

COMMON SENSE

FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

ADDRESSED TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

AMERICA

On the following interesting

SUBJECTS.

- I. Of Power, Accountability, and the People's Mandate
- II. On the Rise of Tyranny in the Twenty-First Century
and the Rebellion of the Government Against the People
- III. On the People's Legal Authority to Judge the Government and Alter it Back to Its Intended State
- IV. The Necessary Civil Safeguard of the People's Tribune Council and its Legality Under Higher Law

"Today we are not merely transferring power from one Administration to another, or from one party to another—but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People."

DONALD J. TRUMP

T E N N E S S E E

Produced by The People's Tribune Council

MMXXI

Common Sense for the 21st Century

Restoring Accountability, Liberty, and the People's Mandate



Established 16 December 2025

Common Sense for the 21st Century

© 2026 Kelly John Walker All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations used in reviews or scholarly works.

Published by **FreedomTalk**

Tennessee, United States

First Edition, 2026 ISBN: Pending

The views expressed in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any institution, organization, or individual referenced herein.

Printed in the United States of America.

How to Use This Booklet

Many Americans sense that something is wrong in our nation but lack the language to explain it. *Common Sense for the 21st Century* supplies that language.

You are encouraged to print this booklet for personal use, education, and peaceful civic action. America was built on pamphlets passed hand to hand. Digital sharing is also encouraged so these ideas may circulate freely.

Common Sense for the 21st Century stands in the tradition of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*: a plainspoken appeal to the conscience and judgment of the American People at a moment when the first principles of our Founding must be restored. Like its predecessor, it is meant to circulate, to persuade, and to compel action.

Use this booklet for discussion. Read it carefully. Share it deliberately. Measure its claims against current events, history, law, and your own conscience.

If you believe the People retain both the right *and the duty* to evaluate the conduct of their rulers, take the next step. Learn more, stay informed, and add your voice at:

ThePeoplesTribuneCouncil.com

To receive ongoing reporting, analysis, and guidance, subscribe to FreedomTalk Magazine—The Journal of Truth & Virtue at:
RealFreedomTalk.com

Liberty survives only where citizens demand it. The responsibility is *ours*.

I. Of Power, Accountability, and the People's Mandate

On the eve of our great nation's 250th anniversary, America finds itself at a moment of real danger. Government overreach, corrupt administrators, and a widening political divide now threaten the cohesion of the Republic itself. The clear mandate delivered by the American People in 2024—a mandate to restore constitutional government and accountable leadership—is being mishandled, while the federal machinery increasingly operates beyond the limits prescribed by the Constitution.

The Rule of Law has deteriorated into abusive rule *by* law, in which legal mechanisms are weaponized to silence and intimidate the very people they were designed to protect. Instead of securing the natural and constitutional rights of the citizenry, the justice system too often acts against them. The system is broken. The injustice is widespread. And the institutions responsible for this decay have demonstrated neither the will nor the capacity to correct it.

We must therefore return to common sense as our guide. The cure for a diseased government cannot come from the institutions that profit from its disorder; it must come from the People themselves. This is not a call for chaos or violence, but for a moral restoration—a turning back to the sacred principles upon which the nation was formed. It is our duty before God and history to appeal to the Higher Law that supersedes all statutes, regulations, and administrative decrees.

Common sense, reason, and the constitutional safeguards articulated by the Founders—from Locke to Jefferson—compel the American People to reassert their rightful duty to oversee their government. As James Madison put it plainly, government is legitimate only because it derives its just powers from the consent of the governed, and only so long as it protects life, liberty, and property. In this sense, the Constitution is a compact—a written agreement among the people establishing limited government. It is a social contract only insofar as it is a voluntary, revocable compact grounded in Natural Law. It is not a contract from which rights flow downward from the state, not a “living” agreement that evolves with elite opinion, and not a grant of unlimited power. The moment government breaks that compact—by violating rights or ruling without consent—the contract itself is breached, and the people retain the authority to judge and alter it. A free people therefore possess not only the right, but the moral duty, to evaluate the conduct of their governors. Upon the faithful exercise of that duty rests the survival of the Republic.

To this understanding of the social compact, Alexander Hamilton added a sober warning at the very threshold of the American experiment. Writing in *Federalist No. 1*, he framed the stakes with uncommon clarity—not as a matter of policy preference, but as a test of whether self-government itself was possible:

“It has been frequently remarked, that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force.”

Hamilton’s premise was unmistakable: legitimate government rests not on inheritance, coercion, or institutional inertia, but on the active judgment and consent of a free people. The Constitution was therefore never intended to relieve citizens of responsibility, but to formalize it—to provide a lasting framework within which the People would continually evaluate whether power was being exercised faithfully and within bounds. When that evaluation is abandoned, reflection gives way to force, and choice yields to compulsion.

Hamilton returned to this warning later in *Federalist No. 15*, describing the inevitable consequence of a people who surrender supervision of their government to process, habit, or deference:

“We may indeed with propriety be said to have reached almost the last stage of national humiliation.”

