

# A More Perfect Constitution

*A More Perfect Constitution* is a book published by American political scientist at the University of Virginia, Larry J. Sabato,<sup>[1]</sup> in which he proposes a constitutional convention to substantially overhaul the United States Constitution.<sup>[2][3][4]</sup> He points out that after the Bill of Rights, there have only been seventeen constitutional amendments over the past 220 years. He argues that a constitutional convention is overdue and is something that the Founding Fathers would have wanted. He offers 23 proposals for revising the Constitution.<sup>[2]</sup>

## A More Perfect Constitution

LARRY J. SABATO

## A MORE PERFECT Constitution



23 PROPOSALS TO REVITALIZE  
OUR CONSTITUTION AND MAKE  
AMERICA A FAIRER COUNTRY

The cover of "A More Perfect Constitution",  
written by Larry J. Sabato .

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## Sabato's proposals

The twenty-three proposals run the gamut from changing the length of the U.S. President's term in office and the number and terms of Supreme Court justices to altering the structure of Congress, modifying the Electoral College, and introducing universal national service.<sup>[1]</sup> Each of his proposals could be implemented with concurrence of 2/3 of each house of Congress and 3/4 of the states, except for the proposal to give some states more Senators than others. That proposal would require concurrence from every state.

## Congress

- Expand the Senate to 136 members to have it be more representative. His plan would give the ten most populous states two additional senators each, and give the next fifteen most populous states one additional senator, and would give the District of Columbia one senator.
- Appoint all former presidents and vice presidents to the new office of "National Senator" to serve national interests instead of state interests, bring presidential experience to the Senate.
- Mandate non-partisan redistricting for House elections to enhance electoral competition and lessen the influence of gerrymandering.
- Lengthen the terms of representatives from two years to three years, and set Senate terms to coincide with all presidential elections so the entire House and Senate would be elected at the same time as the President.
- Expand the size of the House of Representatives to approximately 1,000 members from the current total of 435, so House members can be closer to their constituents, and to level the playing field in House elections.
- Establish term limits in the House and Senate to restore the Founders' principle of frequent rotation in office.
- Add a Balanced Budget Amendment to encourage fiscal fairness to future generations.

- Create a Continuity of Government procedure to provide for the replacement of senators and representatives in the event of extensive deaths or incapacitation as may happen as a result of a major disaster such as a large scale nuclear attack.

## Presidency

- Establish a new six-year one-time presidential term with the option for the President to seek two additional years if approved by a referendum of the American people.
- Limit some presidential war-making powers and expand Congress' oversight of war-making.
- Give the president a line-item veto.
- Allow men and women not born in the United States to run for president or vice president after having been a citizen for 20 years.

## Supreme Court

- Eliminate lifetime tenure for federal judges in favor of non-renewable 15-year terms for all federal judges.
- Grant Congress the power to set a mandatory retirement age for all federal judges.
- Expand the size of the Supreme Court from 9 to 12 to be more representative.
- Give federal judges guaranteed cost of living increases so pay is never an issue.

## Politics

- Write a new constitutional article specifically for the politics of the American system.
- Adopt a regional, staggered lottery system, over four months, for presidential party nominations to avoid the destructive front-loading of primaries.
- Keep the Electoral College, as the previously suggested House and Senate reforms would preserve the benefits of the College while minimizing the chances a president will win without a majority of the popular vote.
- Reform campaign financing by preventing wealthy candidates from financing their campaigns. Mandate partial public financing for House and Senate campaigns to lessen the impact of lobbyists and fundraisers.
- Adopt an automatic registration system for all qualified American citizens to guarantee that their right to vote is not abridged by bureaucratic requirements.

## Universal national service

- Create a constitutional requirement that all able-bodied young Americans devote at least two years of their lives in service to the country

## National constitutional convention

- Convene a new constitutional convention using the state-based mechanism left to Americans by the framers in the current constitution.

## See also

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- Lawrence Lessig prominent scholar advocating for a new constitution<sup>[5]</sup>

## References

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[hi-constitutionbw26jan26,0,2610439.story](#)) *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved November 21, 2012. "Larry J. Sabato's *A More Perfect Constitution*... a series of major overhauls ... calls for a new Constitutional Convention ..

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- Norris, Sarah (February 11, 2009). "U. Virginia Prof's New Book Aims to 'stir The Pot', Revise Constitution" ([http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-502323\\_162-349295.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-502323_162-349295.html)). *CBS News*. Retrieved November 21, 2012. "... Sabato said he sought to revitalize the political system by reforming and revising the Constitution.
- Seitz-Wald, Alex (November 2, 2013). "The U.S. Needs a New Constitution—Here's How to Write It" (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/11/the-us-needs-a-new-constitution-heres-how-to-write-it/281090/>) *The Atlantic*. Retrieved June 3, 2016. "... In his 2008 book, *A More Perfect Constitution: Why the Constitution Must Be Revised*, Sabato... Lawrence Lessig, the iconoclastic professor who is now at Harvard, traces the rise of hyper-partisanship...

## External links

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- [Official website](#)
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