



## What Do You Think About Professor Sabato's Proposals?

Larry J. Sabato. *A More Perfect Union: 23 Proposals to Revitalize our Constitution and Make America a Fairer Country*. New York: Walker & Company, 2007.

### To Reform Congress:

- 1) Enlarge the U.S. Senate from 100 to 136 members, granting the ten most populous states two additional Senators, the 15 next most populous states one additional Senator, and the District of Columbia one Senator.
- 2) Establish a new office of "National Senator" comprised of all former Presidents and Vice Presidents.
- 3) Require the non-partisan drawing of U.S. House districts to avoid partisan gerrymandering and foster electoral competition.
- 4) Extend terms of U.S. Representatives from two to three years, and set Senate terms to expire in presidential election years so that all members of Congress would be elected at the same time as the President.
- 5) Enlarge the U.S. House of Representatives from 435 to roughly 1,000 members, to enable representatives to be closer to constituents.
- 6) Impose term limits on U.S. Senators and Representatives to comport with the Founders' principle of frequent rotation in office.
- 7) Pass a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget to ensure financial fairness for future generations.
- 8) Establish a "Continuity of Government" procedure to provide for a replacement of Senators and Representatives who die or become incapacitated.

### To Reform the Presidency:

- 9) Replace the current four-year term for President with one, six-year term, with the option of serving two additional years with the up or down approval of the American voters.
- 10) Restrict the President's war powers and expand congressional oversight of war-making.
- 11) Equip the President with a line-item veto to help ensure fiscal accountability.
- 12) Permit non-natural born Americans to run for President or Vice President, provided they have been citizens for at least 20 years.

### To Reform the Supreme Court:

- 13) Eliminate lifetime tenure for federal judges in favor of 15-year, non-renewable terms.
- 14) Grant Congress the authority to set a mandatory retirement age for federal judges.
- 15) Enlarge the size of the U.S. Supreme Court from nine to 12 justices to foster better representation.
- 16) Authorize an automatic, cost-of-living increase for federal judges to avoid the dependency on Congress.



To Reform Politics:

- 17) Recognize and appreciate the important role politics plays in our American system of government.
- 18) Establish a staggered, regional lottery system for presidential party nominations, limited to a four-month period, to avoid the deleterious front-loading of primaries.
- 19) Reform the Electoral College by awarding additional electors to more populated states, thus preserving the tradition while diminishing the chances that a President can win without securing a majority of popular votes.
- 20) Ban wealthy candidates from financing their own campaigns and authorize partial funding for congressional candidates.
- 21) Develop an automatic voter registration system for all qualified American citizens to ensure they are not disenfranchised by bureaucratic red tape.

To Foster Civic Engagement:

- 22) Mandate that all able-bodied young Americans devote at least two years of service to our country.

To Implement Proposed Reforms:

- 23) Convene a new Constitutional Convention employing the state-based mechanism provided for by our Founders in Article V.

*“Can any of you seriously say that the Bill of Rights could get through Congress today? It wouldn't even get out of committee.”*

—F. Lee Bailey (*Newsweek*, April 17, 1967)

1. **Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution states that the President can make treaties provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur. Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution provides that a majority of the Senate shall constitute a quorum to do business. Today, what is the minimum number of Senators necessary to block the ratification of a treaty?**  
a. 18      b. 251      c. 34      d. 67      e. 30
2. **In the 1980 presidential election, Ronald Reagan won all but 49 Electoral College votes. How many Electoral College votes did President Reagan win?**  
a. 485      b. 489      c. 396      d. 219      e. 385
3. **Calculate the following. Multiply the number of Justices currently on the U.S. Supreme Court by the number of Articles in the U.S. Constitution. Then add the number of Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and divide by the number of Electoral Votes that the District of Columbia awarded President Clinton in the 1996 Presidential Election. Finally, multiply that number by the number of African Americans now serving in the United States Senate. The correct number is:**  
a. 14      b. 30      c. 54      d. 27      e. 90