Between these two statements lies the core truth of the American republic: when the People actively judge their rulers, liberty endures; when they do not, decay follows as surely as night follows day. This work proceeds from that Founding insight—not as theory, but as necessity.

In the early days of the Roman Republic, the Plebeians—ordinary Roman citizens—refused to tolerate a government that oppressed them. With one voice and one demand, they withdrew from the city and compelled the creation of an office unlike any other: the *Tribunus Plebis*—the Tribune of the People. That office existed not to rule, but to speak when the ruling elites would not listen; to protect the citizenry when power turned hostile; to veto unjust magistrates, corrupt decisions, and abusive prosecutions; and to stand as a lawful shield between the People and the power of the state.

That accountability to the People is not a privilege conferred by government, but the very foundation of a free republic. Ordained by the Creator from antiquity, it yet lives, though now by the thinnest of threads.

Today, America faces a crisis of similar magnitude. The Constitution affirms that all legitimate power flows from the People and rests upon their consent. Yet in practice, the restraints meant to hold power in check no longer function. Authorities once constrained by law now evade accountability through procedural games, abuse of our legal system, and jurisdictional sleight of hand—the shifting of authority between federal, state, and local actors so that power is exercised without clear responsibility, oversight, or accountability. The People, for whom the republic exists, increasingly find themselves unheard, misrepresented, and targeted for political persecution.

The **People’s Tribune Council**, formally established by experienced patriots on December 16, 2025, is neither an academic exercise nor a media brand. It is a direct response to the present constitutional and existential crisis. It exists because a free republic requires a historically grounded civic safeguard—not to govern, but to ensure that government remains answerable to the People who created it and sustain it.

II. When Accountability Dies, Tyranny Grows

“Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one,” wrote Thomas Paine. This was the insight of the Founders, inherited from the Anglosphere and Roman traditions: that authority is a delegated trust, not a master; that power must never be unaccountable; that the People must always retain recourse when that trust is violated.

In earlier ages, civic accountability was secured through English common law, the restraints imposed by Magna Carta, parliamentary checks on power, colonial charters, and local community oversight—institutions designed to bind rulers to law and custom. In the early days of the American republic, that supervisory function was assumed by the “Fourth Estate.” Independent journalists and newspapers served as a public watchdog, exposing abuses of power and providing the People with the information necessary to judge the conduct of their rulers.

Yet in the twenty-first century, that Fourth Estate has largely abdicated its duty. Media corporations have ceased to interrogate power and instead

manufacture narratives that favor ideology and political alignment. Once guardians of public accountability, they have become engines of propaganda—shaping opinion rather than scrutinizing authority.

But worse than a derelict press is a government that refuses accountability and instead hides behind complexity and *lamfare*. When federal authorities seek to pursue controversial actions that would invite scrutiny, oversight, and political consequence if undertaken openly at the federal level, they increasingly rely on proxies. State offices, county prosecutors, and local officials are used to accomplish federal ends that cannot be pursued directly without reckoning. The law is interpreted and enforced along partisan lines rather than applied impartially, breaking the sacred trust between the government and the People.

This is not decentralization or equal justice under law. It is two-tiered justice—the abuse of state and federal power under color of law (using the badge of authority to carry out actions with that have no lawful basis), often in coordination with activist judges who tip the scales to evade meaningful public oversight. These orchestrated legal actions—targeting election skeptics, outspoken citizens, parents, protesters, and whistleblowers—are deliberately structured so that responsibility is diffused and accountability cannot be effectively demanded. The result is a consolidated monopoly of power that even the President, along with the People’s elected representatives at the state and federal levels, is increasingly unable to restrain in defense of civil rights—leaving the nation hostage to the ambitions of a political class insulated from consequence.

The Constitution was expressly designed to prevent such concentrations of unaccountable power. Article I vests lawmaking authority in the people’s representatives; Article II charges the Executive with faithful execution of the laws; and Article III guarantees an independent judiciary bound by due process—not political outcome. The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments further forbid the deprivation of life, liberty, or property without due process of law and require equal protection under the law. When legal authority is dispersed to evade accountability, selectively enforced, or weaponized, these constitutional safeguards are not merely strained—they are violated.

Common sense alone exposes the perversity of the present system: a nation that imprisons non-violent citizens while releasing hardened criminals back onto the streets has abandoned equal justice. To many Americans, such selective punishment is not law enforcement but political persecution—punishment imposed not to proportionately sentence wrongdoing, but to

intimidate, deter, and silence dissent. It is evocative of the despotism that once animated Soviet-style gulags. As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn observed, “The purpose of the prison camp was not punishment, but intimidation.” When law is used to make examples rather than render justice, a free society has already begun to resemble the tyranny it claims to reject.

This pattern is evident not only in high-profile cases like that of former Mesa County Clerk Tina Peters—an elderly Gold Star mother facing a cascade of state charges and contested federal scrutiny that many argue was retaliatory and constitutionally improper—but also in the growing number of parents targeted for speaking out on behalf of their children.

