

ELECTORS and the ELECTORAL COLLEGE

See Article 2 Section 1 and Amendment 12.

My Remarks

Electors and the Electoral College have to be the most unique thing in the Constitution!

The Founders did not trust the Legislators to elect the President and Vice-President because then they would control them - they also feared that the People, in a popular vote, could be swayed by ignorance, lies, faulty reporting, hollow promises, and flashy campaigns. Sounds familiar to me!

“Popular rule is not democracy... It gives the people what they want, not what they need.”
Senator Padme Naberrie, STAR WARS: Attack of the Clones

The Electoral College might be viewed as the one, single ‘check and balance’ the Constitution imposes upon the People. It is an ‘indirect popular vote’ wherein an impromptu body of legislature is created every four years to cast the official votes. The idea was to choose wise, mature persons who fully understood ‘the big picture’ better than the general population - which at that time were mostly farmers and others who worked 16 hours a day and did not have the time and, in those days, the ability to keep up on current events... many could not even read.

These chosen Electors would meet in their respective states at a place chosen by the state to cast their votes - this way they didn't even meet as a group, making lobbying even harder. They would vote according to the guidelines set down within the State. Originally, they would, of course, be influenced by the popular vote of those they were representing, but if they knew things about the candidates the general population did not take into

account, they are free to vote accordingly.

However, many states now require all their electoral votes to go to whomever won the state’s popular vote. The choosing of the electors and any laws governing them and their vote are established by the individual States.

One great advantage to this system is that it forces the candidates to take notice of something other than the large populations centers where the minority of the population actually lives. Large tracts of the country being rural, the large cities could easily dominate the elections, retaining the candidate’s full attention and forcing their will upon the actual majority of the population. The Electoral system gives a more-fair voice to the majority of the citizens who do not live in the few large cities and high-electoral-vote states. It forces candidates to take notice of something other than the four or five states worth the most electoral votes. It forces a responsibility upon the candidate to more-fully represent the full majority.

An example of this occurred in the 2000 presidential election. Although Vice-President Al Gore took the popular vote, he did it by almost exclusively winning the large, heavily-urban areas, leaving the vast majority of the country to his opponent.

According to the FEDERAL REGISTER, the final popular vote was:

Popular vote:

Gore: 50,994,082

Bush: 50,461,080

(won by 533,002 votes)

HOWEVER, -
Majority of States:
Bush: 30
Gore: 21

Majority of Counties:
Bush: 2,434
Gore: 677

Majority of Square Miles:
Bush: 2,427,000
Gore: 580,000

So, through the Electoral process, even though Gore barely won the popular vote, Bush won the election by taking the majority of the states – hence, the majority of the country – as opposed to the majority of the population.

Without the Electoral College, all a person

would need to do is win New York, Florida, Illinois, Texas, and California to win a seat in the White House. The Electoral College gives the other forty-five states a voice in their government.

This is not the first time the President won with a minority of the popular vote:

-- John Quincy Adams was elected by electoral vote; his opponent winning the popular vote.

-- Thomas Jefferson was elected by the House of Representatives – he and one of his opponents had an equal number of electoral votes, so the House became the tie-breaker. They voted 38 times before they had a winner.

-- Abraham Lincoln moved into the White House with only 38% of the popular vote - this was in a day when there were still more than two active political parties.

Those who still harbor the false notion that our system elects the president by popular vote simply do not understand their government.

The Wisdom of the Electoral College

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As I write this column, President Bush has just been declared the winner, winning both the popular, and the more important Electoral College, vote.

As is always the case, many Americans are confused over just what is the Electoral College, and whether or not we ought to stick to a system that occasionally produces an election victory for a candidate who lost the popular vote (as was the case in 2000).

You'll remember from last time around that Al Gore won the popular vote by capturing the vote of a few big states and a few big cities, but lost the election because George W. Bush had, by far, the majority of the states, the majority of the counties, and the majority of the geographic land mass in his favor. Even though President Bush had fewer popular votes, he won the Electoral College vote, and thus the election.

The reaction of the losing party was predictable. They denounced the system, called the victory illegitimate, blamed their loss (in part) on an outmoded Electoral College, and introduced legislation to abolish it.

