

Why the United States Constitution is Relevant Today!

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Middle School Essay 9/17 Contest

I thank God that He gave us a world where people are most prosperous when they are most free. My generation will play a huge role in the coming Constitutional debate. We have many choices to make. Some Americans believe that our Constitution is a living, breathing document that should change with the generations. I believe that if we pursue this track, it will in time, give us a failed constitution. Our Constitution was founded with the focus of a structure of government where abuse of power is minimized and in which there is an equal balance of power. Those who advocate a living constitution would sadly put the courts in a position that would increasingly take on important decisions. This should be a wake-up call to America's youth.

I am growing up on a Colorado cattle farm. I see parallels in nature, in as much as every year we cannot compel specific outcomes as to how many calves will be born, how healthy they will be and whether they will ultimately be brought to market. In the same way, courts cannot compel specific outcomes, and in the process remove or diminish the representative process we so enjoy. As a citizen of this great nation, I believe that the United States Constitution is my personal heritage and responsibility, as it is for anyone privileged enough to be an American citizen. Sadly, I see students who are not engaged and for whom the Constitution is an outdated document.

Let's look at the Immunities Clause, which gives Americans the right to be heard in court and the right to diplomatic protection. This clause does not provide for an unlimited bill of rights, housed within the 14th amendment. Federal judges should never be given the authorization to give us ever wider uniformity. The federalists specifically argued against this type of federal oversight over state and local laws. We are on a slippery slope if we transform our Constitution, which essentially guarantees us negative liberties, to one which can guarantee a broad assortment of "positive" rights. Our Constitution states what the government cannot do, it never said what the government must do on our behalf. We are protected against cruel and unusual punishment and the threat of illegal search and seizure, but are not guaranteed any kind of right to housing, food, clothes, jobs---even health care. We are offered the rights of life, liberty and property. Will our representative democracy and our elected representative decision making abilities be replaced by judges who are unelected and serve for life? I believe that if the immunities clause is used as a grantor of positive rights, my generation will find itself in an America where my neighbors are constitutionally entitled to my family's cows!

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Why is the Constitution relevant today? It guarantees that I am free to enjoy a country in which consent is given by the governed. I am free to exercise my talents and work ethic to the very best of my ability, guaranteed the right to pursue my dreams in a nation that values life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. My rights are undeniable. I am equal to everyone else in America in the eyes of the law. Justice is blind, and my government cannot assume to take ANY authority that has not been granted by the Constitution. These are the truths that are self-evident; truths that must be taught as precious to every generation. Benjamin Franklin said that the Constitution only gives us the right to pursue happiness—we have to catch it for ourselves. Abraham Lincoln warned us against interfering with the Constitution in case our liberties would no longer be safeguarded. The Constitution is supposed to restrain the government, not the people! The coming Constitutional debate is one worth having, one that is entirely relevant, and one in which I hope and pray that the Constitution of my generation looks exactly like the Constitution of 1787.