Across the country, parents who challenge school policies, object to ideological curricula, or demand transparency from public institutions increasingly find themselves investigated, harassed, or criminalized—not for violence or corruption, but for dissent.

Whether one agrees with any individual’s actions is beside the point. When punishment is used as a political signal rather than a measured application of justice, accountability collapses. Federal, state, and local mechanisms intersect in ways that diffuse responsibility, shield power, and deny redress—leaving ordinary citizens exposed to coercion for exercising fundamental rights while genuine threats to public safety go unaddressed.

When jurisdictional complexity is used to deflect scrutiny, accountability collapses. The People lose their ability to evaluate and judge their rulers, and authority becomes insulated from consequence. In a republic, that condition is not accidental. Power that cannot be confronted is power that governs without restraint—and that is the essence of tyranny.

Yet, as John Locke asserted, “Any single man must judge whether circumstances warrant obedience or resistance to the commands of the civil magistrate; we are all qualified, entitled, and morally obliged to evaluate the conduct of our rulers. This political judgment, moreover, is not simply or primarily a right, but like self-preservation, a duty to God. As such it is a judgment that men cannot part with according to the God of Nature. It is the first and foremost of our inalienable rights without which we can preserve no other.”

The People cannot and must not acquiesce to this open abrogation of their Natural Rights. What is required is not rebellion, but a bloodless revolution

of restoration—a return to the First Principles upon which the Republic was founded and by which it can yet be preserved.

As Thomas Jefferson warned, “When once a Republic is corrupted, there is no possibility of remedying any of the growing evils but by removing the corruption and restoring its lost principles; every other correction is either useless or a new evil.”

III. The People’s Tribune Council: A Civic Safeguard Born of Necessity

The People’s Tribune Council stands between citizens and the abuse of state power. It listens to grievances, gathers testimony, and demands transparency and factual accountability. The Council will communicate directly to the highest levels of the republic—including the President of the United States—insisting that constitutional restraint be honored in full and that no branch, agency, or official be permitted to erode the rights of citizens through procedural evasion, lawfare or jurisdictional abuse.

This function is not partisan. It does not serve donors, lobbyists, or political factions. Its authority lies in the principle that *government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed*. When that consent is abused or bypassed through legal charades, the People have the right—and the duty—to demand corrective action.

“If ever a time should come, when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in Government, “wrote Samuel Adams, “our country will stand in need of its experienced patriots to prevent its ruin.”

When the press ceases to guard liberty and government evades accountability, the People must provide their own mechanism of oversight. The People’s Tribune Council exists for this purpose. It revives an ancient civic role—the Tribune of the People—adapted to the American constitutional republic and to the challenges of the modern age. Its purpose is not to govern, legislate, or prosecute. Its purpose is more fundamental: to ensure that those who wield public power remain accountable to the People who vested them with it.

The People’s Tribune Council stands as a civic barrier between citizens and the abuse of state power. It listens to grievances, gathers testimony, demands transparency, and insists upon factual accountability. It communicates directly with the highest levels of the republic, including the

President of the United States, and requires that constitutional restraints be honored in full. The Council insists that no branch, agency, or official be permitted to erode the rights of citizens through bureaucratic shell game, lawfare, or jurisdictional authority laundering.

This function is not partisan. The Council does not serve donors, lobbyists, or political factions. Its authority rests on a single, enduring principle: that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. When that consent is abused or bypassed through legal artifice, the People retain both the right and the duty to demand correction.

As Samuel Adams warned, “If ever a time should come, when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in Government, our country will stand in need of its experienced patriots to prevent its ruin.”

IV. Why This Matters Now

Unchecked power thrives where knowledge is suppressed, civic virtue is diminished, and accountability is absent. This Republic cannot endure as a functional system of self-government if its citizens are unable to judge the actions of those who wield power in their name. This is not ideological rhetoric—it is a constitutional imperative.

The *tribunus plebis* existed to remind civic power that it was *not sovereign*. It existed to *protect* the People, not to rule over them. The People’s Tribune Council is the modern embodiment of that ancient office—a necessary civic safeguard when other institutions fail in their duties.

The American Republic now stands at a crossroads. Either the People reclaim their role as sovereign judges of power, or authority will continue its inexorable drift toward unaccountable domination. The People’s Tribune Council is not merely a recommendation. It is *common sense* for a republic in crisis.

Of the People’s Lawful Authority to Judge Power

The People’s Tribune Council is not advancing a novel assertion but applying the constitutional design the Founders presumed the People would always exercise.

Thomas Jefferson—the principal author of the Declaration of Independence—explicitly rejected the idea that any single branch of government, and especially the judiciary, could serve as the final and exclusive arbiter of constitutional meaning. He warned that such a doctrine was not merely mistaken, but dangerous.

Jefferson called the notion that judges are the “ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions” “a very dangerous doctrine,” because it would “place us under the despotism of an oligarchy.” The Constitution, he explained, “has erected no such single tribunal,” knowing that to whatever hands such authority might be confided, “with the corruptions of time and party, its members would become despots.”

