



What you should have learned in high school

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Remember that high school civics class you apparently slept through? Or maybe you just had a bad teacher? Regardless of the specific reasons, it's obvious a lot of folks didn't get educated on the basic principles on which our country was founded.

So consider this a primer on how our government is supposed to work. Class is about to begin; pay attention.

First, we are a constitutional republic, where ultimate power resides with the Constitution, not an individual or group of individuals. The people elect representatives who are sworn to uphold that document – and only that document.

Beware of anyone who goes out of their way to convince you that a constitutional republic is not a true democratic form of government. They are usually up to no good.

Second, the Constitution mandates three co-equal branches of government: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. Congress makes the laws, the president enforces the laws, and the courts decide whether the laws are consistent with the Constitution.

Beware of anyone who says that one branch of government, especially the executive branch, has more authority than the other two. They are usually up to no good.

Third, all elected officials - and anyone working in government, from a patent clerk to a military general - swear an oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution (and only the Constitution).

Beware of anyone who claims or even hints that loyalty should be to anyone or anything other than the Constitution. They are usually up to no good.

Fourth, we have a president, not a king. We fought a war so we wouldn't have to live under a king. The Framers were acutely aware of this when they stipulated that we get to decide every four years who we want as our leader.

Beware of anyone who claims the president should be allowed to stay in the office after their Constitutionally-mandated two terms are up. They are usually up to no good.

Fifth, the legislative branch, i.e., the Congress, has the power of the purse. They alone authorize funding, levy taxes and tariffs, and exercise total control over how all financial resources are allocated and distributed.

Beware of anyone who claims they have the power to re-distribute or withhold funds without Congressional approval. They are usually up to no good.

Sixth, the Department of Justice should be completely independent from the executive branch and never serve as the president's private law enforcement agency. Weaponization of the DOJ goes against the core principles underlying the Constitution.

Beware of anyone who says they can direct the DOJ to go after specific individuals or entities. They are usually up to no good.

Seventh, the Constitution gives you the right to say whatever you want about whatever you want to whoever you want just as long as you don't endanger, defame or threaten others, incite a riot, commit fraud, or distribute child pornography.

Beware of anyone who says you can't disagree with, criticize or make fun of them. They are usually up to no good.

Eighth, the Constitution guarantees your right to be a Christian – or a Muslim, or a Satan worshipper, or an atheist. Our government neither prohibits your right to worship whoever or whatever you want, nor does it dictate who or what you must worship or not worship.

Beware of anyone who claims that this is a Christian nation. They are usually up to no good.

Ninth, everyone in the United States has the right to due process. The Constitution explicitly says that no “person” shall be denied life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

Beware of anyone who tries to make a distinction between a citizen and anyone else living within the borders of the United States with respect to due process. They are usually up to no good.

Finally, under our form of government, everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty. This is another cornerstone of our Constitution. Allegations do not translate to guilt and an indictment is not a conviction.

Beware of anyone who says they “just know” someone is guilty before the evidence has been presented and the accused has had their day in court. They are usually up to no good.

OK. Glad we cleared all that up. Hopefully you took some notes. You can now consider your high school education complete. Class dismissed.



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