

The Counterweight

Inhibiting Excess in Government

March 2010

We as citizens are the counterweight, the balancing force, which our founding fathers designed into our unique form of government in order to secure our freedoms. Without our proper involvement, our government will overwhelm and trample the very liberties and freedoms it is supposed to ensure. Our involvement is both a right and a responsibility of long standing. We neglect this right and this responsibility to our detriment.

A full century before our country was formally established; the question of the source of the power of government was being hotly debated in England. This was at the time when many families sailed to America in their desire to enjoy the liberty and freedom they understood was their right.

It was at that time, in the 1600s in England, when a non-conformist Scottish preacher by the name of Samuel Rutherford wrote his book, *Lex Rex*, to describe the relationship between the King, the people and the law. The purpose of his book was to hold the king properly accountable – first to God’s laws and then to man’s laws and to the people. In *Lex Rex*, Rutherford discussed the question of whether the king received his power and authority from the people. He concluded, “... the power of creating a man a king is from the people.”

We not only have this long-standing *right*, but we have a *responsibility* to participate in the affairs of government.

During the Constitutional Convention of 1787, our founding fathers spent a great deal of time deliberating this vital issue of the involvement of the people in their government. James Madison wrote in *Federalist Paper Number 37* about the Congress’ concern regarding the seriousness with which the Congress took this issue of balancing a strong stable government with the individual liberties retained by the people. “The genius of republican liberty, seems to demand on one side, not only that all power should be derived from the people; but, that those entrusted with it should be kept in dependence on the people....”

The continued protection from our government overstepping its boundaries and overrunning our liberties requires the citizens to continually participate in their government – to hold their elected representatives closely accountable. By the intentional design of our governmental system, it is the responsibility of every citizen to vote and to let our elected representatives know what our desires are.

Some 13 years before the Constitutional Convention, and 2 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Congress passed the *Declaration of Rights* in Philadelphia, on October 14, 1774. In it, our country's fathers stated, "... the foundation of English liberty, and of all free government, is the *right of the people* to participate in their legislative council...." We ignore this *right* at our peril. Those in the government who would want us to be *their* servants, rather than them being the *public's* servants, make every attempt to trample this *right* under foot.

Over 200 years ago, the people of the United States of America exercised their power to create a government, specify the limits of its powers, and proclaim that the basis of their government's authority is the people. The uniqueness of the United States of America is that we are the first nation whose particular form of government resulted from well-reasoned deliberation rather than from a war or coup. These deliberations were accomplished by men who shared a common ground on a worldview generally consistent with God's Word. After carefully considering the defects and limited successes of other nations throughout history, they established our representative form of a federal republic. These considerations resulted in the attendant security, stability, liberty and freedom that we have enjoyed.

However, the liberty and freedom we so highly treasure will not survive the power and authority of government, which we depend on to provide for our national security and stability, if we neglect our right

and responsibility to be involved in the governance of our nation or if we hesitate to hold our elected officials accountable. Corporately and individually, the citizens of this country are the only counterweight that can offset the tendency of our government toward ambitious, inappropriate, and excessive involvement in our lives.

The right and the responsibility are ours!

- Vote on Election Day, June 8th, and remember to be registered to vote by May 24th.
- Contact your elected representatives and keep them fully aware of your concerns and your desires regarding issues they are dealing with – issues that will affect you and your family.
- Pray for all who are in authority so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. (1 Timothy 2:1-6)