



# *Adults Only*



**A**merica is over 230 years old. On July 4, 1776, our founding fathers produced the Declaration of Independence that said *all men are created equal*. By 1789, we ratified a Constitution that started with the words, *We The People*. America to this day is the greatest social experiment in the history of mankind. It's been successful beyond probably anybody's prediction. We are not just successful in all the material ways, we are a great and noble people. Let me make this clear to the rest of the world... if there was no America, the rest of the world would be less. They had a choice to either become part of civilization or lose all their best citizens to us because we raised the bar. People from all nations flocked to our country. They still do. We built a country that has become large, that says if you work hard, if you are creative, if you are productive, you have an opportunity to take care of yourself and your family in ways that you couldn't dream of anywhere else on the planet. We had a very limited central government and a very engaged populous. We took this country to war in the 19th century because the vision that was laid out in the 18th century still had gaps. It is a work in progress that continues to this day. We went to war in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because a whole segment of the population wasn't able to vote.

In 1920, less than 90 years ago, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed giving women the right to vote. Later, we lowered the voting age to 18. In 1990, other rights were extended to the handicapped and disabled members of American society. We have a right to believe in the “Shining City on the Hill.”

Today, the *bounce* is out of our step. The *swagger* is out of our walk. Polls indicate that three-quarters of our citizens say we’re headed in the wrong direction. A majority say our best days are behind us. Angst is our national emotion. Blame is the political strategy of choice. Thirty percent of registered voters today are neither Democrats nor Republicans. Who can blame them? If that isn’t enough to scare members of both national parties, then they’re just not paying attention. We take delight in keeping either party from

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solving anything, lest someone says something good about them.

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What happened is that during its long 230+-year journey, our government changed... but our Constitution didn’t. Once upon a time we had a barely noticeable federal budget. Today, we have a multi-trillion-dollar money machine. The humble

electees have become today’s keepers of the purse strings. “We the people” are now “We the children.” The “consent of the governed” has become the “begging for the bacon.”

Americans are complex people. We are generous, engaging and optimistic. Yet like all people, we also have the capacity to be selfish, power hungry and narcissistic. If you want to see both sides of good

people, take a look at your close friends going through a divorce. You will ask, “How can two of the nicest people in the world become those two people?” The people we elect, our Presidents, our Congressmen, our Senators, are just like us. They’re fundamentally bright, decent and caring. Once upon a time... and maybe to this day... they ran for those jobs to make the world a better place. But today’s incentives are perverse. The people we elect, bright-eyed, bushy-tailed Congressmen, Senators and Presidents, go off to Washington and they find heaven. They find good money, staff, perks, power and people kissing their ring on a daily basis. Between the cocktail parties, golf outings, foreign travel and media interviews, the first priority of the newbie is to get a lifetime ticket. Enter the lobbyists... line them up, hold your fund raisers, and you’re on your way to a 40-year, very cool gig.

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Oh, as far as those problems that we sent them there to solve... “Well, if it wasn’t for those mean people in the other party, we would be well on our way. And as soon as the public kicks out all of the other people on the other side, we’ll work on it. In the meantime, there’s a corporate jet waiting for me.”

Indeed, I call it the Forever Formula. The Forever Formula is:

*Unlimited Spending + Infinite Lobbyists = 40 years of Washington*

We, the *real* people, pay all the bills and alternate between digging in and tuning out. Then we go off to the mall.

So, now we all agree. There's something wrong. We don't debate... we scream and insult. Everyone's right and wrong at the same time. Our word of choice is "whatever." Well, I'm here to say (with great modesty), "Cheer up, America. Help is on the way. In just a few minutes, you're going to understand the problem and the solution."

We grew up to become children. As our country matured, our citizens regressed. "We the people" became "we the children," and the electees became "they the parents." We bicker about the relationship between the Executive and the Legislative and the Judiciary. We bicker between D's and R's... Democrats and Republicans. We really need a *fight* between the "I's" and the "O's." They're the "I's" – the Insiders. We're the "O's" – the Outsiders.

Now, with too many problems and not enough answers comes the *Adults Only* Trilogy — the three Amendments to the United States Constitution that will make the 21<sup>st</sup> century America's *best*. They're all what I call 80 percenters. As you go across America, 80 percent of the people will agree with all three of the things I'm about to say. And 80 percent of the elected people in Washington will disagree. Here they are:

**Amendment #1: TERM LIMITS**

**Amendment #2: A BALANCED BUDGET**

**Amendment #3: ENGLISH AS OUR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE**

## Term Limits

The concept is simple. It's four, two-year terms for a Congressman and two, six-year terms for a Senator. The effects are profound. Everybody who gets elected is able to bring his or her expertise to the issues at hand, to take a seat in Congress, to negotiate and legislate and compromise and do what we ask him to do. Lifers need not apply. That's the thing about term limits. The 40-year guys don't need to show up. They've got to find new gigs somewhere else in the world that will pay them that kind of money for that little work. Good luck.

With term limits we ask citizens to come for a brief period to solve specific problems for which their career accomplishments have prepared them.

