

“Expiration Date” By Matt Wilcox



Turn back time about 225 years; scarcely more than a decade removed from the Yorktown victory, the infant United States of America forges a document to clad our liberties in high carbon steel. The words “We the People,” emblazoned in elegant, flowing script, would come to be an internationally known insignia of liberty and equality.

Jump to more recent times; as the technoid era begins to close its iron grip on the world, new complications arise and traditional thinking is questioned. Despite the constant change we are experiencing, can we really deduce that the Constitution has expired?

It is an interesting proposition; to question if age has depreciated the validity of our country’s founding manuscript, but how obscene it sounds to interrogate about the Constitution’s, well, constitutionality.

Think of it this way: What would Thomas Jefferson, who owned slaves himself, think of Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream? In a time where amputees’ “sedatives” were four strong men holding down their limbs, what would the populous have to say about taxation on those who do not buy health insurance?

It’s hard to say; what isn’t difficult to understand is that the amendments were necessary for the Constitution’s survival. It wasn’t as if the Constitution was written poorly or the framers overlooked certain issues; it was simply a different time. The amendments were perpetuated in order for the Constitution to evolve proportionately with the people it protected and retain its relevancy as new technologies and discoveries pressed the nation forward.

An elderly man in his rocking chair would simply lean back and say, “Times have changed, son.”

Voice of Democracy winners present on Vets Day

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Wednesday, 14 November 2012 14:04 -

That's not to say the amendments have made a Constitution which is devoid of flaws; it isn't, and was never going to be. At that time, a gun's firing rate was determined by how fast your soldier could ram the ball and powder down his musket barrel. With modern weapons, however, even a novice marksman can squeeze the trigger and send in excess of 1,000 rounds downrange per minute.

It's difficult to say if the framers would think the gun laws which are being debated in the present day to be a violation of the Second Amendment. But one could also question the validity of new laws in and of themselves; the laws are meant to keep high-performance weaponry out of the hands of criminals, but criminals, by nature, don't obey the law.

The Columbine massacre happened when the Federal Assault Weapons Ban was in effect. It finally expired in 2004, but if it had worked the way it was promised, we should've seen a significant drop in gun violence during the years it was active.

This sparked much controversy as to what exactly was encompassed in the Second Amendment. We may never find the perfect balance between preventing lethal crimes without compromising our right to bear arms, but this doesn't invalidate the Constitution.

When the Constitution was written we had only just won our freedom from British rule. People will heatedly debate the validity of that document for years to come, but my stance will remain the same: If the Constitution were irrelevant, would we still even be a nation?

If history has shown us anything, it's that nothing lasts forever. The modern age has brought about new issues, and it's easy to become jumbled and caught up in politics and protocols. In previous years, it seems, people thought simpler and with a bold clarity which has been lost. We chose to go to the moon in that decade and do the other things not because they are easy, but because they are hard.

We had a dream that one day our children would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. A man once said, "The power under the Constitution will always be in the people." His name was George Washington; you may have heard of him.

Voice of Democracy winners present on Vets Day

Written by Holyoke Enterprise
Wednesday, 14 November 2012 14:04 -

The most important driving force of our nation is not Congress, it's not the House of Representatives, and it's not the president. It's the Constitution. If that is irrelevant, is our country as well?

By Savanna Krueger



Long ago, when our United States Constitution was written and completed, it was said to be “the greatest single effort of national deliberation that the world has ever seen.”

Well, at least that is how America's second president and first vice president, John Adams, labeled it.

Way back, in 1780, the well-known Massachusetts Constitution, written by Adams himself, secured the state's government most meticulously on his political views and personal beliefs.

That specific constitution was the very first to be written by a special committee and then commissioned by the people. Along with John Adams' opinions and the outcome of the first state constitution, the citizens believed that the formation of a national constitution was an important move forward. But, it did not matter what they believed; obviously it was up to the government to decide and take action.

The history-changing Constitutional Convention was held secretly. The reason it was held in confidence was so that the committee members could speak their minds as freely as needed without public pressure. They also knew, deep down inside, that the states would not support

Voice of Democracy winners present on Vets Day

Written by Holyoke Enterprise
Wednesday, 14 November 2012 14:04 -

the decisions that they were going to make for the country.

Now, if you think about it, the initial Constitutional Convention I am speaking of was far too long ago for anyone to have been there. It was all the way back in 1787.

To be more specific, it was Sept. 17. Plenty of citizens, yet today, recall that year and day to be one of the most significant and permanent changes in recorded history.

With that in mind, have you ever thought about how the United States Constitution applies to our present day and time? Or, why we never had another Convention? I know I sure have, along with the United States government, which is proposing whether a new Constitutional Convention to update our laws would be a positive action.

My political view of a new Convention or Constitution is that there is no need of it.

I feel as long as we have the right to amend the Constitution, it stays current with our needs and rights. The amendments have made it so that our laws and rights remain up-to-date and stay relevant to the changing needs of the people it protects.

One of the major amendments to the original Constitution was the 13th Amendment. This clause was declared on Dec. 6, 1865 and it states that slavery was abolished as a legal institution. Another amendment I believe changed us as a country is the 19th Amendment, which gives women the right to vote and speak about what they believe. Truthfully, these are not the only amendments that are important to our Constitution; they are all crucial as a whole document.

It there was no Constitution, there would be no government as we know it. We would be missing out on the order and justice that protects each and every one of us. We have rights that our religion, race, age and sex do not matter, nor how much money we make. Without our current government, the person or group with the most money would probably be in control of our nation.

Voice of Democracy winners present on Vets Day

Written by Holyoke Enterprise
Wednesday, 14 November 2012 14:04 -

Women and African Americans are undoubtedly treated better now than they were 200 years ago. This goes along with the goal that states “all men are created equal,” according to the Declaration of Independence.

All of these facts have certainly made our United States Constitution just the way it should be. It is organized and simply states our rights to freedom and protection.

So, as you can see, there are many reasons why I believe the Constitution is still relevant today. Although some people deny that our laws are still valid, I am proud to stand up for what I believe. How could this document that has allowed our country to grow and thrive over the years be irrelevant?

The laws and ideas are not outdated because of the amendments written in and ultimately voted on by representatives of our great country.

We must protect ourselves by standing on the United States Constitution, which is the foundation of this country.

Stand strong with me and this nation for our generation and those after us and support our Constitution and all that it stands for. God bless our America.

By Erin Vieselmeyer

Voice of Democracy winners present on Vets Day

Written by Holyoke Enterprise
Wednesday, 14 November 2012 14:04 -

