

The People's Political Power and Rights as Defined in Extracts from State Constitutions

Preface

These extracts are intended to answer some simple questions about and to confirm what state constitutions say on topics that are important to this Plan. They are from the state's constitutional web site or the best surrogate that could be found. They do not show the constitutions' structures. Extraneous materials are usually excluded. They are not intended as a definitive reference. The text has hyperlinks to the original data. This preserves the information trail for anyone who wishes to assess the conclusions drawn from these extracts and used elsewhere in this web site.

Highlight Legends:

1. **Green** indicates that the state explicitly recognizes the people as the source of the state government's power.
2. **Brown** indicates certain explicit rights of the people, specifically the right to pursue happiness, are protected by the state government.
3. **Blue** indicates that the state explicitly recognizes that the people have the free exercise of the right of suffrage.
4. **Fuchsia** indicates that the state explicitly recognizes that the people have the right to change or alter government.
5. **Pink** indicates that the state explicitly bases the definition of rightful government on the general case of all governments.
6. **Yellow** indicates text of interest.

Extracts from State Constitutions:

Alabama

[That all men are equally free and independent; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness....That all political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit; and that, therefore, they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to change their form of government in such manner as they may deem expedient....The privilege of suffrage shall be protected by laws regulating elections, and prohibiting, under adequate penalties, all undue influences from power, bribery, tumult, or other improper conduct.](#)

Alaska

[This constitution is dedicated to the principles that all persons have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the enjoyment of the rewards of their own industry; that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law; and that all persons have corresponding obligations to the people and to the State....All political power is inherent in the people. All government originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the people as a whole....The rights of citizens of the United States to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged by the state, or any political division or municipality thereof, on account of sex, and the right to register, to vote and to hold office under any law now in effect, or which may hereafter be enacted, is hereby extended to, and conferred upon males and females alike.](#)

Arizona

[All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights....All elections shall be free and equal, and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.](#)

Arkansas

[All men are created equally free and independent, and have certain inherent and inalienable rights; amongst which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty; of acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and reputation; and of pursuing their own happiness. To secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....No power, civil or military, shall ever interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage....](#)

California

[All people are by nature free and independent and have inalienable rights. Among these are enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining safety, happiness, and privacy....The people have the right to instruct their representatives, petition government for redress of grievances, and assemble freely to consult for the common good....The privilege of free suffrage shall be supported by laws regulating elections and prohibiting, under adequate penalties, all undue influence thereon from power, bribery, tumult, or other improper practice.](#)

Colorado

All political power is vested in and derived from the people; all government, of right, originates from the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.... The people of this state have the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves, as a free, sovereign and independent state; and to alter and abolish their constitution and form of government whenever they may deem it necessary to their safety and happiness, provided, such change be not repugnant to the constitution of the United States. All elections shall be free and open; and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

Connecticut

All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit; and they have at all times an undeniable and infeasible right to alter their form of government in such manner as they may think expedient.... Laws shall be made to support the privilege of free suffrage....

Delaware

Through Divine goodness, all people have by nature the rights of worshiping and serving their Creator according to the dictates of their consciences, of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring and protecting reputation and property, and in general of obtaining objects suitable to their condition, without injury by one to another; and as these rights are essential to their welfare, for due exercise thereof, power is inherent in them; and therefore all just authority in the institutions of political society is derived from the people, and established with their consent, to advance their happiness; and they may for this end, as circumstances require, from time to time, alter their Constitution of government.... Every citizen of this State of the age of twenty-one years who shall have been a resident thereof one year next preceding an election... shall be entitled to vote at such election in the... district of which he or she shall at the time be a resident...