This was not hostility toward courts; it was fidelity to republican government. Jefferson understood that no branch of government was intended to be the judge of its own limits. To permit any institution—judicial, executive, or legislative—to claim final supremacy over constitutional meaning would dissolve the very idea of limited government. Sovereignty would migrate from the People to a ruling class operating under color of law.

Jefferson was equally clear about where that sovereignty properly resides. “The People are the only legitimate source of power,” he wrote, and from them the constitutional charter derives its authority. That delegation of power does not extinguish the People’s role as judges of whether that authorization is exercised faithfully; it presumes it.

Nor did Jefferson elevate blind obedience to written law, divorced from justice, as the highest civic virtue. “A strict observance of the written laws is doubtless one of the high duties of a good citizen,” he acknowledged, “but it is not the highest.” Above blind obedience to process stand the laws of necessity, self-preservation and public safety—not as a license for disorder, but as a safeguard against legal self-destruction. To lose one’s country by a scrupulous adherence to form, he warned, would be to lose law itself—along with life, liberty, and property—“thus absurdly sacrificing the end to the means.”

This was not an argument for lawlessness, but against the use of law by an authoritarian elite to destroy the very ends law exists to serve. When the machinery of law is turned against justice, fidelity to liberty and Natural Law must prevail over procedural pretense.

It is precisely here that the People's Tribune Council finds its lawful justification, not to claim power, but to assert supervisory judgment. It exists to allow the People to exercise the role the Founders assumed they would never surrender: evaluating the conduct of their rulers, identifying abuses of authority, and demanding a return to first principles when government departs from them.

In an age when judicial supremacy is treated as unquestionable, bureaucratic process as morally dispositive, and institutional authority as self-legitimizing, the People's Tribune Council restores a constitutional truth deliberately obscured: no institution is sovereign over the People. When citizens are told that all questions have already been settled—by courts, by agencies, by experts—self-government has already been lost. The Council exists to ensure that loss is neither accepted nor permanent.

V. Of Law, Justice, and the Fraud of Legality

One of the most dangerous deceptions ever imposed upon a free people is the claim that legality and justice are the same. From antiquity onward, the Western moral and legal tradition has drawn a clear distinction between law as an instrument of justice and law as a mere command of power. A people that confuses legality with justice will soon find itself ruled by those who have learned to clothe injustice in statutes.

The Founders, including Paine, understood this, yet modern Americans have been carefully conditioned not to.

When law is rightly ordered, it serves as a tool of justice. When law is corrupted, it becomes a weapon to be wielded by despots. Aristotle taught that law is an expression of reason, ordered toward the common good, and that regimes which govern for the private interest of rulers rather than the good of the whole inevitably descend into tyranny. Law that no longer serves justice, he warned, ceases to restrain power and instead sanctifies it.

Augustine carried this insight further. In *The City of God*, he asked what distinguishes a state from a band of robbers if justice is absent. His answer was stark: nothing but scale. Authority divorced from justice is not legitimate authority at all; it is organized plunder operating under the appearance of order.

Aquinas later gave this principle its most precise formulation. In the *Summa Theologica*, he defined law as an ordinance of reason, directed to the

common good, and derived from a higher moral order. A law that contradicts reason or Natural Law, he argued, is not true law but a corruption of law—a perversion that may be enforced by power but does not bind the conscience. Such statutes possess coercive force, but they lack moral rightness.

The American Founders did not invent this distinction; they inherited it and codified it for our own protection as a sovereign people.

This distinction—between the Rule of Law and rule *by* law—is the dividing line between a constitutional republic and a managerial tyranny. The Rule of Law presumes that law is subordinate to truth, reason, and Natural Law. It restrains power by binding rulers as well as the ruled. Rule *by* law, by contrast, treats statutes as instruments of control, detached from moral purpose and insulated from accountability. The former limits authority; the latter weaponizes it, and it is the latter that now dominates American governance.

This is not conjecture, but observable reality. We see it in selective enforcement, in the prosecution of citizens for speech while bureaucrats escape consequence for abuse, and when process itself becomes punishment and delay denies justice to the aggrieved. We see it most clearly when government insists that legality alone confers legitimacy—that if something is legal, it must therefore be right; this is demonstrably wrong and a real and present threat to our republic.

James Madison warned that liberty is equally endangered when law becomes incomprehensible and unstable—when statutes are “so voluminous that they cannot be read,” “so incoherent that they cannot be understood,” or subject to such incessant revision that “no man who knows what the law is today can guess what it will be tomorrow.” In such a system, law no longer guides conduct; it becomes an instrument of arbitrary power, accessible only to those who administer it.

Law severed from virtue does not restrain power; it rationalizes its abuse. As Madison further observed, no form of government can preserve liberty without virtue. John Adams was even more direct: “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

A republic that abandons virtue does not become neutral, but predatory, as legality is transformed from a safeguard against injustice into a means of concealing it.

