

# OCPA FaxLine Report

a public policy information service for members of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Inc.

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Dear OCPA Member:

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

It's an interesting experience reading the Constitution. Two things become very apparent fairly quickly. First: how carefully and deliberately it was constructed. I do not claim to have any expertise on this cherished document, but as an ordinary observer I would think that there are few other man-made documents (if any) that compare to its pure genius in organizing the delicate balance of power between three essential, equal, but separate branches of government. The second thing that becomes apparent is what I can only refer to as "a power surge protector" built into the document itself. This mechanism (again, deliberately constructed) prevents our Republic from becoming overloaded with a spike in power from elements in our society which might seek to radically transform our process of governing.

As Peter Wehner, a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, wrote in a recent article for *The Weekly Standard*, "Because of the Founders' views on the fundamental nature of politics -- that it's conducted by people who are a mixture of virtues and vices, capable of nobility and altruism but driven mostly by self-interest -- they set up a system of government that slowed things down, that prized sobriety instead of radical change, that put a premium on slow turns rather than on lurching shifts in policy."

So this "ship of state" was not built to turn "on a dime" for a very good reason. It was designed this way to protect it from a sudden hijacking and change of course to foreign ports unknown. Such built-in constraints or ballast is an important reason for the stability of our form of government. To betray the Constitutional precepts is like throwing ballast overboard to pick up speed, never anticipating a storm or rough seas.

Daniel Webster noted, "Miracles do not cluster. Hold on to the Constitution of the United States of America and the Republic for which it stands -- what has happened once in six thousand years may never happen again. Hold on to your Constitution, for if the American Constitution shall fail there will be anarchy throughout the world."

Despite the assurances we have from many elected officials of their purported allegiance to the Constitution, there is plenty of cause for alarm. A University of Arizona economics professor estimates that 30% of private US corporate profits are now owned by the government. If healthcare is taken over by the government one can add 14% to that figure. If "cap and trade" passes, one can add another 8%. That's 52% of profits in our country being government-owned. At that point, how can we say we are following the limited government nature of our Constitution, or refer to ourselves as a capitalistic society? And how long will we mislead ourselves into believing that we are truly free men and women?

Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people. Those who have known freedom and then lost it, have never known it again."

Until next time . . . Brett A. Magbee, Vice President for Operations

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