Florida

All political power is inherent in the people. The enunciation herein of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or impair others retained by the people.... All natural persons, female and male alike, are equal before the law and have inalienable rights, among which are the right to enjoy and defend life and liberty, to pursue happiness, to be rewarded for industry, and to acquire, possess and protect property; except that the ownership, inheritance, disposition and possession of real property by aliens ineligible for citizenship may be regulated or prohibited by law. No person shall be deprived of any right because of race, religion, national origin, or physical disability.... Every citizen of the United States who is at least eighteen years of age and who is a permanent resident of the state, if registered as provided by law, shall be an elector of the county where registered.

Georgia

To perpetuate the principles of free government, insure justice to all, preserve peace, promote the interest and happiness of the citizen and of the family, and transmit to posterity the enjoyment of liberty, we the people of Georgia, relying upon the protection and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution.... All citizens of the United States, resident in this state, are hereby declared citizens of this state; and it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to enact such laws as will protect them in the full enjoyment of the rights, privileges, and immunities due to such citizenship.... Every person who is a citizen of the United States and a resident of Georgia as defined by law, who is at least 18 years of age and not disenfranchised by this article, and who meets minimum residency requirements as provided by law shall be entitled to vote at any election by the people.

Hawaii

We, the people of Hawaii, grateful for Divine Guidance, and mindful of our Hawaiian heritage and uniqueness as an island State, dedicate our efforts to fulfill the philosophy decreed by the Hawaii State motto, "Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono." ... We reserve the right to control our destiny, to nurture the integrity of our people and culture, and to preserve the quality of life that we desire. ... We reaffirm our belief in a government of the people, by the people and for the people, and with an understanding and compassionate heart toward all the peoples of the earth, do hereby ordain and establish this constitution for the State of Hawaii. [Am Const Con 1978 and election Nov 7, 1978] ... All political power of this State is inherent in the people and the responsibility for the exercise thereof rests with the people. All government is founded on this authority. [Am Const Con 1978 and election Nov 7, 1978]... Every citizen of the United States who shall have attained the age of eighteen years, have been a resident of this State not less than one year next preceding the election and be a voter registered as provided by law, shall be qualified to vote in any state or local election.

Idaho

All men are by nature free and equal, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are enjoying and defending life and liberty; acquiring, possessing and protecting property; pursuing happiness and securing safety.... All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for their equal protection and benefit, and they have the right to alter, reform or abolish the same whenever they may deem it necessary; and no special privileges or immunities shall ever be granted that may not be altered, revoked, or repealed by the legislature.... Every male or female citizen of the United States, eighteen years old, who has resided in this state, and in the county where he or she offers to vote for the period provided by law, if registered as provided by law, is a qualified elector.

Illinois

We, the People of the State of Illinois ... in order to ... maintain a representative and orderly government ... assure legal, social and economic justice ... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois. ... All men are by nature free and independent and have certain inherent and inalienable rights among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. To secure these rights and the protection of property, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.... Every United States citizen who has

attained the age of 18 or any other voting age required by the United States for voting in State elections and who has been a permanent resident of this State for at least 30 days next preceding any election shall have the right to vote at such election.

Indiana

TO THE END, that justice be established, public order maintained, and liberty perpetuated; WE, the People of the State of Indiana, grateful to ALMIGHTY GOD for the free exercise of the right to choose our own form of government, do ordain this Constitution.... WE DECLARE, That all people are created equal; that they are endowed by their CREATOR with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that all power is inherent in the people; and that all free governments are, and of right ought to be, founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety, and well-being. For the advancement of these ends, the people have, at all times, an indefeasible right to alter and reform their government.... All elections shall be free and equal.... A citizen of the United States who is at least eighteen (18) years of age and who has been a resident of a precinct thirty (30) days immediately preceding an election may vote in that precinct at the election.

Iowa

All men and women are, by nature, free and equal, and have certain inalienable rights--among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness.... All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security, and benefit of the people, and they have the right, at all times, to alter or reform the same, whenever the public good may require it.... Every citizen of the United States of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of this state for such period of time as shall be provided by law and of the county in which he claims his vote for such period of time as shall be provided by law, shall be entitled to vote at all elections which are now or hereafter may be authorized by law.