The Higher Law the State Cannot Repeal

Long before constitutions and courts, civilizations recognized that there exists a Higher Law—Natural Law—binding upon rulers and ruled alike, and standing in judgment over every human statute.

Cicero articulated the principle plainly when he observed that unjust laws are not laws at all, a truth later affirmed by Augustine, who warned that *Lex iniusta non est lex*: An unjust law is no law at all.

Thomas Aquinas refined this understanding, explaining that human law derives its legitimacy only insofar as it accords with right reason and the Moral Law. A statute that contradicts that order, he argued, is not true law but a corruption of it—an act of force rather than justice.

John Locke grounded this tradition in the rights of man under God, insisting that civil authority is legitimate only when it protects life, liberty, and property. When government exceeds that charge, it dissolves its own claim to obedience.

Thomas Paine translated these enduring truths into plain language for ordinary citizens, reminding them that government is a servant, not a master, and that when it ceases to secure liberty, it forfeits its right to rule altogether.

This is the forgotten inheritance that must now be urgently restored—to mind, to conscience, and to practice. When government rebels against the People, Natural Law reigns supreme. No legislature can repeal it; no court can nullify it; no executive order can override it. Natural Law is not granted by government; it is recognized—or violated—by it.

This is why the Founders did something radical when drafting the Constitution. They did not attempt to enumerate every right the People possess. Instead, they acknowledged something far more dangerous to tyrants: that the People retain rights beyond those written down.

That acknowledgment is enshrined in the Ninth Amendment.

The Ninth Amendment: The Republic's Forgotten Safeguard

The Ninth Amendment is one of the most neglected—and most subversive—provisions in the Constitution. Subversive not of order, but of unchecked power. It states plainly that the enumeration of certain rights “shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.”

This was not an afterthought. It was a prescient warning. The Founders understood that a government inclined toward expansion would eventually argue that only enumerated rights exist—and that anything not explicitly written is therefore subject to regulation, permission, or revocation. The Ninth Amendment preemptively rejects that logic. It affirms that rights precede government, and that constitutional silence is not an invitation for power to intrude.

In other words, the burden is not on the citizen to prove he has a right. The burden is on the government to prove it has lawful authority. Modern governance has inverted this principle entirely.

Today, Americans are told they may act only where permission has been granted, speak only where allowed, assemble only under conditions approved by the state, and dissent only within carefully policed boundaries. This is not constitutional government; it is administrative domination masquerading as law.

Why Lawfare Is the Preferred Weapon of Tyranny

Tyranny no longer requires soldiers in the streets when it can weaponize courts, prosecutors, and regulatory agencies. Modern conflict has evolved beyond tanks and troops into legal, economic, and institutional domains—a reality openly acknowledged by military strategists themselves. In *Unrestricted Warfare*, Chinese colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui observed that contemporary warfare is no longer confined to armed force, but now consists of “all means, including military and non-military, lethal and non-lethal means, to compel the enemy to accept one’s interests.”

Lawfare is the domestic manifestation of this reality. It is more effective than brute force precisely because it cloaks coercion in legality, creating the appearance of justice while systematically suppressing dissent. As Sun Tzu observed more than two millennia ago, “The supreme art of war is to

subdue the enemy without fighting.” Lawfare follows this ancient logic precisely: it secures submission not through open force, but through processes designed to intimidate, isolate, and grind down dissent until resistance collapses.

This is why jurisdictional sleight of hand matters so deeply. When federal authorities employ state or local actors to accomplish objectives they cannot openly pursue themselves, they are not merely evading oversight—they are exploiting the People’s faith in law. They rely on citizens believing that *if a court approved it, it must be just*. They count on exhaustion, fear, and confusion. They know that most people will submit rather than endure a process deliberately designed to grind them down.

This is abusive rule *by* law in its purest form—the very abuse the Anglo-American legal tradition arose to prevent. When King John placed himself above the law, wielding legal process as an instrument of coercion rather than justice, the barons compelled the Magna Carta of 1215—not to abolish law, but to bind power to it. The Great Charter established a foundational truth: even the sovereign is subject to law; justice must not be sold, denied, or delayed; and authority loses legitimacy the moment procedure becomes a weapon rather than a restraint.

What we are witnessing now is the inversion of that principle. Law is no longer used to restrain power but to rationalize it; no longer to protect the People but to manage them. This is not the Rule of Law. It is rule by law—and it is precisely the condition Magna Carta was written to prevent.

It is here that the People’s Tribune Council becomes indispensable—not as a rival power, but as a translator of reality. A civic body able to say, plainly and publicly: *this prosecution is not justice; this process is abuse; this jurisdictional maneuver exists to evade accountability*.

Scrutiny does not weaken legitimate authority; it exposes and destroys illegitimate power.

Why the People Must Reclaim Judgment

A free republic cannot survive if its citizens outsource moral judgment to institutions. No branch of government was ever intended to serve as the final judge of its own legitimacy; courts can err, legislatures can corrupt, and executives can abuse power. Only the People, acting with conscience and

reason, can ultimately determine whether authority remains just and faithful to its purpose.

