

Republican Perspective

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by Ed Manning

A SOFT TYRANNY

“A great empire, like a great cake, is most easily diminished at the edges.” Benjamin Franklin

As you read this, the nation has just completed celebrating Independence Day. Parades, fireworks, picnics, hotdogs, baseball and cold beer were enjoyed across the land. Have you ever wondered what the Founding Fathers would think of our country today?

At the close of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, a lady asked Ben Franklin: “well Doctor what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin replied, “a Republic... if you can keep it.” Dr. Franklin’s answer proved to be prophetic.

“Democracy” is not mentioned once in the Constitution. Most of the Founders distrusted pure democracy and equated it to mob rule. James Madison believed a democracy could lead to factions coming together to impose their will on those not members of their coalition. Political parties are also absent in our Constitution.

Steve Forbes writes that the Founders “understood that tyranny wasn’t likely to come from a foreign invasion but from the step-by-step erosion of our freedoms by an expanding government.” The Progressive state continues to grow, limiting our freedoms. The Code of Federal Regulations now has some 80,000 pages. Nearly 75,000 pages in the IRS Code. California has 29 Regulatory Codes with additional thousands of pages. The soft tyranny is well underway.

Boston civil liberties lawyer, Harvey Silvergate's book, *Three Felonies a Day: How the Feds Target the Innocent*, should be on the Progressive’s recommended reading list. Big Government can get you whenever it wants:

- A Virginia 11-year old girl, who saved a woodpecker from a cat, was fined for “transporting” a protected species.
- A fisherman who released some undersize fish he caught was convicted of violating the anti-shredding clause of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.
- A Maryland land developer was sentenced to prison for violating the Clean Water Act, when he improved land the Army Corps of Engineers deemed as “navigable water,” even though the nearest river was 6 miles away.

Progressive statisticians often use the rhetoric of “democracy” but the reality is that they wish to override the choices people make in their everyday lives to fit one of their “justices”

(social, environmental, political, etc). These statisticians claim to support enlightened education of the masses but have a contempt and disregard for citizens' free choices. We require training by qualified experts from either federal or state government to keep us from making choices considered irresponsible. Commoners are viewed to be made up of weak-minded simpletons who need guiding care-givers to aid in making decisions that are "good," "right" and "just."

The Founders understood the difference between a "republic" and a "democracy." In a democracy, decisions are made at the heat of the moment. Such was the case of the recent Democrat sit-in over demands for gun control. This type of haste was what the Founders chose to avoid.

Today's government has moved far from its original purpose - the protecting of liberty including people's property rights to their own honestly owned income and wealth. Despite Progressive intentions and a trillion dollars of our taxes, poverty has not improved over the past 50 years. More regulations, taxes and fees are compounded under the guise of improving our lot. Redistribution of earned wealth is deemed proper and likely beyond the Founders' wildest dreams.

In the 1830's, the French political thinker, Alexis de Tocqueville traveled extensively throughout America. His admiration for our country was qualified by his suspicion of equality. While he viewed the future to be in the Republic, he concluded it was unclear whether it would evolve toward liberty or a new kind of despotism, a soft tyranny.

The Progressive Democratic Party is implementing de Tocqueville's concern: "Having thus taken each citizen in turn in its powerful embrace and shaped him to its will, government then extends its embrace to include the whole of society. It covers the whole of social life with a network of petty, complicated rules that are both minute and uniform It does not break men's will, but softens, bends, and guides it; it seldom enjoins, but often inhibits, actions; it does not destroy anything, but prevents much from being born; it is not at all tyrannical, but it hinders, restrains, enervates, stifles, and stultifies so much that in the end each nation is no more than a flock of timid and hardworking animals with the government as its shepherd."