Thankfully, has not been the big furor on this issue this time around – though I've already listened in as one 'expert,' just yesterday, called for its abolition.

Despite its apparent flaws, the Electoral College needs to stand.

A Republic – Not a Democracy

To understand why, we must remember that the Founders gave us a republic – not a democracy. And with that republic comes a system of mixed representation with mixed electoral methods that rejected the one person, one vote philosophy. The thing that the Founding Fathers wanted to avoid

was the mindset that, "like it or not, the majority is the voice of God."

There were reasons. Madison noted that the idea was to multiply and complicate the numbers of parties and interests that compete for power, and to multiply and complicate how they compete for power, in order to place a substantial check on centralization, that enemy of all freedom.

Some of us forget that the old motto, "absolute power corrupts absolutely," had a sister motto, "the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands (whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective), may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

That is, there were three extremes that tended to tyranny – monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. That's right, democracy was on the list, and was considered by most of the Founders the worst form of all.

Madison noted in Federalist 10, "Democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention, have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have ever been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths."

Likewise, Hamilton noted at the Constitutional Convention that "the fate of Republican government" hinges upon "due stability." Democracies were not stable. "If we incline too much to democracy, we shall soon shoot into a monarchy."

He recommended a "moderate government" – that is, a mixed republic, something which incorporates the democratic/representative principle, yet is far more ingenious than mere mob rule.

An Old Debate

The bottom line is that – at least, according to the Founding Fathers – you can't have one group, or a few large states with a few large cities, calling all the shots. And when you think about it, most Americans really don't believe that places like New York City and L.A. ought to be empowered to tell all the rest of us how we must live.

But maybe they (or some of their grasping politicians) do.

This is an old discussion. You'll remember from history that during the time of the Constitutional Convention, the large states thought it only fair and democratic that Congressmen be chosen according to population.

Sure they did.

The small states thought that idea wasn't fair at all. They weren't fools. They knew it would just be a matter of time till the big states, the big cities, the big manufacturers, bossed the small states, the small towns, the small farmers around.

The Great Compromise

The answer was the Great Compromise. It brought us proportional representation in the House (the number of representatives chosen as per population), and equal representation in the Senate (two votes per state, regardless of population). Further, Senators were chosen by the state legislatures (another check in favor of state rights).

Part 2 of the answer was the Electoral College in presidential elections, which mirrored the same compromise. Under the provisions of the Electoral College, each state had the same combined number of electoral votes as Senators and House members. In addition, it provided for indirect representation via state appointed electors casting the final vote.

In practical terms, this helps give smaller states and 'smaller' interests a slight advantage disproportionate to their population, placing a check upon the larger states and 'larger' interests.

It's about protecting the little guy, which is a concept that is as American as apple pie.

In Defense of the Electoral College

by Steve Farrell; copyright 2002, Meridian Magazine

Part 1: A Check on Socialism

Because of all the brouhaha over the Electoral College that occurred in the year 2000, when a President of the United States was elected despite the fact that he lost the popular vote, there has been a growing chorus calling for an abandonment of the electoral college in favor of a more direct democracy, one which features one person, one vote.

One person, one vote, majority rule sounds American, progressive, and fair, but here's a reminder, it failed in Greece, it brought down Rome, and it almost crushed America under the Articles of Confederation.

Edmund Randolph, one of the distinguished delegates from Virginia, stated at the Constitutional Convention: "The general object [to which we've gathered together in this convention is] to provide a cure for the evils under which the United States labored; that in tracing these evils to their origin, every man had found it in the turbulence and follies of democracy." [The reader must be reminded at this point that the Founding Fathers did not attempt to create a democracy - see "Democracy or Republic" in this Appendix.]

Eldridge Gerry, the delegate from Massachusetts, knew well what one of those turbulent follies was. He warned of democracy: "[I have] been taught by experience the danger of the leveling spirit... possessed in it." That is, its tendency toward what we call communism and socialism.

Madison, the very Father of the Constitution, taught the same exact thing. In Federalist 10 he warned every American that among democracy's many dangers was this chief one: "A common passion or interest will, in almost every case... [combine to destroy]... personal security or the

rights of property... [and insist on]... reducing mankind to a perfect equality ... in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions."