This was precisely why Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense*—not to persuade elites or flatter power, but to awaken ordinary citizens to their responsibilities as free people. His aim was not to win arguments, but to clarify obligations, reminding the People that self-government demands judgment, not deference.

That same necessity confronts us now.

The People's Tribune Council exists to assist the People in exercising that judgment by gathering facts, exposing abuses, articulating first principles, and reminding those who wield power that they are not sovereign. It is a civic instrument designed to channel defiance into accountability, resistance into reform, and moral outrage into lawful correction.

Without such mechanisms, defiance fragments and hardens into isolation. With them, it becomes ordered, durable, and restorative—capable not merely of opposing injustice, but of recalling the republic to its rightful foundations.

VI. Of the Duty to Defy Unjust Authority

There comes a point in the life of every republic when obedience ceases to be a virtue. This is not a radical claim, but an ancient one.

Civilizations far older—and often wiser—than our own understood that authority derives its legitimacy not from force, nor from procedure alone, but from righteous justice. When authority separates itself from justice, it forfeits its moral claim on the obedience of free men. What remains may still command compliance through fear, habit, or coercion, but it no longer commands conscience.

Defiance, therefore, is often caricatured as chaos, but properly understood, it is discipline. Principled defiance is not impulsive, violent, or anarchic. It is grounded in reason, conscience, and an appeal to higher law. It recognizes that obedience is not owed to power itself, but to justice. When the two diverge, allegiance must follow justice—or liberty dies.

Thomas Paine understood this instinctively. He did not ask whether British rule over the colonies was technically lawful; he asked whether it was right.

Having answered that question honestly, the rest followed as a matter of reason rather than rebellion. Paine knew that tyranny rarely announces itself as such. More often, it cloaks itself in law, custom, and institutional form. The task of a free people, therefore, is not merely to obey authority, but to discern when authority has departed from justice and begun to rule by pretense rather than right.

Modern Americans have been carefully conditioned to think otherwise. We are told that obedience is the highest civic good, that compliance is synonymous with order, and that questioning authority is dangerous, divisive, or extremist. Yet this inversion of virtue is precisely how free societies decay. A population trained to obey unjust commands without judgment will eventually find itself ruled by those who issue them, long after justice has been displaced by unchecked power and law reduced to an instrument of control.

This is why this moment in American history matters so deeply. Americans are facing not an absence of law, but an excess of weaponized law—systems designed to crush dissent through exhaustion and attrition rather than persuasion. Process has become punishment; delay has become a means of evading the constitutional duty to provide speedy and impartial justice; jurisdiction has become a shield for abuse, operating under the color of legality.

The duty to defy unjust authority is therefore inseparable from the duty to preserve the republic. A people unwilling to resist abuse will not remain free for long. Paine understood this. Locke understood this. The Founders understood this. History has confirmed it without exception—and it warns that those who ignore its lessons do so at their own peril.

When Government Rebels Against the People

The Founders did not believe that government possessed inherent legitimacy. They believed legitimacy had to be earned—and continually renewed—through adherence to Natural Law and the protection of rights. Government exists to secure preexisting liberties, not to redefine them.

When government violates this trust, it is not the People who rebel, but the state.

This distinction is deliberately obscured in modern discourse. Citizens who resist unjust authority are routinely labeled “lawless,” “extremist,”

“insurrectionists,” or “threats to democracy.” In truth, it is the government that has departed from its constitutional and moral foundations. Resistance in such moments is not rebellion against order; it is loyalty to a higher order.

When government rebels against the People, Natural Law reigns supreme.

This principle is not theoretical. It explains why citizens throughout history—from the American Founders to abolitionists to civil rights leaders—were morally justified in defying laws that violated human dignity. It also explains why citizens today must relearn the same courage.

Why the People’s Duty to Supervise Their Government Cannot Be Delegated

One of the most dangerous habits of modern citizens is the belief that someone else will save us from tyranny—that courts will fix it, elections will correct it, or institutions will police themselves. But institutions do not reform themselves without pressure from an awakened citizenry.

This is why the People’s Tribune Council is not a substitute for civic responsibility, but a catalyst for it. The Council exists to assist the People in exercising judgment—not to replace it. It provides structure where individuals feel isolated, clarity where confusion reigns, and moral reinforcement where fear has taken hold.

Defiance without organization is fragile. Organization without moral grounding is dangerous. The Council exists to unite both—to channel principled resistance into lawful accountability.

The Consequence of Silence

The question before the American People is not whether injustice exists in our present government institutions—it plainly does. The question is whether we will acknowledge it, name it, and confront it, or retreat into comfortable obedience while liberty continues to erode around us.

Paine did not write *Common Sense* to comfort his readers. He wrote to awaken them—to remind them that freedom is not maintained by wishful thinking or maintaining the status quo and hoping for different results, but by action rooted in principle. The same task confronts us now. The duty to

defy unjust authority is not optional. It is the price of self-government. A people unwilling to pay it will soon find themselves governed without consent and no longer free.

