this document. The intent of this document is to protect the rights of individuals within the country, both citizens and all others, and that is the only valid purpose of government. When the United States government acts outside its borders, it must still act in accordance with this constitution, and refrain from violating the rights of individuals. This is in recognition that rights are not a gift of government, or an earned privilege, but are inherent in every human being."

The idea here is to state plainly what the intent of the constitution is and what the proper purpose of the government is. This makes it much easier to determine when a law is allowable or unconstitutional. Combined with the clear enumeration of powers laid out in the rest of the document, there would be much less room for mis-interpretation than there currently is.

It also makes it clear that rights are not a matter of citizenship. Any and all who are within the jurisdiction of the government are to have their rights respected and protected. Also, the government cannot violate an individual's rights just because that person is not within the borders of the country.

Finally, this preamble states that government power is limited. The current United States Constitution is supposed to do this as well, but is vague in many ways. A new constitution should state plainly what the government is allowed to do, and should require that all new laws specify the constitutional clause that authorizes them. This will prevent much of our useless legislation, and help prevent an abuse of power on the part of the government.

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