A Second Bill of Rights

1. The Right to Fair Elections: The United States Government has the authority to pass legislation that places reasonable limits on the amount of individual, union, and corporate contributions to candidates for public office and on the volume and timing of related issue advertisements.

2. The Right to Be Protected Against Gun Violence: The United States Government has the authority to pass legislation that places reasonable limits and regulations on the sale and use of firearms and other dangerous weapons.

3. The Right to Vote: The right of every citizen to vote shall not be impeded by arbitrary identification requirements or by the failure of public officials to provide adequate voting equipment; a timely re-vote is required for any election characterized by a meaningful violation of these conditions; voting for national office shall be held on the first Saturday in November, although opportunities for early voting are permissible.

4. The Right to Be Free from Gerrymandering: Each congressional district for the U.S. House of Representatives shall consist of a set of contiguous Census Tracts; the U.S. Census Bureau shall redraw district boundaries in Census years in such a way as to minimize the total length of the district boundaries within each state, so long as the number of people in each district is approximately the same; Census Tract boundaries may not be changed based on political considerations.

5. The Right to Vote for and to Run for President: Any person who has been a citizen of the United States for at least 35 years is eligible to run for the office of President of the United States and to serve if elected; the same rule applies to the office of Vice President;
these provisions apply to all citizens of the United States, including those who live in U.S. territories, who also have the right to vote in Presidential elections.

6. The Right to Avoid Cruel and Unusual Punishment: Neither the United States nor any jurisdiction within it may impose the death penalty for any crime or charge as an adult any person younger than age 17.

7. The Right to a Responsive Supreme Court: No justice of the U.S. Supreme Court may serve for more than 30 years.

8. The Right to be Valued Above Corporations: Corporations are not people; the rights and responsibilities of corporations and other forms of business must be specified in legislation, not inferred from Constitutional provisions that apply to citizens.

9. The Right to Fair Representation: For the purposes of determining the number of senators and representatives in Congress, the District of Columbia shall be treated as if it were a state; the United States Senate shall consist of 152 senators; each state (and the District of Columbia) shall have at least two senators; the remaining 50 senators shall be allocated based on population, except that no state shall have more than 4 senators in total.

10. The Right to Be Protected Against Indirect Discrimination: It shall be unlawful to take actions using indirect means that would violate civil rights laws if undertaken directly; in this context, an indirect action is an action that has a disparate impact on a legally protected group with no business justification.

First draft by John Yinger, July 4, 2014.


Comments welcome!