Kansas

We, the people of Kansas, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious privileges, in order to insure the full enjoyment of our rights as American citizens, do ordain and establish this constitution of the state of Kansas... All men are possessed of equal and inalienable natural rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.... All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and are instituted for their equal protection and benefit.... Every citizen of the United States who has attained the age of eighteen years and who resides in the voting area in which he or she seeks to vote shall be deemed a qualified elector.

Kentucky

We, the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties we enjoy, and invoking the continuance of these blessings, do ordain and establish this Constitution.... Absolute and arbitrary power over the lives, liberty and property of freemen exists nowhere in a republic, not even in the largest majority.... All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety, happiness and the protection of property. For the advancement of these ends, they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may deem proper.... Every citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen years who has resided in the state one year, and in the county six months, and the precinct in which he offers to vote sixty days next preceding the election, shall be a voter in said precinct and not elsewhere but the following persons are excepted and shall not have the right to vote.

Louisiana

We, the people of Louisiana...desiring to protect individual rights to life, liberty, and property...maintain a representative and orderly government...do ordain and establish this constitution.... All government, of right, originates with the people, is founded on their will alone, and is instituted to protect the rights of the individual and for the good of the whole. Its only legitimate ends are to secure justice for all, preserve peace, protect the rights, and promote the happiness and general welfare of the people. The rights enumerated in this Article are inalienable by the state and shall be preserved inviolate by the state.... Every citizen of the state, upon reaching eighteen years of age, shall have the right to register and vote, except that this right may be suspended while a person is interdicted and judicially declared mentally incompetent or is under an order of imprisonment for conviction of a felony.

Maine

We the people of Maine, in order to...promote our common welfare, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of liberty...do ordain and establish the following Constitution for the government of the same.... All power is inherent in the people; all free governments are founded in their authority and instituted for their benefit; they have therefore an unalienable and indefeasible right to institute government, and to alter, reform, or totally change the same, when their safety and happiness require it.... Every citizen of the United States of the age of 18 years and upwards....having his or her residence established in this State, shall be an elector for Governor, Senators and Representatives

Maryland

That all Government of right originates from the People, is founded in compact only, and instituted solely for the good of the whole; and they have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish their Form of Government in such manner as they may deem expedient.... That the right of the People to participate in the Legislature is the best security of liberty and the foundation of all free Government; for this purpose, elections ought to be free and frequent; and every citizen having the qualifications prescribed by the Constitution, ought to have the right of suffrage.

Massachusetts

The end of the institution, maintenance, and administration of government, is to secure the existence of the body politic, to protect it, and to furnish the individuals who compose it with the power of enjoying in safety and tranquillity their natural rights, and the blessings of life: and whenever these great objects are not obtained, the people have a right to alter the government, and to take measures necessary for their safety, prosperity and happiness.... The body politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals: it is a social compact, by which the whole people covenants with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good. It is the duty of the people, therefore, in framing a constitution of government, to provide for an equitable mode of making laws, as well as for an impartial interpretation, and a faithful execution of them; that every man may, at all times, find his security in them.... All elections ought to be free: and all the inhabitants of this commonwealth, having such qualifications as they shall establish by their frame of government, have an equal right to elect officers, and to be elected, for public employments.

Michigan

We, the people of the State of Michigan, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of freedom, and earnestly desiring to secure these blessings undiminished to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution.... All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for their equal benefit, security and protection.... Every citizen of the United States who has attained the age of 21 years, who has resided in this state six months, and who meets the requirements of local residence provided by law, shall be an elector and qualified to vote in any election except as otherwise provided in this constitution....

Minnesota

We, the people of the state of Minnesota, grateful to God for our civil and religious liberty, and desiring to perpetuate its blessings and secure the same to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution.... Government is instituted for the security, benefit and protection of the people, in whom all political power is inherent, together with the right to alter, modify or reform government whenever required by the public good.... Every person 18 years of age or more who has been a citizen of the United States for three months and who has resided in the precinct for 30 days next preceding an election shall be entitled to vote in that precinct.

