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**VIGILANCE**  
THE PRICE OF  
**LIBERTY**

# What you can do today to save America tomorrow



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*Vigilance: The Price of Liberty*

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These people contributed to our goal of developing a book that could be widely read, based on fact and reason, without political bias. Our contributions, if it should come to have value, were made possible in part by their efforts.

We also pay honor to the greatest American hero our nation has heretofore ever known—George Washington. We further offer our deepest respect to the men who founded our country and the framers of our Constitution. If a country is to be judged by those that it holds in admiration, then America is truly exceptional.

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# Preface

We are given problems because we can solve them.

—Megan Zwerling

Politics have always been a hot topic in my house. Current events were discussed, both sides of a debate were argued, and propositions were analyzed before a vote was cast. I was always encouraged to have my own opinion, but it had to be supported by fact. I can remember, as young as five years old, being part of the political discussions at the dinner table. Now, fast forward, I am seventeen and applying to college. A comprehensive process that includes a vast array of essays about myself and all done through a series of thought-provoking questions.

The genesis of this book began with a similar question asked by two different universities: Choose an issue of importance to you—the issue could be personal, school related, local, political, or international in scope—and write an essay in which you explain the significance of that issue to yourself, your family, your community, or your generation. The answer I first contemplated was the immorality of politics, but as thoughts evolved, the following was written:

Government has become too large to sustain and too opaque to be accountable, which diminishes its ability to do the public good. The size and complexity of government discourages people from attempting to comprehend its proceedings. Therefore, citizens become disenchanted and disaffected with government, and this leads to the rise of factions in which activists and lobbyists have disproportionate influence.

This is the biggest problem facing my generation, and hopefully with this realization, my generation can repair the damage. In discussing the essay with my father, he suggested that we collaborate on a book. This work before you is our journey of discovery of the state of our country and our need to become vigilant or soon risk the loss of our liberty and prosperity within the next generation.

Our ideas blossomed when my father and I packed my car in the summer of 2012 to drive from Southern California to the University of South Carolina. We travelled through the mountains of California into the high desert of Arizona, then passing through the mesas of New Mexico and the plains of Texas on our way to the lush woods of the Southeast. In four days, we transitioned from vast expanse of land in the West, to having our eyes kept prisoner on the highway by the dense trees that allowed no further view from the road once we crossed the Mississippi River. During our travel, we challenged each other about the book's concepts, and while gazing at the breadth of the nation, the idea of the environmental conservation movement took root in my thoughts.

As we drove through the East, I wondered how it was that environmentalists had issue with cutting trees when all I could see was a wall of tree trunks and leaves. As I tried to convey this idea to my father, it crystalized that to protect and conserve the environment, it must be respected. And it was then that I realized that we, the people of this country, and the Constitution as our

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founding document must be respected by our elected officials for our liberty to be protected and conserved.

A representative of the people must have respect for his constituents to be able to honestly serve them and defend the Constitution. The men and women of government are supposed to act as guardians of the Constitution, not of their self-interest, in order to preserve the liberties endowed to us by our Creator and the men who shed blood for our freedoms. Disrespect of the public by politicians and bureaucrats is what plagues our country and has caused the focus to shift from fidelity to the oath of office to pernicious [harmful] acts of self-interest and the near financial collapse of our nation.

Politicians act as they do because we do not know the “rules” they must adhere to. Their disrespect originates from the lack of knowledge we collectively have of the Constitution. It is widely believed that the Constitution is an outdated document that could not possibly be useful today because the founders had no concept of the technology and society of the twenty-first century. But the Constitution specifies the mechanics of government with the goal to preserve liberty; and it is liberty that transcends time.

Like a watchful parent is needed to produce a respectful child that is well-mannered, a vigilant public is needed to produce a respectful government that is well-managed. The government is meant to serve the people, but without the people to demand the best from those who have been given the power to govern, the vices of man can run amuck. When elected officials and unseen bureaucrats are tasked with the welfare of the nation but are without supervision, the boundaries of the Constitution are trampled upon.

The perils that face our nation are rooted in our ignorance of the Constitution and our apathy toward a government we feel helpless to influence. But until despotism rules, each of us has an ability to influence the course of government. We strive for a nonpartisan realization that liberty requires vigilance and

implores individuals to make their political decisions from an informed and reasoned perspective.

At the beginning of the American Revolutionary War, Thomas Paine put forth his book *Common Sense* to argue for American independence, and we ask you consider his words when reading this book:

In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossessions, and suffer his reason and feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put ON, or rather he will not put OFF, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

—Megan V. Zwerling



# Victory or Death

These are the times that try men's souls.

