

America Is Living James Madison's Nightmare: How Hyper-partisan Politics and Rigid Political Ideology Has Polarized and Paralyzed A Nation

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Do you believe that government is working today the way our Founding Fathers intended it to work?

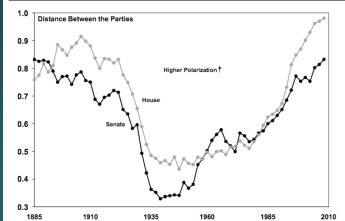
Do you believe that government is working today the way the American people want/need it to work?

Americans' Overall Views Of The Federal Government Are Very Negative:

- ▶ 19% Trust the government always/most of the time
- ▶ 74% Most elected officials put own interests ahead of country's
- ▶ 55% Ordinary Americans would do better job solving problems

Pew Research Center - October, 2015

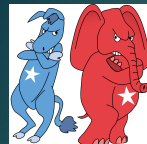
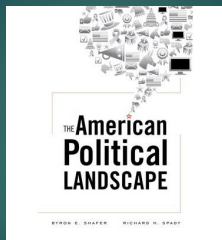
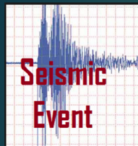
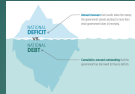
Exhibit 7
Political Polarization is High – and Still Rising!



Note: This measure of political polarization is derived from analysis of the voting patterns of Congress and is based on the relative divergence in the average positions of Democratic and Republican legislators.
Source: "Polarized America" by McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal



When Our Leaders Are Unable Or Unwilling To Compromise Big Issues Go Unresolved



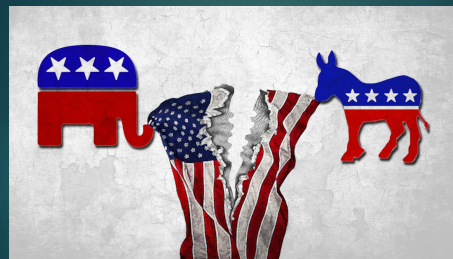
Political Right

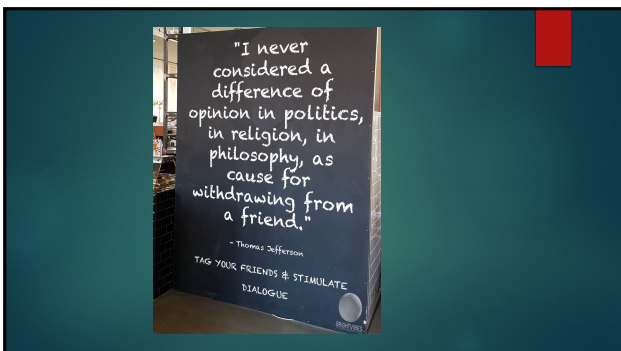
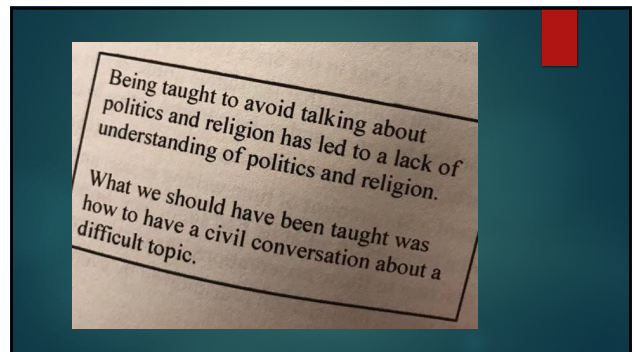
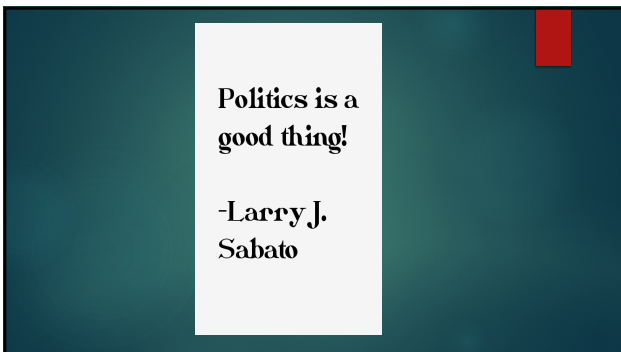
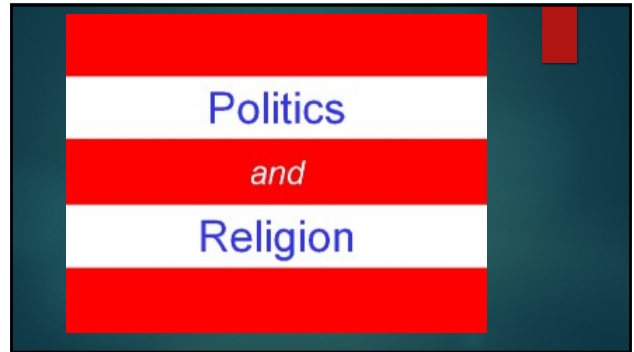
Tea Party
Trump

