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## A Public Service for the Twenty-First Century

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No simpler or more eloquent statement of the purposes of the Government of the United States has ever been expressed than these words in the preamble of the Constitution: "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. . . ."

Every time I read this noble introduction, I wonder how many citizens remember studying these objectives in school—or if they ever had any exposure to them at all. I wonder how many teachers have taken the time to pore over these words in their classes, to examine the meaning and implications of each phrase as it has been interpreted and elaborated upon in the actions of the government over our two-hundred-year history. How many dissect the full meaning of justice, analyze the ramifications of welfare, explore the significance of liberty, realize the variants on how we secure it, ponder the futuristic connotations of our posterity? What examples of current functions of government flow from or are explained by any one of these phrases? I am not alluding here to all the fine points of constitutional law but simply to the elementary fact that this preamble alone is the foundation of so much that has developed in two centuries, of so much that profoundly affects the daily lives of all of us.

And I also wonder what emphasis is placed on the opening phrase: "We the people. . . ." It should remind us that government is not only something that serves and controls our very existence but also is an instrument of all of us, a means that our forebears established and that we

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