—Thomas Paine

It was December of 1776, little more than four months after America had declared its independence, and General George Washington's army was in full retreat. While successful in flushing the British from Boston, the American army moved to New York where it suffered devastating defeats. Driven out of New York and forced to flee across the Delaware River to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, only 3,000 of the initial 20,000 troops remained of the Continental army. Overmatched by British troops and with his army's enlistments expiring at month's end, Washington knew he had to do something bold or the revolution would be at risk. To this end, Washington conceived a plan to attack the town of Trenton, New Jersey, on Christmas Day. The watch words would be "Victory or Death."

Trenton was the closest outpost to Washington and manned with about 1,400 Hessian [German] mercenaries under the Hessian Commander Colonel Johann Rall. Washington devised a plan to strike the Hessians, believing they would be sleeping off the effect of Christmas Eve food and drink.

Thomas Paine had written an essay that Washington ordered read to his troops on that night before Christmas with the opening words: “These are the times that try men’s souls.” Troops would be on the march that Christmas, some without shoes and all facing a winter storm as they made their way onto boats to cross the Delaware River. It would take some fourteen hours for soldiers, horses, and artillery to cross the river in sleet while dodging blocks of ice.

As the Americans began their journey that fateful Christmas Eve, a Loyalist—Americans who aligned with the British and saw the rebellion as treason against the Crown—came to see Colonel Rall at the house of Abraham Hunt, a wealthy town merchant. But Rall would not be disturbed and was given a note instead, which Rall placed into his coat pocket.

It was about 3:00 a.m. when the Continental Army landed and began its march of ten miles to Trenton. Washington ordered the men to keep moving. Two stopped for rest and froze to death. Of the four forces that set out for Trenton, only two arrived, and Washington placed his troops at both ends of the town when at about 8:00 a.m., he ordered the attack.

The Hessians bolted from their houses to battle formation as the Americans converged from each side of Trenton. American soldiers lay blows of flesh and steel on the enemy and shouted, “This is the time to try men’s souls!” Cannon fire from each end of the town cut down the Hessians as they poured into the street to engage in battle.

Colonel Rall urgently gathered his coat to organize a charge; however, during the battle he was shot and mortally wounded. He would soon surrender to General Washington, but before he would die, he lifted the note he placed in his pocket given to him the night before, only to read the warning that the Americans were on the march to Trenton. Near death, Rall would say, “If I had read that at Mr. Hunt’s, I’d not be here.”

Shortly after the Hessians surrendered, General Washington would return to Pennsylvania. For the next fourteen hours, the

Continental Army would again cross the Delaware to return to Bucks County with captured weapons and some 900 prisoners.

For a period of forty-eight hours, valiant men forged a victory without sleep and little food and in conditions that would kill any other man—it was only their determination for liberty that would keep them alive. With their blood following them on the snow from their bare feet and the courage that would try men’s souls, the Battle of Trenton brought life to the new revolution.

Such were the sacrifices and resolute courage that gave birth to America. We have largely forgotten our heritage and the goal of liberty that was so valiantly fought for in 1776. In doing so, we have stepped on a path toward tyranny, and the warm lake of blood that gave genesis to our nation lies a distance that is too far from sight. We must take measure to make our way back to this enshrined lake that paid for our liberty, or we risk forever that which was so dearly won.

## Our Journey of Enlightenment

Our American government is based on the people granting power *to* the government. All other powers and rights were to perfectly remain with the people and the states. If the power of the government was to be increased, then the Constitution required the consent of the people through the democratic process of amendment. The Constitution perfectly specifies that *only* the people can expand the power of government. However, since President Franklin Roosevelt, there has been a war waged upon the Constitution to usurp the rights of the people and for government to claim all power that it can get away with. From this, government has confiscated from us all manner of our money, property, and freedoms. Our only salvation from this usurpation of our liberty is our vigilance to restore our fidelity to the Constitution.

However, the vast majority of Americans have been led to believe the Constitution is outdated or something to be interpreted for modern times—the vast majority has not read the

Constitution! *The Constitution is the “rule book” for the process of governing.* It is a document designed to protect liberty from the tyranny of government. Unless we understand the Constitution and become vigilant to hold politicians to observing it, then American freedom will end within the next generation.

But you say that government is too large to be affected, and as an individual, there is relatively little you can do. It may appear an insurmountable task of an individual against an omnipotent government, but America has done such before. The harms and ills inflicted by the greatest power in the world fell to American thirst for liberty. The incessant taxes and abridgement of our freedoms were foiled by Americans who stood their ground and defeated the greatest army and navy among all nations. We speak of our American revolution that pitted a small ragtag group of men against the power of Great Britain. We speak of relatively few *individuals* who inspired a battle for independence.

