

## **Senate ?... Senate !!... We Don't Need No Steenkin' Senate**

Ask a journalist to describe, or define the purpose of the U.S. Senate. You'll often get this response: "The Senate is a federal legislative body which functions best, as a safety-valve to decelerate the overheated law-making gestures of the House of Representatives."

Your mistake of course, is asking a journalist anything at all. Cable news (especially C-SPAN) has elevated the stature of journalists to the point where they no longer make a distinction between journalist and expert.

The journalists' mistake is in thinking that the senate is a deliberative, rather than obstructive body. The senate is actually a body in which the minority can control the majority at will.

It's hilarious to listen to liberals whine about the Senate being under Republican control... then, for example, turn about the task of blocking the majority's attempt to get a floor vote on a federal judge. That was a process requiring only a 51 vote majority, but the minority forces a 60 vote requirement to get the issue to the Senate floor. That effectively blocks a vote on any judge, even those having the 51 vote majority to be approved.

The judgeships are only one symptom of the machinations of this dysfunctional body.

Look at the constitutional duties of the senate. Everything there, can be done at least as well (with much less conflict, abusive rhetoric, and party-line voting) by the **50 States Governors**.

There are some remarkable consequences to abolishing the senate, and replacing it with a Board of Governors. Think about it. A raft of journalists and 100 politicians would have to find honest work. But seriously folks... Governors are busy people. They must look after their stateside duties as well as the new tasks absorbed from the defunct senate. Of great importance too, the Governors are more likely to amalgamate concern for their state, with the concern for the greater national interest. Such concern is widely non-existent within the Senate as it currently exists. The Senators seem to be representatives of their political parties rather than representatives of the people who sent them there... and ultimately, this is what makes them utterly useless.

Another wonderful benefit is that the Governors are not in Washington D.C. That's really important. Senators get into more trouble when two or more get together to plan trickery, deceit, and other mischievousness. By keeping the Governors within their states, their senatorial duties will be performed electronically through secure email, telephone and videoconferencing. All these forms would be made part of the public record. Voting is, as they say, "by electronic means."

### **An interim solution**

Don't hold your breath waiting for the senate to vote itself out of existence.

There's an alternate path we could take, to make the Senate a functional legislative entity. Consider the following two electoral situations...

1. Every six years, the people of Massachusetts re-elect Ted Kennedy to the Senate. For the most part, the people in the other 49 states mostly groan in frustration and political agony.
2. Opportunists like Hilly, waltz into an ultra-liberal state like New York State and obtain instant election victory, with *guaranteed* re-election. Again, the people in the other 49 states widely disapprove, but can do nothing about it.

People such as these two, are the reason the Social Security System has not been reformed... why the IRS has not been restructured... why tax simplification, Medicare, illegal Immigration, and many other federal improvements cannot be made. With a Republican majority, these people are *obstructionists*, and with a democratic majority, they beam as *socialists*. We the people cannot seem to win.

A way around this dilemma is to allow *all* the people in the 50 states to vote for *each* senator. That is, a procedure needs to exist for overriding the aberrant, provincial vote for a senator in any one of the 50 states.

To be fair to each state though, the vote *within* the state should be weighted *most* heavily, and the vote from the other 49 states should have the least weighting. But we should be able to override a bad choice in a state, and we, the majority, should be able to defeat the minority... Senate rules notwithstanding.

What kind of weighting could be implemented? There are a couple that might work, but the following procedure seems to be most fair:

In any given state, candidate-A and candidate-B are running for the U.S. Senate. Define the following:

$V_A$  = Total Vote for Candidate-A, from *within* the state

$V_B$  = Total Vote for Candidate-B, from within the state

$W_A$  = Total Vote for Candidate-A, from the other 49 states.

$W_B$  = Total Vote for Candidate-B, from the other 49 states.

The USA has 50 states. Let's apply the factor  $\left(\frac{49}{50}\right)$  to the total vote for a candidate within an individual state, and apply the factor  $\left(\frac{1}{50}\right)$  to the vote for the same candidate, from the other 49 states.

The net (i.e., final) votes for candidate-A and candidate-B are:

$$\text{Net Vote for candidate-A} = \left(\frac{49}{50}\right) \cdot V_A + \left(\frac{1}{50}\right) \cdot W_A$$

$$\text{Net Vote for candidate-B} = \left(\frac{49}{50}\right) \cdot V_B + \left(\frac{1}{50}\right) \cdot W_B$$

Here's a simple, hypothetical example that even a journalist should be able to follow:

The people of Vermont vote 2:1 in favor of candidate-A, but the people in the rest of the country are adamantly against candidate-A. Assuming the following turnout, who wins the Senate seat?

### VERMONT

$$\begin{array}{ll} V_A = 150,000 & W_A = 43,250,000 \\ V_B = 75,000 & W_B = 47,500,000 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Net Vote (A)} &= \left(\frac{49}{50}\right) \cdot 150,000 + \left(\frac{1}{50}\right) \cdot 43,250,000 \\ &= 147,000 + 865,000 \\ &= \mathbf{1,012,000} \text{ votes for candidate-A} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Net Vote (B)} &= \left(\frac{49}{50}\right) \cdot 75,000 + \left(\frac{1}{50}\right) \cdot 47,500,000 \\ &= 73,500 + 950,000 \\ &= \mathbf{1,023,500} \text{ votes for candidate-B} \end{aligned}$$

Candidate-B wins the election by 11,500 votes.

In this case, candidate-A was considered a national hazard by the whole nation, except, of course, for Vermont. If the will of Vermont were not overridden, they would have sent candidate-A to the Senate to obstruct, vilify, and impede the *national* will.

