

Community Comment
May 10, 2013
Sam Pennisi

The Constitution

There are scholars and historians who divide the history and development of governing a people into two eras; before the Constitution of the United States and after. The concept and framework of self governance developed in the 1780's was truly revolutionary.

In this light, the political antics going on this country today, especially at the federal level, are embarrassing, troubling, and amount to treason. You heard me right, treason.

We enjoy the best and longest lasting system of rule that provides for self governance that has ever existed. The framework was not only nothing short of brilliant, it is timeless. It has worked for us when we were just a few million and, until recently, worked for us as we surpassed 300 million. How can that be? The Constitution works because it is fluid. We have been able to meet the demands of evolving culture while not losing the central tenants of our defining legal structure.

The Constitution secured the balance of individual rights, states powers, and a federal or national government that binds us together as a country and a culture. That is a powerful and unique working document. But it requires something from us that generations passed have managed to pass down; the willingness to abide by the rules we create and the spirit of our political ideals. We have not been living up to this lately.

Here are some examples to consider:

The Governor of a large state actually talks about succession, leaving the Union of the United States, and then runs for President and is taken seriously. We settled that possibility in the mid 1800's with a civil war that took a terrible toll in human life but secured the fact that we are the United States of America. And we survive as a nation because of that fact.

Congress has figured out how to rule by the minority. This has always been possible but now it has become a strategy stopping the majority from governing according to the will of the majority. Any document can be abused. It takes a sense of patriotism and citizenship to engage in the spirit of our Founder's work. Treason has been defined by lesser transgressions.

Money has taken over our political landscape, not because of some diabolical enemy but because we have allowed it. We blame the Courts or the Congress or the President when, in fact, we, the people, are to blame. We have let ideology trump responsibility and representation. We have let influence and personal gain trump the will of the people and the good of the nation.

The Constitution is not a rigid religious document. It is a fluid document that has been able to flow with time and changing culture. Each generation must Shepard this grand experiment in a government by the people. We need to do better.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.