

*Vince Ryan is wrong supporting Gravel's initiative.*

## What Do Most Americans Want?

Without letters from our readers we at *American Free Press* would have to conclude that what we write is having no impact whatsoever. We like those readers who speak up and say what's on their mind. And well they should because AFP is not a timid newspaper but a publication that make its readers both think and act.

Especially well informed and concerned are those readers who are members of the American Free Press Readership Council. By virtue of their membership they set policy for AFP. For that reason alone they are careful readers of the "little paper that is growing fast."

Now the question of burning interest to many of them is the current discussion in AFP and in this column about the direct democracy project spearheaded by former populist U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska).

Mr. Robert G. Wheaton, an AFPRC member from San Antonio, Tex., writes the following:

Dear Sir:

I just finished reading your column "True Democracy in Action" (AFP 10/21).

Aware that our Founding Fathers intended this to be a republic and not a democracy, I have very limited enthusiasm for many of the changes offered to correct the problems we know exist. Too often what seems like a good populist idea comes back to bite us with unintended consequences. The income tax is a great example; before we had one it appealed to populists. The idea of financing government by soaking the wealthy only was a pretty easy sell to those who knew they'd always be exempt anyway—only look what's happened: unintended consequences. Or, chances are, they were intended consequences all along.

And whatever the issue, if it requires (or seems to require) a new amendment to the Constitution, I'm opposed to it on principle. The specter of a Constitutional Convention always seems nearer whenever some group is jumping up and down and promoting yet another amendment.

Congress is certainly "craven." But one must be delusional to see a Democracy Amendment as the answer. I know we're all frustrated and wanting something that'll work. However, I feel sure that if "True Democracy" ever supplanted our republican form of government, we'd see that also manipulated to our detriment, and we'd pine for the old republic.

As for "throwing the cowards out," now there's an objective I support 100 percent!

Our reply follows.

Dear Mr. Wheaton:

Thank you for joining the debate on direct democracy as espoused by Gravel and discussed in AFP. You are one of many thoughtful AFPRC letter writers, e-mailers and telephone callers we have heard from on this issue.

To begin with you are repeating the oft quoted saying that "this is a republic not a democracy," meaning that government remote from the people is preferred to government directly run by the people themselves.

Open any dictionary to the word "democracy" and you will find it defined as "government by the people, rule of the majority." Any one who does not wish majority rule must want rule by a minority. I am sure you wish majority—not minority—rule.

As a resident of a state without the initiative process do you believe that your rights as a citizen are diminished or enhanced?

**de-moc-ra-cy** \di-'māk-rə-sē\ *n.* *pl.* -cies [MF *democratie*, fr. LL *democratia*, fr. Gk *dēmokratia*, fr. *dēmos* + *-kratia* -cracy] 1 **a** : government by the people; *esp.* : rule of the majority **b** : a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usu. involving periodically held free elections 2 : a political unit that has a democratic government 3 *cap.* : the principles and policies of the Democratic party in the U.S. 4 : the common people *esp.* when constituting the source of political authority 5 : the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges

There are 24 states that already have the initiative: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

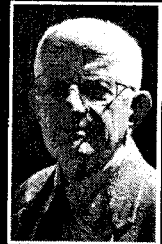
Have you not wished that something could be done to override the many outrageous acts of Congress or the president or the Supreme Court that continue to destroy our country by confiscatory taxation, unconstitutional wars and trade policies guaranteeing the ruin of our industrial and agricultural bases?

Millions of people wish they could vote on national legislation but wrongly believe they are forever forbidden from doing so. They think, as you, that a government without any real input from the people is best and is what the Founding Fathers wanted.

But harken back to the early days of our country. There

## The Ryan Report

By Vince Ryan



were no roads, no phones, no planes, no automobiles, no radio, etc., etc. You walked, rode a horse or rode by carriage. If you had the means you could travel by sailboat from Charleston to New York or Boston. Contact with others was slow and difficult. Direct democracy was impossible so the Founding Fathers were forced to create representative government—a republic.

Today we have a so-called "representative" government that has saddled the American people with the so-called Patriot Act (P.L. 107-56). Under this law once the police target you, they can eavesdrop on your phone calls, e-mail and faxes. They can enter your home and destroy and take whatever they wish. They can also grab your bank accounts, car, your house itself. Yes, Congress did that and no doubt with the Homeland Security bill might do more. Do you—does any American want this?

AFP has exposed this diabolical Patriot Act. But we are victimized by our so-called "representative" government.

Today an international plutocracy runs our country. This elite controls the media and the money and, therefore, the Congress. They have no interest whatsoever in the welfare of the people or what the people think, because with their power over the Congress, the miscreants can get away with anything.

The people are influenced by the press but they cannot be bribed with mega bucks from the elite. In fact, the people are inherently against the power of big money. And time has proved that if they have access to the truth they will always do what is best for the country and themselves.

It is the politicians who use the people but actually fear them. So too do the plutocrats who own the politicians.

If only the people could vote on national issues to override the craven Congress, it is to be expected there would be a change for the better. The time has come for the big leap to be made. If not done soon, it just might be too late.

A national ballot initiative to counter Congress would work but more courageous leaders like Gravel are needed to spread the word. AFP is doing its part. We are asking our READERSHIP COUNCIL to vote on direct democracy. ★