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Council of Competence

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Hello,

we have a great problem in government. The problem is low competence of the politicians. How we can move the best people in the nation into government.

What if we would abolish the Senate and create a Council of Competence. A council that should be voted by the House of Representative and choose only the brightest and smartest people in the nation. This council would have only one duty to design bills and send it to the House for adoption. The house would not have the right to create a bill only to adopt the bills from the council.

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[Anonymous](#) · 5 days ago 🔒

That would be a horrible idea.

The notion of having the house and the senate elected independently is to minimize concentration of power.

A divided congress, like we have today, is precisely what the framers intended, so to make it difficult that any single branch of government has too much power.

You are basically defending parliamentary rule, which is the system of government most popular in Western Europe. You can summarize it as a dictatorship in which the dictator is replaced every time that there are elections for the elective body (House of Commons, Parliament or whatever).

In Europe, a continent that has been totalitarian for most of the last 2000 years, the idea of a dictatorship in which the keys to power are passed among a selected few, this idea might be interesting. In the US, which was born as the anti "totalitarian Great Britain", not so much.

Everything in the constitution is designed as to minimize the situation that you suggest.

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Joel Kovarsky · 5 days ago 

Johann,

You cannot be serious. This is quite a wild assertion. You want the partisan House, whose members are elected every two years and often determined by very narrow local and parochial interests, to start picking a "Council of Competence"? Do those people get re-chosen every two years? Given our past history, and the early problems getting the states to even select their own Senators, I have to agree with anonymous--this would be a regressive and far less democratic system. What is the competence of House members to select for competence? Are the "best people" the scholars? Arguably not in terms of running a political system. And then I am left with the cynical implications of David Halberstam's book, *The Best and the Brightest*: http://www.newyorker.com/talk/2007/05/07/070507ta_talk_packer.

In Halberstam's own words:

"The basic question behind the book," he later wrote, "was why men who were said to be the ablest to serve in government this century had been the architects of what struck me as likely to be the worst tragedy since the Civil War."

We know that not everyone agreed with his Viet Nam War analyses, but the point remains--are the "best and the brightest" the best political managers? Perhaps more mundane is how do we measure competence for political office? The Founders--at times competing but certainly skilled partisans--most certainly considered these issues.

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Anonymous · 5 days ago 

My hypothesis is that Johann is European. Europe's love affair with totalitarianism continues to this day even though they mask it as "democracy". There, the notion of a dictatorship that changes hands every X years, is very popular. Where Americans see government as a "necessary evil", Europeans see it as the source of all good things in life.

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David E. Johnson · 5 days ago 

Anonymous

I think you mean to say that **some** Americans see government as a "necessary evil". Seems more and more are becoming smitten with a Federal or even International caretaker.

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Anonymous · 5 days ago

Sure, but the "government is evil" is the majority opinion and it has been for a very long time <http://www.people-press.org/2013/10/18/trust-in-government-interactive/> . Support of government hasn't been very popular since the 1960s. Government gained some brief popularity in the aftermath of 9/11, but even that didn't last long.

I would say that mistrust of government is a core American value as shown by the founders mistrust of the very concentration of power that the OP proposes.

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Johann Quiring · 4 days ago

The goal is it to increase competence in government.

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Anonymous · 4 days ago

But are you European? The whole premise of your statement makes it look like you are.

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Anonymous · 4 days ago

Your proposal looks suspiciously similar to this https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guardian_Council . Every time a layer of "experts" is added to the democratic process, is a time power is concentrated.

The notion that scholars or experts are more "ethical" or "less evil" than the rest of the population is a fallacy. If higher education or expertise were correlated with ethics, there would be no crime among the highly educated. While there is not a lot of blue collar crime among them, white collar crimes happens almost exclusively among the highly educated. The impacts of corruption scandals like Enron's or Madoff's (or SCOTUS justices who think that the constitution is meaningless) is more far reaching than the low intensity crime typically associated with uneducated people.

The magic of the founding fathers was to understand this basic truth of human nature: concentration of power is bad, no matter how well intentioned the people who have the power are. They set up a system in which, by design, there are many ways people of nefarious intent will have a very hard time concentrating too much power. Obama thought he would have an

easy time between 2009 and 2010. He had majorities on both houses of congress, a very friendly press, what could go wrong? Even with that, he had a hard time passing Obamacare. And once the American people understood what was going on, he was punished by losing control of congress in 2010. As things stand right now, it is very unlikely he will get back the house (the more likely outcome is that he will lose ground in the US Senate although not sure if enough ground as to make Joe Biden irrelevant).

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