Political Left

MoveOn.org
Occupy Movement
ANTIFA

Policy → Politics → Demeanor





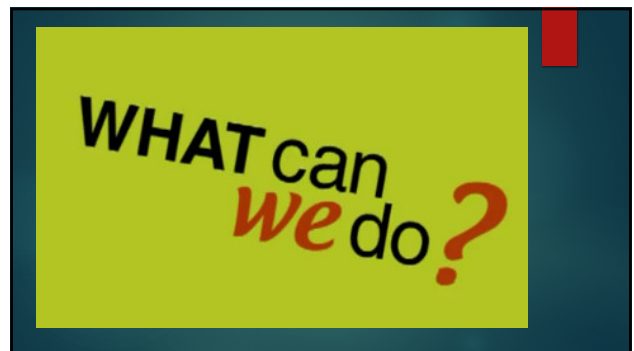
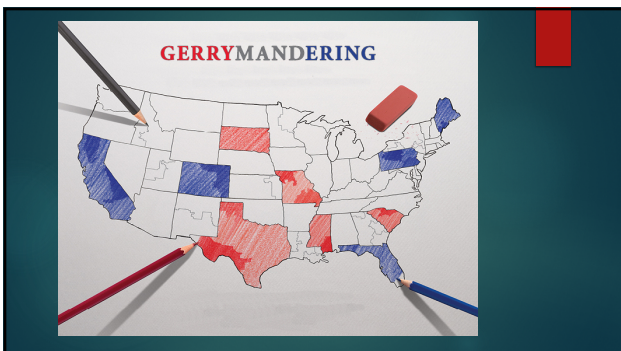


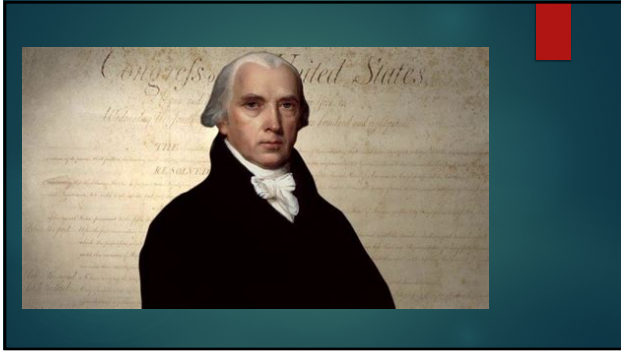
Facebook's co-founder blasts social media: "It literally changes your relationship with society"

One of Facebook's founders says that social media may have a negative impact on the human brain


"It literally changes your relationship with society, with each other . . . It probably interferes with productivity in weird ways. God only knows what it's doing to our children's brains."

He said that Facebook and its successors were deliberately designed to consume as much time and attention as possible from their users. The result was that they created "a social-validation feedback loop . . . exactly the kind of thing that a hacker like myself would come up with, because you're exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology."





