

Finding Hope In A Dismal World

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by [Joel S. Hirschhorn](#)

For so many, hope is down the drain. Hard to fault them. Abundant evidence shows our insane world sliding down a global cheese grater.

Fish are dying in the Great Lakes. Bees have disappeared. Polar ice caps and glaciers worldwide are melting faster than ever. A global pandemic of a drug-resistant strain of TB is coming at us. Much of the U.S. food supply is highly vulnerable because of imports and totally inadequate government scrutiny. Politicians keep lying. Americans keep dying. Too many senselessly in the insane Iraq war that our delusional president cherishes and our cowardly Congress refuses to stop. Others die because of lax gun laws. Even more because they can't get quality medical care. And the icing on the fungus-infested cake: the richest one percent of Americans captures 19 percent of the nation's income. As the rich become super-rich, economic injustice and inequality punish most debt-loaded Americans, with millions facing bankruptcy and home foreclosure.

Our crisis-filled, threatening world offers these existential choices.

Distraction: Pay little attention to bad news. Escapism prevents pain, such as compulsive consumerism, Internet surfing, gambling, drugs, cell phone and iPod oblivion, religion, etc. Stay politically disinterested and disengaged. Selfishness prevails.

Denial: Psychologically block out awful, disturbing information. Stay focused on personal needs and pleasures in a socially and politically disconnected world. Why bother voting? Why think about a world tumbling into the toilet? Why keep up with all the shitty news? Better to watch American Idol. Don't pay attention to doomsayers.

Devotion: Actively stay informed. Eat up the bad news and suffer despair, depression, cynicism. Cope by finding some basis for hope - something that just might stop some of the madness. Devote time, energy and commitment to it. Something worth fighting for is the noble way to remain sane in a crazy world.

These days, hope often lies with the successful climb to the presidency for whoever is believed will turn things around, take us in a new, better direction. Such is mainstream delusional political hope. Why delusional? Because only a fool trusts politicians. None of the Democrat's promised major legislative priorities for the new Congress have been enacted. Not one! Impeachment of President Bush has not been pursued. Transgressions of Republicans in Congress and the Executive Branch - criminal, legislative and ethical - are so commonplace they barely get attention anymore. Our [delusional democracy](#) thrives on lesser-evil voting that sustains the two-party stranglehold.

Others make a commitment to some cause or movement: like fighting global warming, stopping the Iraq war, finding a cure to some terrible disease, supporting a third party, etc.

Here is the hope I have discovered. It is not mainstream. It goes against the grain. It is not politically correct. It rejects historical precedence. And yet it is the epitome of true patriotism for Americans that trust the U.S. Constitution, and for those who see all three branches of government unable and unwilling to work in the interest of "we the people."

My hope is that we can successfully pressure Congress and state legislatures to give us what our prescient Founders and Framers gave us in Article V of the Constitution: a national convention to consider proposals for amending the Constitution. An Article V convention would operate outside the control of Congress, the White House and the Supreme Court. The wise Framers foresaw that ultimately Americans would confront a government that was not serving them effectively. So they created two routes to propose constitutional amendments, the highest level of lawmaking.

For over 200 years only one method has been used: Congress has proposed all of our constitutional amendments. No Article V convention has ever been allowed. The one flaw in Article V was that only

Congress can call a convention when two-thirds of state legislatures ask for one. The word "shall" made clear Congress' constitutional mandate to call a convention when that one and only constitutional requirement was met. Have 34 state legislatures asked for an Article V convention? You bet. In fact, there have been over 500 state applications from all 50 states over our nation's history. Unsurprisingly, Congress has never wanted to share power and allow an Article V convention to operate independently, even though whatever proposals for amendments resulted would face exactly the same constitutional requirement for ratification by states that proposals made by Congress face.

Have Americans risen up in rage and rebellion over the stubborn refusal by Congress to obey the Constitution? Hell no. Has the Supreme Court made Congress obey the Constitution? Hell no. In fact, a miniscule number of Americans even know about our right to an Article V convention, even among the most politically engaged.

Have there been many organized attempts to get an Article V convention? You bet. And not one has succeeded. They all failed for two reasons. First, they all were associated with efforts to get a specific constitutional amendment. This always mobilized groups that opposed the amendment. ANY amendment will bring out opposition, and when it emerges it produces fierce opposition to an Article V convention.

Second, a wide array of organized interests, on the political left and right, have forcefully opposed the Article V convention. Those with influence over the political system do not want an independent convention to propose ways to fix the many political, government and social problems plaguing the nation. They would rather use their muscle and money to corrupt politicians. They have employed the scare tactic that an Article V convention would be a "runaway" convention that would threaten national stability. They lie that an Article V convention could by itself create a new constitution - ignoring the ratification requirement and all the public and media scrutiny that would inevitably envelope America's first Article V convention and prevent delegates from pursuing nutty objectives. They also ignore countless state conventions that have changed constitutions without disastrous effects.

Sadly, no presidential candidate has come out in favor of an Article V convention, not even the mavericks. Nor have any of the cuttngly honest political commentators of our age, including Gore Vidal, [Bill Maher](#), Jon Stewart and Lou Dobbs.

I believe a convention is the best way to restore the quality of American government, politics and society. And also inspire a new era of political engagement among much of the public so fed up with politics as usual. Conventions do not threaten democracy - they strengthen it. My hope rests with the new national group - Friends of the Article V Convention. It can succeed in creating the forces necessary to give us what the Framers said we have a right to. FOAVC will not back any specific amendment. Like members of Congress, convention delegates have the right to consider whatever they deem necessary. FOAVC will also fight the lies of anti-conventionists.

You too can find hope. It is located at <http://www.foavc.org/>. Then let that hope channel your moral energy by becoming a member. The Friends of the Article V Convention need you. America needs you. Now.