

I want to thank Senator Baumgardner for the invitation to share my thoughts with you today.

I've been a public school teacher for 26 years and have always done my best to teach my students the values and infinite wisdom that our founding fathers and framers of the Constitution provided for us in the establishment of our Federal Form of government.

I have used the Citizenship Test in my Government and Civics classes for many years. I believe there should be restrictions and limitations on some of our students from being required to pass this test. Those students with IEP's and SPED services should never be under that requirement. I could and would support this test for our other students, being that the test is at the same requirement level as our naturalized citizens. Here are some of my reasons.

If "We The People", don't know what our rights are, then we have a good chance to lose them. This is a common belief by many of our most distinguished leaders and politicians. Ignorance leads to manipulation, while knowledge leads to independence and freedom.

There is a movement today to stray away from what our founders created in order to manipulate politics and take power away from the States and Federal system; a move toward more power for political parties.

James Madison warned us in Federalist 10 against what he called, factions, or political parties. He defined them this way:

"...a number of citizens, ...who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interest of community."

Factions, or political parties, can be dangerous if proper restraints are not in place or are removed from our Constitutional structure. Our students must be taught accurately what the framers of the Constitution created and its purposes. The Madisonian Model of government allows parties to exist without the annihilation of our liberty, or more specifically our freedom of speech. This is done through a safeguard of intricate, yet rigid systems of checks, balances, and separation of powers.

In order to remove the threat of faction or political parties to our Constitutional System, Madison explained two remedies.

One, destroy liberty and not allow political parties to exist. This would produce an authoritarian regime. This remedy is worse than the problem.

The second is to freely establish only one way of thought. Well, this is impossible, if we are left at liberty to form our own opinions. The free market place of ideas is what has made America unique and special on this earth. And that is what we as public educators should strive to do. Teach our students the "what" and the "why" of our Constitutional System and not engage in partisan indoctrination.

I will close with this:

Teachers do have some discretion on what and how curriculum is taught in the classroom, and just like James Madison did for us, I believe it is our duty to put in place safeguards to protect and maintain our school classrooms to be free from bias and the dangers of political partisanship.

This simple non-partisan, Citizenship Test could do just that. It could ensure that our teachers teach and our students learn the fundamentals in which our government was created by the Constitution to guarantee diversity of thought and equal participation in our government in order for future generations to continue to live with the “Blessings of Liberty.”

Thank you for your time.

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