Marx, of course, told us that the chief object of communism was the destruction of the right to private property. Understanding the danger inherent in pure democracies, Communists preach democracy, everywhere they go, with an emphasis on equality of ends, rather than Jefferson's republican principle of equality before the law. Writes Marx in the Communist Manifesto, "We have seen... that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat [the poor, or "working class"] to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy."

That is, use democracy to concentrate all power in the hands of a minority, or a group of minorities in order to overthrow the existing political, economic, and moral order.

The cure to such dangers agreed upon at the Constitutional Convention, was the establishment of a republic with mixed modes of representation, checks and balances, separations of power, and a bill of rights.

The magnificence of the system is that it established a system which made it extremely difficult for power to combine, whether in the hands of the one (monarchy), the few (oligarchy), or the many (democracy).

The people already had a voice in the House, which was checked by a Senate elected by the state legislatures (a check devised to protect property and state rights) [The Seventeenth Amendment changed this so that the Senate was elected by the People instead of the state legislature.]. They did not want to then obliterate that check by having the president directly elected by the people, that is, dependent upon a majority victory only.

Thus, they insured that the president would be

indirectly elected through electors (who were picked by whatever mode the states saw fit to establish), and then they set up a representative formula, identical to the one in Congress, which insured a successful candidate must seek broad support rather than big city support only.

That is why each state has a guaranteed three electoral votes, regardless of the size of the state, as a check against the second part of the formula, which focused on population.

This was an inspired move. Big cities, which are the stuff of big states, while they traditionally attract wealth, are also centers of poverty, being places where the vast majority of new immigrants trying to find their way, and old welfare recipients who never seem to find their way, are found in their largest numbers.

To then create an election formula that depends upon the popular vote alone creates candidates who will tend to focus inordinately upon the poor and uneducated to get elected. This is a prescription for socialism and communism.

The Electoral College helps prevent this. It insures a candidate must balance his approach with rural, property, and state rights issues. It is one of many checks against direct democracy found in our Constitution, and is therefore a check against socialism. It ought to be left alone.

Part 2: Protecting Minority Rights

Entrusting political power to imperfect human beings is rarely a safe idea. Such power tends to swell the head, corrupt the manner, afflict the soul and eventually make war on the neighbor of everyone who tastes of it.

This is just as true whether those who possess such power consist of the one, the few, or the many. It's human nature. And human nature has never changed.

Because America's Founders understood this flaw in man, they were just as wary of democracy as they were of oligarchy and monarchy.

In Part 1, brought to the stand were American Founders Edmund Randolph, Eldridge Gerry and James Madison to testify that the natural byproduct of pure democracy is socialism. This they knew to be true because any form of absolute power will as the maxim declares, "tend to corrupt absolutely." Democracy is absolute power in the hands of the majority - a majority who will eventually, especially in times of moral decline, vote to themselves advantages over minorities.

By minority, the Founders meant almost anything. It could refer to the rich, the merchant, the small state, the immigrant, the unpopular religious sect or viewpoint, or a thousand other things.

But the Founders had a cure, a mixed republic, which ingeniously created various centers of powers, divisions of powers and modes of representation with two objects in mind: Number one, to reach out and represent as many groups as possible (generally in broad sweeps); and number two, to make it extremely difficult for any one group to ever become a majority over all the others.

This is the genius of republicanism: to prevent the people from producing "a mandate" for government, but rather keep the government so locked up in gridlock that competing power centers will only come together on policies which are universally acceptable to all. (See Federalist 51) The electoral college was part of this plan, and it was a brilliant idea.

Discovering a Mixed Representative Formula

The Founders considered at least 10 different plans to elect the president, only one of which was by the direct election of the people. But as we know, the one which stuck was the indirect election of the president by electors chosen by the states.

The formula mirrors the representative plan for each state in the U.S. Congress. Therefore:

-- each state is guaranteed two electoral votes (as per their two votes in the U.S. Senate);

-- additionally, each state has electoral votes apportioned according to the size of the state's population as determined in the Census (as per their assigned numbers in the U.S. House);

-- thus, if your state's congressional delegation consists of three U.S. House members and two U.S. Senators as does mine in Nevada, then the electoral vote in your state is five.