The American people instinctively have a faith in the benefits from liberty, and it is the *idea* of liberty that feeds our dreams of a better tomorrow. You, as an individual, have great power when focused. Politicians, parties, political factions, and bureaucrats *will* succumb to a vigilant American people as individuals rise to retake their freedoms.

It is the purpose of this book to take you on a journey of enlightenment from the founding of our nation to your mobilization to be vigilant. It is a journey of a father and daughter who have become angered for being played for fools by politicians and the media, fearful for the fate of the country and vigilant to restore our liberty. From two generations, we have reached the same conclusion and provide a nonpartisan exploration based on fact and reason why the Constitution is as valid and important today as when it was written.

In chapters 2, 3, and 4, we provide a background to the history that launched our nation, a working knowledge of the Constitution, and reveal why the modern “living” Constitution has stolen much of our freedoms. In chapters 5, 6, and 7, we evaluate the fundamental failure of government entitlements and

welfare and the inevitable collapse of our nation from these programs. In chapter 8, we explore the inescapability from political corruption, and in chapter 9, we show how the media is linked to fostering the poison of politics. Then in chapter 10, we offer seven solutions for your action to restoring fidelity to the Constitution and, with it, the protection of our liberty. Finally, in chapter 11, we conclude with our thoughts with a call to vigilance and a prayer for your vigilance to protect America, the best and last hope in this world for the bright light of liberty. We offer a copy of the Constitution in the appendix as your companion.

## Conclusion: Vigilance Remains the Guardian of Liberty

Throughout the balance of the book, Liberty will remain capitalized to emphasize its importance. We draw a clear distinction between *Liberty, which is individual freedom of choice and tyranny, which is government dictation of the choice the individual is permitted to make.* Liberty vests in each individual the power to make choices without coercion to pursue his economic, cultural, religious, charitable, personal, and political interests. This is the essence of Liberty, which is constantly under attack from the inevitability of political corruption.

Freedom from want of necessity is tyranny from a government that provides for the people, but forces them to accept what the government determines they can have and how much of it they can have. Freedom from want is cloaked as compassion, that is supposed to shelter each person from lack of necessities of food, housing, clothing, education, and health care, but what each gets is rationed according to the priorities set by the government. History is long in the failure of governments that proclaim doing the public good by caring for the necessities of the people. We are reminded of what William Pitt, Prime Minister of Great Britain, said in 1783:[59]

“Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves.”

The reckless expansion of our national government to provide necessities has been a death march toward financial Armageddon and will continue unless we restore the constitutional limits of government. If we fail in our vigilance, then we do not deserve nor will we have the prosperity to fulfill our dreams. Thomas Paine wrote, “Those who expect to reap the benefits of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it.” The question that then arises is “What should I do to be vigilant?” We define vigilance as four steps:

1. Learning the Constitution
2. Keeping informed of political events from multiple sources of different perspectives
3. Independently find the facts, and
4. Make your thoughts known to politicians by constant communication with them, organizing groups, and voting.

The Constitution is designed to protect Liberty from the tyranny of government. Vigilance starts with knowing the Constitution because *you have to know what government can and cannot do to keep politicians and media honest*. Unfortunately, our schools have kept the Constitution and American history largely out of our view or taught us the genius of the Constitution is its vagueness so it can be interpreted to modern times. This has made us ill prepared for managing our government. But we do not need to be constitutional scholars, and this book will help provide a working knowledge of the Constitution.

To be vigilant, you need to listen to different sources of political news and verify facts. If you do not, then you are merely a partisan in an echo chamber. If you rely on media sources as honest brokers of fact, then you become uninformed and misinformed. Remember, the media is largely a lapdog for their political preference than a watchdog for the ploys of politicians.

The promise of the book is to provide a nonpartisan analysis of facts and a basic knowledge of the Constitution. To show how we have become disconnected from the Constitution and how this threatens our Liberty. To prove that the Constitution is as relevant today as it was in 1790 when it was ratified by the thirteen states. To establish that unrestrained government power has produced unsustainable social programs that will result in the collapse of the nation in the next generation. We hope to impart to you a sense of urgency to become vigilant and bring forth your action to demand a well-managed government so that we may preserve our Liberty and prosperity.

We implore you to heed the words of John Philpot Curran, an Irish politician and judge, who said in 1790[1], just as America was completing the ratification of its Constitution:

The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime and the punishment of his guilt.