

## A Broken Sausage Grinder: Is Our Government Fundamentally Flawed?

**Hank Thomas**

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*This discourse on the United States' flawed political system is clear, concise, well organized, and engagingly written.*

In an office of the United States House of Representatives, there was a sign that said: "Law and sausage are alike. Anyone who loves either should not watch it being made." So, it is more than appropriate that Hank Thomas has titled his discourse on the United States' political system *A Broken Sausage Grinder: Is Our Government Fundamentally Flawed?*

The author begins *A Broken Sausage Grinder* with a primer on American history and political thought. He systematically reviews the major documents that have impacted the development of the republican form of government, including such documents as the Mayflower Compact and the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut created in 1639. He points out that slavery was opposed in Pennsylvania as early as 1688.

In a well-articulated chapter titled "What Were the Founders Thinking?" Thomas cogently explores the Federalists Papers, those eighty-five essays written to support the adoption of the United States Constitution. The Federalists warned of the evils of factionalism, and Thomas sees this as a current flaw in the system. Echoing Madison, he asserts: "It is the voters who must keep the factions from hijacking our government."

Thomas argues that the means to correct the course of the ship of state are in the hands of the citizens. "Our freedom of speech gives us the right to say things, but just because we have the right to say something doesn't mean we should say it or that we should sit quietly when someone crosses the line." Much like Madison, Hamilton, and John Jay, the author is consistently reasoned and moderate in his arguments for restraint in the political forum. In fact, he concludes: "Our problem today stems from a loss of respect for the beliefs and ideologies of other Americans."

The book concludes with appendixes equally as valuable as the text. Thomas has included the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the US Constitution (including the amendments), a list of the Federalist Papers, and a chronological list of the political division in the US House of Representatives.

Thomas is an engineering graduate and former naval officer, and his scientific education and military background are on display here. The book is clear, concise, well organized, and engagingly written. Even the most uninformed can follow Thomas's arguments and appreciate his work.

*A Broken Sausage Grinder* is a wonderful book that could be used as a text for a civics class or as a guide for adult continuing education on citizenship. In either case, it serves well as a departure point for further research, study, and reflection on the United States' freedoms, politics, and future.

JOHN SENGER (November 24, 2015)

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