This feature was incorporated consistent with the "Great Compromise" in the Constitutional Convention over congressional representation. That is, each state's two votes in the Senate protect the sovereignty of the smaller states (an equality of states rule), while each state's proportional representation in the House favor fairness for the larger states (an inequality of states rule).

This is a republican governmental feature which forces at least one of the candidates, usually both, to seek broad support rather than local or regional support, which in turns tends to favor the protection of state sovereignty, the cultural and religious values of rural America and ethnic minority rights.

Let's look at this.

Rights of Small States

As just stated, if one half of the electoral formula is proportionate to population, while the other half - the two votes per state - is not, the former quality favors the interests of the larger states and thus strict majority rule, while the latter equality gives smaller states a disproportionate advantage, and thus a check on this advantage, in favor of the little guy.

Individually, this two vote small state check on larger states is helpful; collectively, the small state check can be powerful. William C. Kimberling, deputy director of the Federal Election Commission, Office of Election Administration gives us an example:

"In 1988 ... the combined voting age population (3,119,000) of the seven least populous jurisdiction of Alaska, Delaware, the District of Columbia, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming carried the same voting strength in the Electoral College (21 electoral votes) as the 9,614,000 persons of voting age in the State of Florida. Each Floridian's potential vote, then, carried about one third the weight of a potential vote in the other States listed."

This Electoral College feature protects small states, lending a hand to equality in their regard. We ought to leave it alone.

Rural, Cultural, and Religious Values

As the above example illustrate, candidates for the presidency are forced to find a message that appeals to smaller but collectively valuable population centers, a vital check on large states. But this is more than just a protection clause for the interests of the smaller states, it is also a protection clause for the religious and cultural values which sustain the liberties of a nation.

This meant a great deal to Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson believed that it was on the farm, on the ranch, and in small-towns where America would find the moral values which temper and preserve liberty - while it was in industrial society and in big cities where these values would be derided and true liberty would most easily be destroyed by a love of luxury, indolence, amusement and pleasure.

Jefferson wrote to Madison: "I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries; as long as they are chiefly agricultural ... When they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe."

We only have to observe the elitist lifestyles, the rampant crime, the moral decay, the welfare enrollment percentages and the lower public school performance levels which prevail in big cities today, to understand that Jefferson was right. These big

city forces raise a hue and cry for more and more government invasion into private and public life.

And it does work. Consider how the big city, liberal, gun control advocates, were in election 2000, by their own admission, forced to back down because the rural campaign trail unveiled a different perspective, that is the prospect of hundreds and hundreds of small towns where people use guns responsibly for hunting, target practicing and self defense, the latter especially being the intent of the second amendment. Similarly, how the Republican candidate was persuaded to take a public stand against abortion, because his electoral base was projected to be strongest in rural America.

For a free people to long survive, the bedrock values of virtue, religion and education - more prevalent in rural communities - must sufficiently offset their opposites. Inasmuch as the electoral college permits rural states to band together and wield an influence disproportionate to their numbers, this Jeffersonian wish is accomplished through the electoral college. His fellow founders had it right. We ought to leave it alone

Minority Rights

At the National Democratic Convention, in April of 1860, Yancy gave one of the world's most famous orations. In it he stated: "Constitutions are made solely for the protection of the minorities in government, and for the guidance of majorities."

An example of how the Electoral College helps is found in the September 30th - October 6th 2000 edition of "The Economist." In the piece titled "Yo Te Quiro Mucho," we read:

"Latinos cluster in some of the most populous, and, therefore electorally desirable, states. California, Florida, New York, Illinois and Texas, the five states with the largest Latino populations, account between them for 166 electoral college votes, 61% of the total needed for victory. In a close race ... any identifiable bloc gets attention, and Latinos are both numerous and well-placed."

Think about this. Latinos make up 11.7 percent of the population, but are a strong voting block that must be addressed in 61 percent of the electoral votes. This does not mean that they will be the only group addressed in those cities, and thus capable of forcing policy on the majority, but it does mean that their concerns, like everyone else's had better be addressed by the candidates. And so they are.

This Electoral College feature helps protect minority rights. We ought to leave it alone.

The Founders in their wisdom devised a representative plan, which although imperfect, does a better job than any other political machinery in the world to address and protect the across-the-board interests of a nation. Or in other words, it does this in a manner, said Madison, "[which comprehends] in ... society so many separate descriptions of citizens as will render an unjust combination of a majority of the whole very improbable, if not impracticable."

