

WORDS MEAN THINGS

According to Constitutional Amendment XV, voting rights cannot be abridged or denied by any state or by the United States ... on account of "previous condition of servitude." The question, then, is, just what is the meaning of the word, servitude?

Some say 'servitude' meant .. and means .. slavery. Some say that it means subservience or that it is, specifically, the hard labor a prisoner must do to .. well .. work out his sentence. Lo, a precise definition is at hand, from within the Alpha and the Omega of the Constitution itself.

No dictionary, no cultural interpretation and no investigation as to meaning 'at the time' can be more appropriate than the insight we can gain by looking just two amendments back. Amendment XIII shows clearly that 'servitude' and 'slavery' are not one and the same thing.

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist in the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

"Punishment for crime" is prison time. It's involuntary servitude. Prior servitude is about a party who was convicted and is legally and properly no longer in prison. XV says clearly, then, that persons once convicted but no longer confined, those whose 'condition of servitude' is in the past, cannot have their voting rights denied because of that earlier conviction and punishment.

"The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude."

The word, servitude, not slavery, was used. The evident intent was to include in the meaning of the amendment something more than just slavery, something called 'involuntary servitude,' including "punishment for crime."

The bottom line is that purging voter rolls of previously incarcerated persons is unconstitutional. Felon lists should not exist.

Speaking of 'not exist,' note that the tone and intent of the **Constitution** of these United States is to decide what **type of country these collective states shall be**. That's why Amendment XIII says .. in effect .. inhumane treatment of people -- involuntary servitude -- at the hands of the United States or any state government ... "shall not exist" ... citizens or not ... on our own soil or not.

From Guantanamo Bay to Baghdad to all fifty states, it's time to stop the glaring violations and put our loyalty squarely behind the Constitution in all its glory. More than the flag, more than any group or individual, that's our past, present and future and we'd better eliminate any abuse or misuse of it. Let us again seek a more perfect Union.

I rest my case.

Notice that the felon list deal and the Guantanamo Naval Base adventure are both blatant violations of the Constitution, obvious even to the untrained eye. Notice, too, that millions of people would rather accept these abuses than take their eyes off the TV screen for a few hours. But, when the big C has been totally destroyed and can be seen only in museums in other countries, well...never mind. It still won't matter.

Stupid is stupid and ignorance is bliss. Have a nice day. Can you say: 'want fries with that?'