

House of NO Representatives

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Let's Play House

You've heard the expression, 'they can put a man on the moon' It's one way of wondering out loud why modern technology is not adapted to something more urgent than our being represented on another planet.

It's that representation thing I feel needs to be addressed right now. The reason we have representative government is that the old-fashioned town meeting was not very practical for a federal constitution, or even a state charter, when those governments were organized. Technology now permits those who want to be involved in the dickering, debating, considering, and, above all, the voting to do so.

Bottom line: we no longer need the services of those very expensive representatives we feed and house in Washington, D. C. and in the fifty state capitals. You may wish to read that one more time. I'll wait here.

The intent of the Constitution of the United States was something called, government of the people. In more than two hundred years, we've hardly seen that government at the federal or state level and only rarely at the town and village level. What we have experienced is what the founders felt was the only practical alternative. Assuming honest, decent elected officials, representative government is in fact government of the people. That turns out to be a very big assumption.

Enter technology. Assume a bright, concerned, informed public. OK, so it's not perfect. Assign to every qualified voter a personal ID number much like the bank would provide for security. This may turn out to be a lengthy alpha-numeric code but it is important to insure one vote per voter.

Home, or other readily available, phones are the key to the plan. The other ingredient is information. Dialing for info or watching specific TV programs at selected times would provide citizen information. Every week, say Tuesday evening, it's voting time on the issues.

From budget to line items to the declaration of peace, why not the ultimate government of the people with the executive branch bound, as is the intent of the Constitution, to execute the will of the citizens? What better source for the will of the people than those people?

Some say, the business of the country could fall into the hands of foolish, drunken, and distracted people. OK, so that part doesn't change. I said, it's not perfect. Quite seriously, we have reached the point where the concentration of the national power into the hands of fewer than a thousand of us is not realistic. Turning the heads of that relative handful of people is just too easy for the wealthy and otherwise powerful or vocal.

The influencing of many citizens by flashy, expensive advertising techniques might remain a problem but that, at least, will be above board where we can all see it. Super computers, free from tampering fingers, secure as can be, {using two different servers simultaneously} can literally replace not only the congressional stenographers but the congress itself, or, at least, the House.

Now, you're asking: do we really need a president? Perhaps not. But, I suggest we hang on to that office for a while longer. Having it completely under our direct control should make it very valuable and efficient as well as ever more highly prestigious.

We need someone in a high place with power and prestige who jumps when we reach for the phone. It's just the right symbol for each of us who now feel left out to be a dial tone away from the highest authority in the world.

Besides, she can attend international functions on our behalf.

**** Making It Work ****

Let's start with six regions: Northeast, Northwest, North Central and Southeast, Southwest, and South Central. In each, we install a computer system which can process telephone votes.

Back each system with redundancy, complete with lines from two competing phone systems, and tie into a central data bank. We'll need an election channel on TV and a radio frequency for simulcasting. Information, debates, proposals, and complaints should be aired almost continuously and repeatedly.

We're replacing representatives and their staffs, more than 15,000 people, with citizen voters.

Along with other benefits, five billion dollars will be saved annually. Information is the key. We may have to assist some voters with access. So be it. At the risk of seeming pushy, allow me to suggest:

>A security ID number for each voter.

>One more number, 800 USA-VOTE, free call, for national issues and elections. Eligible voters take command every Tuesday except the last three in June and the last three in December. Properly endorsed and publicized proposals and/or candidates are presented for consideration from early morning to late evening. The tally is the final word from the 'House.' Per the constitution, items passing the House must then be presented to the Senate and to the president. So, too, some of what must be considered by the citizen voters will have originated in the Senate or come over from the White House.

In transition or in practice, each district could vote to be represented -- as now -- or to send its collective vote to its 'seat' in the House of Representatives. The House could function as a hybrid as the people may wish. The 'seats' voting by tally of citizens, while no less susceptible to propaganda and advertising, etc., are less likely to be the subject of bribes, per se. Not that bribes do exist or that there's anything wrong with that.

It's really the very same system without the representatives, secrets, bribes, huge staffs, and parking spaces. It puts technology to use for democracy. If this country were not already the envy of every societal unit in the world, this makes it so. Some will say it won't work.

Isn't that exciting? That's exactly what many said about the Constitution in the first place.