This is republican government at its best. The idea is to protect liberty for all, not just for the majority, to preserve liberty for a millennium, not just for a decade. Let's be smart, and leave the Electoral College alone.

Part 3: When a Majority Doesn't Work

George Chapman observed, in 1605, "Young men think old men are fools." And so do progressives.

As the Constitutional debate over the future of the Electoral College has found renewed vigor in our day, there certainly is no shortage of youthful, progressive, cocksure "experts" exuding but one message: The Founders were narrow, provincial men who took no thought for tomorrow - while we, the elite class of the latter days are a better educated, more forward-looking group of Universalists, who are so much the wiser.

But wisdom doesn't work that way. Wisdom slows down, takes a deep breath, looks back into

history and humbly searches the moral and political memory banks of those "old men" for a few valuable lessons. Wisdom knows that if one fails to learn from history, one will ultimately fail.

It was respect for the wisdom of the senior class that inspired the Founders to wear white wigs, because back then, generally older meant wiser.

Where is that humility, patience and respect for tradition today? In a "crisis," moderns prefer to arrogantly and impulsively do whatever it takes and get it over with, regardless of the principles compromised, regardless of the long-term risks, regardless of how they trample upon the graves of their forefathers.

Consider election 2000. One side believed in essence, 'if we lose the electoral college count, fair and square, let's insure victory next time by reinventing the counting process, reinventing the Constitution, converting a Republic into a democracy, and call the move progressive, and our opponents reaction, backwards.'

On the other hand, many of those on the side who benefited by the electoral college, when confronted with tough questions like "why not one person one vote?" are too often inclined not to take the time to rummage through dusty old books in search of ageless answers, but to cave in, in order to fit in.

One person, one vote, one national tally sounds like a good rule, but if we listen to the voices of the past, we might just learn that flat-out majority rule is not the best rule. After all, absolute reliance upon the wisdom of majorities without the balance and checks of other considerations, can get us into big trouble. De Tocqueville wrote in 1832: "If ever the free institutions of America are destroyed, that event will arise from the unlimited tyranny of the majority."

Lincoln echoed the same: "If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen we must live through all time, or die by suicide." Moderns don't seem to

understand that liberty brings with it those kinds of risks, and that to decrease the risks, the Founders put together something more complex than majority rule, a republic.

John Marshal, chief justice of the Supreme Court between 1801 and 1805, explained: "Between a balanced republic and a democracy, the difference is like that between order and chaos." An over-reliance on majority opinion can bring injustice, stupidity and eventual suicide.

Evidence abounds:

-- By majority vote, ancient Israel rejected a free system of judges, for kings.

-- By a majority (unanimous) vote, Christ was convicted and sentenced to death.

-- By majority vote, Greek city-states came and passed away in violent, short-lived fits of passion.

-- By majority vote, Rome changed from a free republic to a brutal empire.

-- By majority vote, the British House of Commons soundly rejected Thomas Jefferson's proposal to abolish slavery in colonial Virginia.

-- By majority vote, the British House of Commons passed the Stamp Tax, and other oppressive measures, which led to the War of Independence.

-- By majority vote, the Continental Congress forced Jefferson to remove from the Declaration of Independence a passage calling for the abolition of the British tradition of slavery in the United States.

-- By majority vote, the Sedition Act of 1798 passed, restricting liberty of speech and the press.

-- By majority vote, in the early and mid 1800's, the institution of slavery continued and spread to new states as they joined the Union.

-- By majority vote (of Southern States), the South seceded, state by state, initiating a civil war, the bloodiest war in U.S. history and the beginning of the end for states' rights.

-- By super majorities, Congress and the states passed the 17th Amendment in 1913, rejecting America's most important check against socialism and federal domination of the states - the election

of U.S. Senators by state legislatures - in favor of the direct election of the Senate by the people. Within a decade socialism was introduced in America.

-- Ever since, by majority vote Americans have adopted one socialist measure after another, until the majority have come to believe that the federal government has the right to forcibly redistribute wealth and control nearly every economic, educational, and social activity in this nation, moving us toward the diametric opposite of the inspired system our Founders gave us.