Mississippi

We, the people of Mississippi in convention assembled, grateful to Almighty God, and invoking his blessing on our work, do ordain and establish this constitution.... All political power is vested in, and derived from, the people; all government of right originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.... All persons, resident in this state, citizens of the United States, are hereby declared citizens of the state of Mississippi.... Every inhabitant of this state... who is a citizen of the United States of America, eighteen (18) years old and upward, who has been a resident of this state for one (1) year, and for one (1) year in the county in which he offers to vote, and for six (6) months in the election precinct or in the incorporated city or town in which he offers to vote, and who is duly registered as provided in this article... is declared to be a qualified elector, except that he shall be qualified to vote for President and Vice President of the United States if he meets the requirements established by Congress therefor and is otherwise a qualified elector.

Missouri

That all political power is vested in and derived from the people; that all government of right originates from the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.... That all constitutional government is intended to promote the general welfare of the people; that all persons have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and the enjoyment of the gains of their own industry; that all persons are created equal and are entitled to equal rights and opportunity under the law; that to give security to these things is the principal office of government, and that when government does not confer this security, it fails in its chief design.... That all elections shall be free and open; and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

Montana

All political power is vested in and derived from the people. All government of right originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.... The public has the right to expect governmental agencies to afford such reasonable opportunity for citizen participation in the operation of the agencies prior to the final decision as may be provided by law.... All elections shall be free and open, and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

Nebraska

We, the people... do ordain and establish the following declaration of rights and frame of government, as the Constitution of the State of Nebraska.... All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain inherent and inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness.... To secure these rights, and the protection of property, governments are instituted among people, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.... No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor be denied equal protection of the laws.... All elections shall be free; and there shall be no hindrance or impediment to the right of a qualified voter to exercise the elective franchise.

Nevada

All men are by Nature free and equal and have certain inalienable rights among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty; Acquiring, Possessing and Protecting property and pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness[.]... All political power is inherent in the people[.] Government is instituted for the protection, security and benefit of the people; and they have the right to alter or reform the same whenever the public good may require it. But the Paramount Allegiance of every citizen is due to the Federal Government in the exercise of all its Constitutional powers as the same have been or may be defined by the Supreme Court of the United States; and no power exists in the

people of this or any other State of the Federal Union to dissolve their connection therewith or perform any act tending to impair[,] subvert, or resist the Supreme Authority of the government of the United States. The Constitution of the United States confers full power on the Federal Government to maintain and Perpetuate its existence [existence], and whensoever any portion of the States, or people thereof attempt to secede from the Federal Union, or forcibly resist the Execution of its laws, the Federal Government may, by warrant of the Constitution, employ armed force in compelling obedience to its Authority....All citizens of the United States (not laboring under the disabilities named in this constitution) of the age of eighteen years and upwards, who shall have actually, and not constructively, resided in the state six months, and in the district or county thirty days next preceding any election, shall be entitled to vote for all officers that now or hereafter may be elected by the people, and upon all questions submitted to the electors at such election; provided, that no person who has been or may be convicted of treason or felony in any state or territory of the United States, unless restored to civil rights, and no person who has been adjudicated mentally incompetent, unless restored to legal capacity, shall be entitled to the privilege of an elector.

New Hampshire

All men are born equally free and independent; therefore, all government of right originates from the people, is founded in consent, and instituted for the general good....When men enter into a state of society, they surrender up some of their natural rights to that society, in order to ensure the protection of others; and, without such an equivalent, the surrender is void....The people of this state have the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves as a free, sovereign, and independent state; and do, and forever hereafter shall, exercise and enjoy every power, jurisdiction, and right, pertaining thereto, which is not, or may not hereafter be, by them expressly delegated to the United States of America in congress assembled....All elections are to be free, and every inhabitant of the state of 18 years of age and upwards shall have an equal right to vote in any election.