James Madison



The passions, therefore, not the reason, of the public would sit in judgment. But it is the reason, alone, of the public, that ought to control and regulate the government. The passions ought to be controlled and regulated by the government.

AZ QUOTES

KEY PILLARS OF A WORKING DEMOCRACY

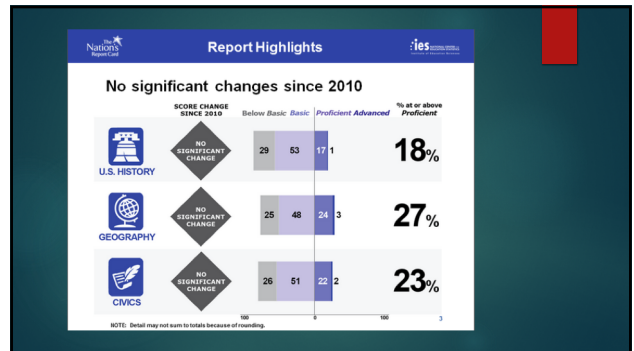
- ▶ Civic Engagement
- ▶ Civil Conversation
- ▶ Compromise

James Madison On Civic Engagement

Madison believed in an educated and enlightened citizenry. He believed that citizens needed to be informed about the affairs of government and involved in the affairs of government. This is the essence of civic engagement. Unfortunately, today we do not have a citizenry that is knowledgeable about the affairs of government, and most citizens do not want to be engaged in the political/government process. We have ceded this ground to the most extreme voice of the right and the left. Madison viewed that as a formula for disaster.

KEY QUESTION

Do we have an educated and enlightened citizenry?



Americans know literally nothing about the Constitution

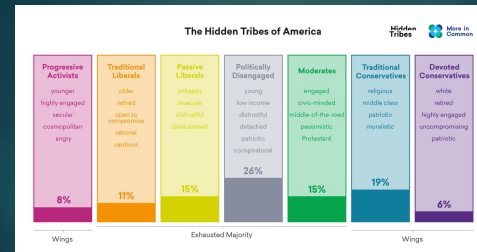
- ▶ More than one in three people (37%) could not name a single right protected by the First Amendment. THE FIRST AMENDMENT! (Speech – Religion – Press – Peacefully Assemble)
- ▶ Only one in four (26%) can name all three branches of the government.
- ▶ One in three (33%) can't name any branch of government. None. Not even one.
- ▶ Only 28.4% of college graduates correctly identify the father of the Constitution as James Madison.
- ▶ When asked to name the chief justice of the Supreme Court, less than three in 10 (28%) correctly answered John Roberts.

KEY QUESTION

Do we have an engaged citizenry?

KEY VOTING STATISTICS

- ▶ Only 79% of Americans who are eligible to vote are registered to vote
- ▶ In the 2018 mid-term elections only 49% of registered voters voted
- ▶ That means that only 39% of eligible voters actually participated in the most basic element of civic engagement - voting



James Madison On Civil Conversation

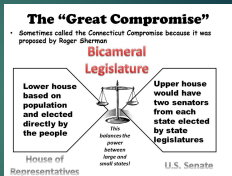
Madison recognized that democratic government requires civil conversation. In his famous "Federalist No. 10," Madison taught that in a democracy based on the equal rights and liberty of all, conflict is inevitable. He challenged us to acknowledge that, though we may prefer others to share "the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests" as those like us, we cannot achieve this uniformity without infringing on the rights and liberties of others.

James Madison On Compromise

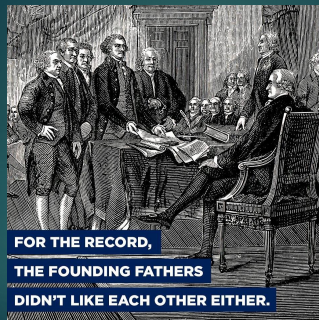
Madison taught us that civil conversation requires compromise. While some may see compromise as a bad thing, as reflecting a lack of principle or conviction, Madison believed that compromise simply acknowledged the vastness of his vision of a nation committed to the equal rights and liberty of all.

