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### Many as One: A Defense of Representative Government

Since the dawn of American independence, decisions of great magnitude have come to rest on the minds of society's leaders. With their political acumen, prudence, and general wisdom, they have guided our country through times both difficult and placid, exercising their power as dictated by the Constitution, a desideratum for the functioning of a fair and free nation. However, their power is not absolute, as their office stands not as a vessel of unfettered power, but as a voice for their constituents; the role of a politician is to represent the needs and desires of those who elected them, not their own whims and ideas. It is this concept of a representative government that, while with its flaws, works most effectively for our nation, as it ensures that the voices of the regular citizenry, the ones who are so often overlooked, can be heard and respected by the government that leads them. I believe that a representative system is the strongest form of government for our country, because, while it does have its drawbacks, it ensures that the many, many voices of our United choir can be equally heard and respected, a requirement not just of the Constitution, but of the people governed by it.

The facet most desirable of a representative democracy is its fairness; in this system, the government and the people are of equal power, as while the government leads the people, it is the people that consent to its ruling. An example of this governmental balance is outlined in Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, wherein it states:

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the

Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State  
Legislature.

The House of Representatives, with its 435 elected members, is one of the primary bulwarks against a single-narrative political scape, as its wide array of members (each elected from predetermined districts throughout the United States) represent groups from all walks of life, from the hardworking yet near-penurious farmers of the countryside, to the long-oppressed natives of our country, and even the immigrants who travel here for a chance at a better life, risking everything they can fathom and more for the slim chance at achieving success. It is these groups, and others, who are at the heart of the United States, the lifeblood of an indefatigable nation built on cooperation and reason. While each state varies in its amount of districts, each district is relatively small, limited to a smattering of counties or cities, allowing for the chosen representative of each area to properly cater to the needs of their constituents. As well, a proper House member listens not just to the biggest contributor or loudest mouth in their district, they appeal to *all* of those under their governmental care, with examples of this meticulous care being demonstrated by Congressman Brad Schneider, the representative of Illinois's tenth congressional district, a district that mainly comprises Chicago's northern suburbs (such as Winnetka and Deerfield). On his website, Rep. Schneider recounts several "success" stories that he has helped bring about, such as Britney G, a pregnant mother who received assistance from Schnieder in expediting her husband's visa so that he could attend his child's birth. Britney extols Schneider, stating that "We contacted the Office of Congressman Brad Schneider for assistance and they took action immediately. As a result of the Congressman's inquiry into our case, our expedite was approved" (Constituent Success Stories). It is stories like these (and a multitude of others) that shows the merit of a representative system; without representatives, many would go

without critical support from our government, as their issues would simply add onto an unconquerable litany, rather than be listened to and resolved. A representative system allows for ample aid to be given to those who need it, as it caters towards the needs of the people, not the government who rules them.

While the merit of a representative system is undeniable, it is not without its flaws and drawbacks. A government composed of elected persons, while hypothetically desirable, faces adversity in one key aspect, one that has plagued mankind for millenia, and one that will persist until the last breath of man has been drawn: humanity. People are not perfect; we are prideful, filled with greed, indignation, and a colorful menagerie of other despicable traits. This ignobility is not lost on the leaders of society. Even though their role requires near perfection, they often demonstrate the opposite. Governments have long been plagued by corrupt officials, whether it be through malicious schemes, embezzlement, or outright neglect of their administrative duties. Of these malfeasances, though, most troubling is neglect. It is an unfortunate reality that politicians often shirk the promises they've made to their constituents, favoring their own whims over the needs of the people they represent. Once they are in office, representatives have no legal obligation to perform their duties, and can be allured by the promises of financial gain, a higher political office, or other deleterious factors (Raiker). Simply put, once a representative gains office, their promises are held only by the thin cord of probity, and for many officials, this cord is easily cut. However, this issue does not discredit the value of a representative system. Corruption will always affect those in power, regardless of the type of government they participate in. Thus, the representative system reigns supreme, as for every one official who abuses their power, there are countless others who fully uphold the values and requirements of the office they hold, respecting those most important to them: the men, women, and children of their constituency.

There is much to be said about the efficacy of a representative system; while some grievances can be raised against it, they wither against the overwhelming majority of upsides. A representative system, built off of wisdom, justice, and moderation is what our founding fathers intended to build, and it is the system that we are blessed to maintain today. A representative government ensures that the voices of *everyone* can be heard, and considered, by the leaders whose choices affect them.

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