-- Sometimes, by majority vote, compelling evidence against murderers and others is thrown by the wayside by juries, in favor of racial, political, social, and religious causes or issues which have nothing to do with the guilt or innocence of the accused, resulting in innocent men going into prison or bankruptcy, and guilty men being set free and made, on the backs of others, rich.

-- By majority vote, a president of the United States, guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice was acquitted, because a feigned majority (represented in opinion polls) told these Senators that a conviction would hurt their reelection chances, and so they refused to examine the evidence, making a mockery of the American belief in equality before the law, setting a precedent for later presidents that they are above the law.

-- Finally, This big city/state majority feels that it matters not that the opposing presidential candidate in the year 2000 won the support of 2,434 counties, compared to its candidate's 677 counties; that the opposing candidate won the approval of the people who live in over 2.4 million square miles of U.S. territory as compared with its candidate's half a million miles, that the opposing candidate won 60 percent of the states, compared to its candidates 40 percent, and that the opposing candidate captured the virtual representation of 143 million Americans v. its candidate's 127 million (virtual representation meaning the Electoral College rule gives the winner in each state the

electoral backing of the entire population of the state, including those who failed to vote).

The majority makes mistakes, sometimes dreadful ones. To help prevent this, other factors need to come into play which often halt the mistakes of a misinformed, emotionally driven, self-centered majority. Things like unalienable rights, constitutional checks, division of powers, state rights, alternative or appellate court hearings (upon appeal) - things our founders thought of, but sometimes, we forget or ignore or endeavor to do away with.

Here are some examples the Founders put in our system to check pure majority rule.

-- Appellate courts of state and federal judges (with no jury involved) reverse the decision of people's courts of original jurisdiction.

-- Civil convictions can be used as a back-up to hold accountable those who fooled the majority of the jury on capital charges, and this because more liberal rules of evidence apply. The O.J. Simpson provides an example.

-- A President's veto checks the majority will expressed in congressional bills.

-- Supreme Courts declare unconstitutional laws approved by majorities of both Houses of Congress.

-- Congress and the President can pass legislation to reverse the majority decision of the Supreme Court, or to limit its jurisdiction.

-- Constitutional amendments override Constitutional laws previously approved by supermajorities of the people.

-- Amendments are won, not by simple majorities, but by a tough and time consuming house by house, state-by-state process, in search of new supermajorities.

-- The Bill of Rights overrules laws which violate those rights.

-- Presidents issue pardons (as do Governors) which overthrow the majority votes of juries, the affirmations of appeals courts, and prevent civil court action from taking place in the interest of

preserving the peace, or reversing a possible injustice.

-- State legislatures (like in Vermont) create laws which reject a law approved by the national will in Washington. All of which points to one thing, obtaining a sense of the majority will is important; but the majority will is not the word of God (as some claim), because in far too many cases, it is about as far from that word as one can go. We all know this is true. So who are we trying to kid by insisting upon pure democracy?

Our government is a republic, and republics, though imperfect, are careful about making laws and initiating change. They explore the law from a variety of angles, rather than just the one angle of the majority. If anything, what is needed is to sure up and restore our Republican features, not throw them out or tear them down.

American statesmen John C. Calhoun warned: "People do not understand liberty or majorities. The will of a majority is the will of a rabble. Progressive democracy is incompatible with liberty. Those who study after this fashion are yet in the hornbook, the ABC of governments. Democracy is

leveling--this is inconsistent with true liberty. Anarchy is more to be dreaded than despotic power. It is the worst tyranny. The best government is that which draws least from the people, and is scarcely felt, except to execute."

Some of our worst mistakes as a nation, and by other nations have been made by majority vote. It is only by considering the rights and interests of a broad sweep of our nation that we hope to avoid making such errors again. That is why we have a Republic, and why we have such features as the electoral college.

The tendency of moderns to arrogantly and impulsively do whatever it takes to win, to move on, to avoid having to draw upon the past and think about it, is as great a danger as a free people can face.

Yes, "Young men think old men are fools." but there's more to Chapman's quote: "Old men know that young men are fools." Perhaps, with a little bit of wisdom, a little bit of listening and learning, a little bit of patience and a little bit of faith, some of those young progressives might find out why this is so.