VII. Of Becoming Ungovernable by Tyranny—Yet Governable by Conscience

Those who benefit from unaccountable power paint it as lawlessness, disorder, rebellion for rebellion's sake. But this is a deliberate misrepresentation. Tyranny has always feared the citizen who cannot be coerced, intimidated, or morally confused. It therefore rebrands conscience as extremism and courage as instability.

In truth, becoming ungovernable by tyranny is not a rejection of order, but a refusal to submit to illegitimate authority. A free people must remain governable by law, yet ungovernable by abuse; governable by justice, yet ungovernable by fraud; governable by conscience, yet ungovernable by fear. This distinction is essential to self-government—and it is one that has been deliberately blurred, if not erased altogether, from modern civic understanding.

The Psychology of Control

Tyranny does not begin with chains. It begins with conditioning. Citizens are trained to believe they are powerless, isolated, and dependent. They are taught that resistance is futile, that institutions are too large to challenge, that consequences are inevitable and personal. Over time, this produces not obedience, but resignation. A resigned people do not need to be ruled harshly—they will police themselves.

This is why modern authoritarians rely less on open force and more on systems of compliance: reputational threats, financial pressure, endless process, selective enforcement, and social ostracism. In place of neutral, rights-based liberty, they substitute subjective and moralized standards, recasting free speech itself as a social danger and punishing citizens not for unlawful acts but for causing offense or speaking “hateful” words. The objective is not merely to punish dissenters, but to deter dissent altogether—to train citizens to self-censor and ultimately police one another. Power no longer requires mass arrests or public spectacles of violence; it requires citizens willing to enforce orthodoxy in the name of the common good, convinced that coercion is compassion.

Tyranny rarely announces itself as cruelty. It presents itself as caring—recruiting citizens not as enforcers, but as *helpers*, persuading them that silencing, reporting, or isolating their neighbors is an act of social responsibility. Albert Camus warned that “the welfare of humanity is always the alibi of tyrants” (« *Le bien-être de l’humanité est toujours l’alibi des tyrans.* »). Moral language, he explained, does not restrain power; it soothes the conscience of those who enforce injustice while believing themselves righteous.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing from a Nazi prison cell, identified the same fatal miscalculation. “The German has kept his freedom by seeking deliverance from self-will through service to the community,” he wrote. “But in this he misjudged the world; he did not realize that his submissiveness and self-sacrifice could be exploited for evil ends.” Bonhoeffer understood that regimes do not merely command obedience—they weaponize virtue, converting self-sacrifice into submission and moral concern into compliance. “Civil courage,” he concluded, “can grow only out of the free responsibility of free men.”

An “ungovernable” citizen—one who understands his rights, recognizes illegitimate authority, and refuses to internalize unjust commands—becomes immune to the primary weapon of modern tyranny: fear. Such a citizen may still face unjust consequences with courage, but he is no longer controlled. The Apostle Paul made this distinction explicit, writing that “the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient.” In other words, law exists to restrain transgression, not to replace conscience or govern those capable of moral self-rule. It is not the proper function of government to manufacture virtue or legislate moral conformity, but to secure justice and preserve liberty—including our own ability to discern right from wrong.

This inversion was glaringly evident during the Covid era, when citizens were punished not for criminal acts but for exercising judgment, questioning authority, worshiping freely, working to provide for their families, or refusing to comply with ever-shifting mandates enforced through fear rather than law. When authority treats the upright as criminals and substitutes coercion for character, it reveals not strength but decay and the urgent need for correction.

Authoritarian systems cannot coexist with an awakened and independent moral conscience. Conscience introduces a standard beyond power, forcing rulers to justify themselves not merely with legality, but with legitimacy.

Modern governance wars against conscience by redefining morality as obedience and dissent as danger. Citizens are encouraged to outsource judgment to “experts,” defer responsibility to institutions, and suppress instinctive moral clarity in favor of procedural compliance.

Ungovernable people do not reject legitimate government; they reject moralized coercion and psychological tyranny—the attempt to rule not by law, but by fear, shame, and the manipulation of conscience.

Why the System Targets the Courageous First

Every tyrannical system targets exemplars, not because those individuals are dangerous in isolation, but because courage is contagious.

This explains the relentless targeting of parents, election skeptics, whistleblowers, protesters, journalists, and ordinary citizens who refuse to submit quietly. The goal is to silence dissent and even the questioning of the forced orthodoxy. The message is simple: *this is what happens when you do not comply.*

But history shows the opposite effect often follows.

When citizens see that compliance offers no safety and silence offers no protection, fear loses its leverage. The moment people realize that obedience does not guarantee peace, the calculus changes. At that point, conscience reasserts itself.

Becoming ungovernable begins there.

The Role of the People’s Tribune Council

This is where isolated courage must be reinforced by collective structure. Ungovernable citizens standing alone are vulnerable. Ungovernable citizens standing together—armed with truth, documentation, and moral clarity—become formidable. The People’s Tribune Council exists precisely to provide this reinforcement.

It transforms individual defiance into civic accountability.