## Balanced Budgets

The difficult part of the Trilogy is the Balanced Budget Amendment. This one is hard. My Balanced Budget Amendment is not like any that they talk about in Washington. It's an *Adults Only* Balanced Budget Amendment... the kind that children like us are not supposed to know about. Here's what everybody needs to understand: when they talk about Balanced Budget Amendments, they say things like, "We have an annual deficit of about 200 billion dollars a year. We're going to either raise taxes or cut programs, or do a combination of the two. We're going to get that down to zero and we're going to have a balanced budget." However, the truth is you won't even have a half balanced budget.

Every year the national debt increases over 500 billion dollars — half a trillion dollars a year, 1.44 billion dollars a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. How come if the deficit is 200 *billion* dollars, the debt increases 500 *billion* dollars? In 2006, we had an accumulated debt of eight-and-a-half billion dollars. In 2007, we have a deficit of

200 billion dollars. You would think we would have an accumulated debt at the end of the year of \$8.7 billion, but in fact, it was already at 9 billion by September of 2007. How does this happen? This happens because so many projects are placed “Off Budget.” Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. Congress and the President are going to chip in 100 billion dollars to help them rebuild that town, and we say “OK.” Where’s it coming from? The answer is, *nowhere*. It’s Off Budget. That means that it doesn’t change the 200 billion dollars one bit. But it adds 100 billion dollars to next year’s debt. It’s *Off* the budget and *On* the debt. Nice! See the “US National Debt Clock” for yourself at [brillig.com](http://brillig.com). The President goes around the world and visits a country that we once heard of, and is now back in the news for some reason

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## Democracy is not a spectator sport

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or another. He announces an agreement, including Loan Forgiveness. Everybody heard of those words? *Loan Forgiveness*. We used to do Foreign Aid. We now do Loan Forgiveness. We make them loans that they have no chance of repaying, and then many years down the road we forgive them for it. It’s Off Budget. If you forgive them 20 billion dollars in loans, you’ve

just increased the national debt by 20 billion dollars, even though you haven’t touched the annual budget deficit.

The *Adults Only* Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment reads as follows:

*The cumulative national debt may not increase from one year to the next. (An exception may be made only for a declared war with Congressional approval.)*

That is not a “no new tax” position. It is not a “no new spending” position. It is a position that says the people who go to Washington have to make the hard choices concerning the allocation of limited resources. When they come up with a new program that costs a hundred dollars, it has to come from somewhere. You then wind up with *real* adults having *real* discussions over *real* problems... the same way that you do over the kitchen table when all of a sudden you have an emergency in your family, and you need to have that extra thousand dollars. That is central to this position. The reason why Term Limits are necessary, but not sufficient, is that if term limited electees still had this unlimited checkbook, we would still be kicking this fiscal can down the road. All 50 states have to balance their budget every year. Special Legislative sessions are convened when they come up short. They don't have an *Off Budget* option and some are *Term Limited*. They all have to negotiate in good faith and come up with solutions that everybody can live with.

## English as our official language

We all came from somewhere else. Each new immigrant group added to our culture with unique words, fabulous foods and a great work ethic. The common goals were Opportunity and Assimilation. That meant speaking English and dollars. As long as there were many cultures, English was essential. Now that there is one other extraordinarily large culture... the Hispanic culture... English is even more essential. In Canada, they have friends and “amis” – and Separation referenda. If we have friends and “amigos,” our “e pluribus” will stop becoming “unum.” More on this later where a comprehensive immigration program is presented that deals with all those current issues.

In an Adult Only world, there is one overriding truth – *Democracy is not a spectator sport*. You cannot talk about *Adults Only* and then leave it to everybody else to make the decisions that

have profound effects on you, your children and your grandchildren. Everybody in the country has to have some involvement, more than an occasional trip to a voting booth to vote for the party their parents told them to vote for. Most don't even know what each party is about.

Somebody needs to go to America and say, "I understand why we're not what we used to be." If we are going to have a 21<sup>st</sup> century

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that is once again an American century, we must become young and vibrant again, and unclog our hardened arteries. We all have the same needs. No matter which political party we support, no matter which church, synagogue, book club, current events group, service organization or whatever we belong to, we all

have the same concerns and the same fears. Everybody asks, "Why can't we get better people to run for high public office?" The truth is there are pretty good people on both sides. But the incentives that now exist make the chances close to zero of getting much accomplished in Washington today.

We could all live with the other party if they didn't have blank checks and unlimited time in Washington. That's exactly the point. It's time to think about our new old relationship. It's about changing the discussion to I versus O... the Insiders versus the Outsiders. This is about giving our country a 21<sup>st</sup> century that right now the insiders are giving away. You cannot have a 9 trillion dollar debt, unfunded entitlements in the 20-30 trillion dollar range and expect a happy ending. Life isn't like that. The fiscal can that we're kicking down the road is going to hit a bump, come up and smack us in the head. We know it's going to happen, but more than that, we know we can fix it.

We need to make sure that our government grows up before our grandchildren do. Prepare yourself to get involved. We've got work to do.

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