New Jersey

All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain natural and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness....All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security, and benefit of the people, and they have the right at all times to alter or reform the same, whenever the public good may require it....The people reserve unto themselves the power to recall, after at least one year of service, any elected official in this State or representing this State in the United States Congress. Every citizen of the United States, of the age of 18 years, who shall have been a resident of this State and of the county in which he claims his vote 30 days, next before the election, shall be entitled to vote for all officers that now are or hereafter may be elective by the people, and upon all questions which may be submitted to a vote of the peoples.

New Mexico

The State of New Mexico is an inseparable part of the Federal Union, and the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land. ...All political power is vested in and derived from the people, all government of right originates with the people, is founded upon their will and is instituted solely for their good....The people of the state have the sole and exclusive right to govern themselves as a free, sovereign and independent state....All elections shall be free and open, and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage....All elections shall be free and open, and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

New York

No member of this state shall be disfranchised, or deprived of any of the rights or privileges secured to any citizen thereof, unless by the law of the land, or the judgment of his or her peers....Every citizen shall be entitled to vote at every election for all officers elected by the people and upon all questions submitted to the vote of the people....All elections ought to be free; and no person by force of arms, malice, menacing, or otherwise, should presume to disturb or hinder any citizen of this state in the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

North Carolina

That the great, general, and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and established, and that the relations of this State to the Union and government of the United States and those of the people of this State to the rest of the American people may be defined and affirmed, we do declare that...We hold it to be self-evident that all persons are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, the enjoyment of the fruits of their own labor, and the pursuit of happiness....All political power is vested in and derived from the people; all government of right originates from the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.... Every person born in the United States and every person who has been naturalized, 18 years of age, and possessing the qualifications set out in this Article, shall be entitled to vote at any election by the people of the State, except as herein otherwise provided.

North Dakota

All individuals are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty; acquiring, possessing and protecting property and reputation; pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness; and to keep and bear arms for the defense of their person, family, property, and the state, and for lawful hunting, recreational, and other lawful purposes, which shall not be infringed....All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security and benefit of the people, and they have a right to alter or reform the same whenever the public good may require....Every citizen of the United States, who has attained the age of eighteen years and who is a North Dakota resident, shall be a qualified elector....

Ohio

All men are, by nature, free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and seeking and obtaining happiness and safety....All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for their equal protection and benefit, and they have the right to alter, reform, or abolish the same, whenever they may deem it necessary; and no special privileges or immunities shall ever be granted, that may not be altered, revoked, or repealed by the general assembly....Every citizen of the United States, of the age of eighteen years, who has been a resident of the state, county, township, or ward, such time as may be provided by law, and has been registered to vote for thirty days, has the qualifications of an elector, and is entitled to vote at all elections.

Oklahoma

The State of Oklahoma is an inseparable part of the Federal Union, and the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land.... All political power is inherent in the people; and government is instituted for their protection, security, and benefit, and to promote their general welfare; and they have the right to alter or reform the same whenever the public good may require it: Provided, such change be not repugnant to the Constitution of the United States....No power, civil or military, shall ever interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage by those entitled to such right.

Oregon

We declare that all men, when they form a social compact are equal in right: that all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety, and happiness; and they have at all times a right to alter, reform, or abolish the government in such manner as they may think proper....Every citizen of the United States is entitled to vote in all elections not otherwise provided for by this Constitution if such citizen...

Pennsylvania

All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think proper....Elections shall be free and equal; and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage....Elections shall be free and equal; and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

Rhode Island

In the words of the Father of his Country, we declare that "the basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and alter their constitutions of government; but that the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all." ...All free governments are instituted for the protection, safety, and happiness of the people. All laws, therefore, should be made for the good of the whole; and the burdens of the state ought to be fairly distributed among its citizens....Every citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen years or over who has had residence and home in this state for thirty days next preceding the time of voting, who has resided thirty days in the town or city from which such citizen desires to vote, and whose name shall be registered at least thirty days next preceding the time of voting as provided by law, shall have the right to vote for all offices to be elected and on all questions submitted to the electors...

