

# The Great American Experiment

Given the turbulence of today's political rhetoric, let us remember the values that inspired the great American experiment. The fundamental values and principles of the United States of America were established and recorded in these 3 documents:

From **The Declaration of Independence**: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . .*

From **The US Constitution**: *We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. . .*

From **The Bill of Rights**: *Amendment I. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. . .*

(<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs>)

## Core Values

- ▶ Equality, individual liberty, and popular sovereignty are fundamental American values.
- ▶ Power resides in the people, who express their will via free and fair elections: no king, no dictator.
- ▶ Our democracy rests on the rule of law.
- ▶ We are one nation, not 50 feudalities. *E pluribus unum.*
- ▶ An independent press is essential to our democracy.
- ▶ No religion is to be supported or abolished by the government.
- ▶ The majority rules, but the rights of the minority are protected.

**Furthermore: Democracy requires an ethical government**, free from corruption and cronyism. Ethical government is why **successful democracies have healthier, better educated citizens and more prosperous economies** than other forms of governments. Therefore:

- ▶ Officials must act with honesty and be accountable to the people.
- ▶ Our military takes an oath to the Constitution, not to a single leader.
- ▶ The ethical operation of government relies on an independent, nonpartisan civil service.
- ▶ Subject matter expertise is essential to good government. Sound, fair decisions require truth, facts, science, and evidence. Mere opinion and belief, no matter how fervently held, are not substitutes for objective data, honestly collected, methodically analyzed, and logically interpreted.
- ▶ Compromise is essential to governance. Civil discourse, not threats and violence, must be the means to resolve differences.

**Finally:** America's role in the world gives outsized importance to its decisions and actions.

O, let America be America again—  
The land that never has been yet—  
And yet must be. . .  
—Langston Hughes

With grateful acknowledgment to Ilean Galloway and Jennifer Rubin, among others, for inspiration.

<https://www.sandvote.org>