



TRANSFORMING WASHINGTON *(with particular attention to partisanship)*

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The five Act 2 non-partisan reform amendments will transform the culture of Washington by addressing the systemic problems of our federal government and imposing new rules on government officials: rules of accountability, discipline, transparency, civility, and the rule of law. Act 2 suggests that there are two keys to successful reform:

1. The states must call for an open convention pursuant to the Constitution's Article V that will consider all suggestions for constructive reform, rather than calling a restricted-agenda convention.
2. The reforms must be non-partisan and should be focused first on systemic changes that will transform Washington into an effective government that encourages collegial debate, rather than continuing to be drawn into endless partisan clashes on policy issues.

After we have completed the transformation of Washington through these reforms, we will be better positioned to deal with policy issues in a constructive atmosphere.

We would see immediate and near-term results from the Act 2 reforms; they would . . .

- **establish** an organizational unit external to the three federal branches to enforce the law against government officials, eliminating the need for special counsels; it would be staffed with political centrists, controlled by the states in a States' Compact group, and administered in a non-partisan manner.
- **recognize and codify** the right of voters to quiet enjoyment of their elections, without outside interference; this will properly acknowledge the

importance of free and fair elections in the republic and sharply reduce the tsunami of money that flows in these elections.

- **require** that all claims on the federal purse, including tax code allowances, must be presented for public view in the annual budget process and be authorized by budget resolutions. This will impose transparency on congressional handouts and force attention on our national priorities and capabilities.
- **require** that the budget be balanced in normal years; provide for emergency deficits but require full fiscal recovery within eight years; also cap the federal debt at the level of the annual Gross National Product.
- **block issuance** of new domestic orders and regulations from the executive branch and agencies with a simple resolution from either the House or Senate; this will force the originator to seek normal legislative approval for actions that have been challenged as unlawful or are deemed to be more properly the subject matter of legislation.
- **utilize** the organizational unit that was created to enforce the law against government officials as the home for all departments and agencies that should be protected from partisan meddling by executive or legislative officials; this will curtail the practice of using governmental power to advance a political agenda by intimidating citizens.
- **offer** citizens a place to lodge complaints of impropriety by officials (including the police); publicize actions taken in response to such complaints.
- **increase** the effectiveness and vitality of the federal government by placing limits on service in the federal judiciary and Congress; this will eliminate the insidious threat of age-related infirmities and clear out pockets of personal power that tend to grow over time.

These reforms would strengthen the pillars of the republic and fortify our personal freedoms. But, as wonderful as all that will be, there are more possibilities yet to come . . .

Perhaps our most severe, pervasive problems today are the hyper-partisanship and lust for power of the two major political parties. But the Accountability Amendment (which is the linchpin of the Act 2 reforms) will create an

organizational unit that will be a game-changer: it will establish a beachhead in the government for non-partisan activity, and this promises to have profound impact on the political power structure. The new States' Compact group will be the watchdog of the federal government, but it will be a watchdog with teeth! It will have the authority to impose discipline, penalties, and reprimands, and to mandate new procedures to improve operations and prevent malfeasance.

It will also be well positioned to set up a research section that studies and experiments with new non-partisan approaches to our problems, seeking common sense solutions that are lawful, appropriate, and will enhance the health of the republic. Here are some areas that the researchers might study:

- Gerrymandering of election district boundaries
- Rules of behavior at public demonstrations, including at campuses and schools
- Standards for the media to clarify responsibilities of the fourth estate which are implicit in their constitutional preference
- Standards of conduct for candidates and federal officials to curtail personal attacks on opponents
- Review of citizenship training in our schools
- Evaluation of how our freedoms compare with those of other nations
- Issue suggested practices to the states, not mandates

If we successfully establish the non-partisan States' Compact, there is no limit to what we might achieve!

A Hopeful Takeaway on Partisanship

The public is disgusted with and weary of the severe partisanship in Washington, leaving many citizens skeptical of any attempt to create a non-partisan function there. They will say it is not possible and our situation is hopeless. However, Act 2 disagrees with this doomsday outlook. In the essay on the Accountability Amendment, it has this to say on the subject:

“Organizations tend to adapt to and embrace the philosophy of their leaders, and with the careful selection of political centrists for the leadership positions of the Compact, it could quickly institutionalize a

non-partisan atmosphere in this group. That would be a big plus for the republic, and could be a first step toward a more civil and productive political culture."

Has anyone else offered a solution for the toxic partisanship in our federal government today? If so, we would like to hear it. There are few problems in America that are as damaging to the republic as this. It is time we put an end to it!!



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