South Carolina

All political power is vested in and derived from the people only, therefore, they have the right at all times to modify their form of government. ...The privileges and immunities of citizens of this State and of the United States under this Constitution shall not be abridged...All elections shall be free and open, and every inhabitant of this State possessing the qualifications provided for in this Constitution shall have an equal right to elect officers and be elected to fill public office....No power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage in this State.

South Dakota

All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring and protecting property and the pursuit of happiness. To secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....All political power is inherent in the people, and all free government is founded on their authority, and is instituted for their equal protection and benefit, and they have the right in lawful and constituted methods to alter or reform their forms of government in such manner as they may think proper. And the state of South Dakota is an inseparable part of the American Union and the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land....Elections shall be free and equal, and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

Tennessee

That all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety, and happiness; for the advancement of those ends they have at all times, an unalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform, or abolish the government in such manner as they may think proper....That government being instituted for the common benefit, the doctrine of nonresistance against arbitrary power and oppression is absurd, slavish, and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind....The elections shall be free and equal, and the right of suffrage, as hereinafter declared, shall never be denied to any person entitled thereto....The elections

shall be free and equal, and the right of suffrage, as hereinafter declared, shall never be denied to any person entitled thereto, except upon a conviction by a jury of some infamous crime, previously ascertained and declared by law, and judgment thereon by court of competent jurisdiction.

Texas

All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit. The faith of the people of Texas stands pledged to the preservation of a republican form of government, and, subject to this limitation only, they have at all times the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think expedient.... Every person subject to none of the disqualifications provided by Section 1 of this article or by a law enacted under that section who is a citizen of the United States and who is a resident of this State shall be deemed a qualified voter....

Utah

All men have the inherent and inalienable right to enjoy and defend their lives and liberties; to acquire, possess and protect property; to worship according to the dictates of their consciences; to assemble peaceably, protest against wrongs, and petition for redress of grievances; to communicate freely their thoughts and opinions, being responsible for the abuse of that right.... All political power is inherent in the people; and all free governments are founded on their authority for their equal protection and benefit, and they have the right to alter or reform their government as the public welfare may require.... All elections shall be free, and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage. Soldiers, in time of war, may vote at their post of duty, in or out of the State, under regulations to be prescribed by law.

Vermont

That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community, and not for the particular emolument or advantage of any single person, family, or set of persons, who are a part only of that community; and that the community hath an indubitable, unalienable, and indefeasible right, to reform or alter government, in such manner as shall be, by that community, judged most conducive to the public weal.... That all elections ought to be free and without corruption, and that all voters, having a sufficient, evident, common interest with, and attachment to the community, have a right to elect officers, and be elected into office, agreeably to the regulations made in this constitution.

Virginia

That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people, that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them.... That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and, whenever any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.... That all elections ought to be free; and that all men, having sufficient evidence of permanent common interest with, and attachment to, the community, have the right of suffrage, and cannot be taxed, or deprived of, or damaged in, their property for public uses, without their own consent, or that of their representatives duly elected, or bound by any law to which they have not, in like manner, assented for the public good.

Washington

All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights.... All Elections shall be free and equal, and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.

West Virginia

All power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people. Magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them.... Government is instituted for the common benefit, protection and security of the people, nation or community. Of all its various forms that is the best, which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community has an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish it in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.... The citizens of the state shall be entitled to vote at all elections held within the counties in which they respectively reside...

Wisconsin

All people are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights; among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; to secure these rights, governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.... Every United States citizen age 18 or older who is a resident of an election district in this state is a qualified elector of that district.

Wyoming

All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness; for the advancement of these ends they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish the government in such manner as they may think proper.... Every citizen of the United States of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, who has resided in the state or territory one year and in the county wherein such residence is located sixty days next preceding any election, shall be entitled to vote at such

[election, except as herein otherwise provided.](#)