

New Years



By Paul Engel

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- Whether you make New Years Resolutions or not, the beginning of a new year is a good time to consider the future.
- What will you do in 2024 to help you better understand the Constitution, your rights, and how to defend them?
- What will you do to help protect liberty and freedom for all in 2024?

I don't "do" New Years Resolutions. To me, they're one step above a campaign promise. (At least you intend to keep your resolutions.) That said, the beginning of a new year is a good time to consider your future. What plans do you have for the new year? So, while I do not make New Years Resolutions, if you do, here are a few ideas I think you should consider.

Read the Constitution

I know, I sound like a broken record, but I believe reading the Constitution is something we should be doing at least once a year. In fact, if you read the Constitution 3, 4, or even 12 times a year, that would not be a bad thing. I agree with our first Chief Justice of the United States, John Jay. If you want to know when your rights are being violated, and be prepared to defend and assert them, then read and study the Constitution of the United States.

If you are feeling really ambitious, how about reading both the [Federalist](#) and [Anti-Federalist papers](#) while you're at it? These were the essays, published in New York newspapers,

discussing what the Framers expected the Constitution to actually do, and the concerns some of them had about the central government. If you're really looking to go deep, follow that up with reading the [state ratification debates](#).

Attend a Bootcamp

Even if you are not considering [The Patriots Program](#), I would recommend attending the bootcamp online. It's free, and you'll walk away with tools you can use today to defend and assert your rights.

I'm considering doing a few bootcamps online via Zoom. If you are interested, either sign up for one of my mailing lists or watch the website for the announcement. These Zoom Bootcamps will contain the same information as the recorded one currently available, but it will offer you an opportunity to ask questions and get feedback.

Meet your Sheriff

Believe it or not, the most powerful law enforcement officer in your county is not the State Police, the FBI, or any federal agency, but your Sheriff. Shortly after moving to Middle Tennessee, I setup a meeting with the Sheriff in my county. At first, he was confused because I wasn't there to complain. I wanted to meet him outside of any campaign, just to know a little bit about the man.

During our meeting I told him what I wanted to know was if anyone from my house calls 911, I wanted to be sure the deputy that showed up was trained that their first and primary responsibility was to protect the rights of everyone involved. The good news, at least for me and the others in my county, my Sheriff agreed. I told him that if he protects our rights, then I would have his back. Granted, I have a unique set of skills; I can teach his deputies, or write a position paper based on the Constitution. I told him I would also stand with him at a press conference, or testify to the constitutionality

of his actions.

Have you ever talked to your Sheriff? Ever made sure they understood what you expected from them? More important, have you let your Sheriff know you've got their back? If you expect your Sheriff to protect your rights, is it too much to ask that you will back them up when they do? OK, so maybe you don't think you could write a position paper, but you can stand by them during a press conference, offer to speak up at a county meeting, or just help in any way possible. Imagine what it must feel like for a Sheriff, knowing that if they do anything controversial, the media, politicians, and yes, the public, will be after them. How good would it feel to know that if they fulfill their oath to support the constitutions of their state and the United States, at least some of the citizens of their county will back them up.

Attend School Board or Board of Elections' Meetings

Now, let's think about the future. Our children will grow up in the world we leave for them. What will your children learn about themselves, our history, and this country? Since about 90% of children attend a government school, don't we have a responsibility to make sure they are taught properly? Taught the truth about this country, i.e., the good, the bad, and the ugly? Shouldn't we make sure they are taught what their rights are, and what their civic responsibilities are to keep this nation free? Then, whether you have school aged children or not, being involved in the school board is a great step. If nothing else, you can help make sure the racism and pornography that has been spreading across academia lately stays out of your schools.

If schools aren't your thing, what about the Board of Elections? If the United States is to remain a republic, then We the People must choose our representatives by election. Recent history has shown that those elections are under attack. What better way to help preserve the republic than to

make sure the elections in your county are free, fair, and transparent? Remember, every election starts at the county level. Keeping your Board of Elections on the right side of the Constitution may not seem like much, but as more and more people do so, we can change not just our counties, but our states and our nation, too.

Vote Wisely

So many people focus on whether or not you vote, few consider how you decide who to vote for? Don't get me wrong, voting is an important civic duty, but how you decide who to vote for is just as important.

Here's what I do. When anyone asks for my vote, I start by asking them one question. "Show me when you did something to fulfill your oath to support the Constitution when it cost you something?" I'm looking closely not only at what they say, but how they act. Most people are caught off guard, unsure, and reply with some sound bite platform plank that doesn't mean a thing. Occasionally, someone will tell me that they raised their hand and signed up to defend this nation, but most people are all talk and no action. To me, it's not what you say, but what you do that really matters. As we look toward the chaos of the 2024 elections, if you make resolutions, please resolve to vote wisely, not just this year, but in all future years.

Conclusion

If you are making New Years resolutions, I hope you'll consider some of these ideas. If, like me, you don't make resolutions, I still hope you will consider these things you can do to help restore liberty and justice to all. Remember, as President James Garfield said at this nation's first centennial:

[N]ow more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant,

reckless and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature ... [I]f the next centennial does not find us a great nation...it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces.

[James A. Garfield, A Century of Congress](#)

In the middle of our third century, just as it was at the end of the first, the character of not only our Congress, but of our state legislature, our governors, and our county office holders, is our responsibility. I hope you will take that responsibility seriously.

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