Our Country Was Founded On The Assumption That Our Leaders Would Be Willing To Compromise For The Good Of The Nation

- ▶ Constitutional Convention Of 1787
 - ▶ Structure of the Federal Government
 - ▶ Executive Branch
 - ▶ Legislative Branch
 - ▶ Bicameral
 - ▶ Judicial Branch
 - ▶ Federal vs State Government



"American Democracy will survive only as long as good men of good will are willing to put the best interests of their country first."
 Author Unknown



THE NEED FOR COMPROMISE

NICHOLAS MAUER
 WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

AMERICAN POLITICS TODAY HAS A BIG PROBLEM. OUR NATION IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE POLARIZED, AND OUR GOVERNMENT REFLECTS THIS.

INSTEAD OF ENGAGING IN THE CIVIL DISCOURSE OUR FOUNDING FATHERS ENVISIONED, OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE WAGING A POLITICAL WAR. THE RADICAL EXTREMES OF BOTH PARTIES ARE MORE INTERESTED IN SHOUTING AND GRANDSTANDING, THAN SITTING DOWN A GETTING STUFF DONE.

AND ALL THIS IS BECAUSE ONE LITTLE WORD IS LACKING FROM POLITICAL VOCABULARY: COMPROMISE.

This gridlock is not what our Founding Fathers had in mind when they forged our Constitution. The founders created the Constitution to encourage compromise, it had checks and balances to ensure the different branches of government had to work together to create and enforce balanced legislation, not no legislation at all. Our entire government is based on a compromise, the Great Compromise which resulted in our bicameral Congress.

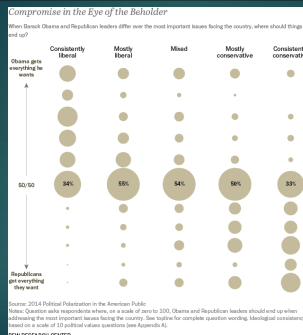
Today, politicians always love to say they represent what the Founders wanted for America; if they truly want to emulate the Founders, they should reach across the aisle.

It's Time Congress Returns To Regular Order
 Senator John McCain (R-AZ)

We are proving inadequate not only to our most difficult problems but also to routine duties. Our national political campaigns never stop. We seem convinced that majorities exist to impose their will with few concessions and that minorities exist to prevent the party in power from doing anything important.

That's not how we were meant to govern. Our entire system of government — with its checks and balances, its bicameral Congress, its protections of the rights of the minority — was designed for compromise. It seldom works smoothly or speedily. It was never expected to.

It requires pragmatic problem-solving from even the most passionate partisans. It relies on compromise between opposing sides to protect the interests we share.



"For too many in Washington, even talking to the opposition, much less working across the aisle, is a sin. In an era of narrow majorities and divided government, that is a recipe for certain failure."

Pres. George W. Bush



NOLABELS.ORG

"No party has a monopoly on wisdom. No democracy works without compromise."

President Barack Obama

WHAT can we do?

- ▶ Become more engaged in informed and civil discussions about the important issues of the day
- ▶ Encourage compromise and seek common ground
- ▶ Avoid extremes and antagonism whenever possible
- ▶ Get your news from reputable sources
- ▶ Understand the limitations of:
 - ▶ Talk TV/radio
 - ▶ 24/7 news cycle
 - ▶ Social media
- ▶ Do something about radical political gerrymandering



Civics Education

What Should We Teach?

The Constitution

How government is supposed to work.

The importance of compromise.

The importance of listening and respecting other points of view.

The importance of tolerance and diversity.

If compromise is the essence of a working democracy, what happens to a democracy when its leaders lose the ability to compromise or see compromise as a bad thing?

**BROKEN
GOVERNMENT**

If civil conversation and compromise are the glue that holds a diverse society together, what happens to that society if its people are unwilling to respect differing points of view and seek out what unites them, as opposed to what divides them?

**"BROKEN"
SOCIETY**