The Council speaks for people who have been targeted and mistreated. It shows that these cases are not isolated accidents, but part of a pattern. It

calls out legal games, punishment by process, and the misuse of enforcement power for what they are. And it tells these truths directly to the public—without filtering, spin, or permission—on behalf of the People.

In doing so, it reduces fear and replaces isolation with solidarity and hope. It reminds citizens that they are not alone—and that resistance grounded in truth is neither futile nor reckless.

Governable by Conscience

To be governable by conscience is to accept restraint because it is just rational, and right, not because it is imposed. It is to obey laws that secure rights while refusing commands that violate them; to recognize authority when it is legitimate and to withdraw consent when it is not. This is the highest form of self-government, and it is exactly what the Founders intended.

A society of such citizens does not descend into disorder—it becomes resilient and self-correcting. Tyranny cannot endure where power must justify itself morally, not merely procedurally. Thomas Paine and the Founding Fathers understood this. They trusted the People with truth not because they were flawless, but because they were capable of judgment.

The present government must renew that trust with the People and regain its legitimacy, and the People's Tribune Council exists to help restore governance in line with the Constitution, Bill of Rights and Natural Law.

The Choice Before Us

The question is no longer whether Americans will be governed, but whether we will be governed by conscience or coercion, by justice or mere procedure, by truth or fear—for to become ungovernable by tyranny is not to abandon the republic, but to preserve it.

VIII. Of Jurisdictional Tyranny and the Weaponization of Process

The great danger facing the American republic is not the sudden suspension of the Constitution, but its gradual neutralization through bureaucratic maneuvering, jurisdictional gamesmanship, and the deliberate misuse of legal procedure. What cannot be done openly is done indirectly; what

cannot survive scrutiny is buried beneath complexity; and what cannot be justified morally is defended procedurally.

Jurisdiction exists to restrain power by defining authority, limiting reach, and preserving accountability. When jurisdiction is manipulated—shifted, layered, or obscured—it becomes a shield for abuse. Authority is no longer checked by boundaries; it slips between them. This is not accidental. It is systematic.

Process as Punishment

In a just system, process exists to discover truth and deliver justice. In a corrupted system, process becomes the punishment itself.

Endless investigations, overlapping jurisdictions, prolonged pretrial detention, crushing legal costs, strategic delay, and selective enforcement are not failures of administration; they are features of rule by law. The objective is not conviction, but exhaustion. Not justice, but deterrence.

A citizen need not be found guilty to be destroyed. He need only be entangled.

This is why so many modern prosecutions feel unmoored from proportionality or urgency. The damage is done long before a verdict is reached. Careers are ended. Families are bankrupted. Reputations are poisoned. The message to others is unmistakable: this can happen to you.

The system relies on fear to finish the job.

Jurisdictional Substitution

One of the most dangerous developments in contemporary governance is jurisdictional substitution—the use of state or local authorities to advance federal objectives that federal agencies cannot pursue openly without political, legal, or constitutional consequence.

This tactic allows federal power to act without appearing to act.

Responsibility fragments. Oversight dissolves. Accountability evaporates. Federal officials deny involvement while benefiting from outcomes. State

actors claim independence while advancing national agendas. Citizens are left unable to identify who is wielding power against them.

This is not federalism. It is evasion.

Federalism was designed to divide power to protect liberty. Jurisdictional substitution perverts that design by allowing power to flow downward to avoid restraint, then upward to claim results without responsibility. The pattern appears repeatedly—across election-related prosecutions, parental rights cases, protest enforcement, regulatory actions, and political targeting. The names and facts vary; the structure does not.

Why This Method Works

Jurisdictional tyranny succeeds because it exploits public trust in institutions.

Citizens are conditioned to believe that if a state prosecutor brings charges, the matter must be local; if a federal agency denies involvement, the matter must be independent; if courts allow it to proceed, the matter must be legitimate. Each assumption is reasonable—until they are deliberately exploited together.

The result is plausible deniability at every level and accountability at none.

This is why exposing structure matters more than contesting individual cases. Isolated incidents can be dismissed as anomalies. Patterns cannot. The People's Tribune Council exists to identify these patterns, assemble facts across jurisdictions and agencies, and present them plainly to the People and to those entrusted with executive authority.

Sunlight does not destroy law. It destroys pretense.

Delay as Control

Justice delayed is justice denied—but delay is increasingly used as strategy rather than accident.

Years-long proceedings drain resources and morale. Appeals stretch indefinitely. Administrative actions linger unresolved. The accused live

under permanent uncertainty—punished without conviction and silenced without verdict.

This tactic is especially effective against ordinary citizens—parents, small business owners, journalists, activists—those without institutional backing or limitless resources. The system does not need to win. It needs only to outlast.

This is not justice. It is attrition.

The Failure of the Fourth Estate

At one time, the press might have exposed such abuses. That era has passed.

The modern media is structurally incapable of fulfilling its watchdog role because it is entangled with the very power it is meant to scrutinize. Dependent on access, ideology, and institutional narratives, it frames rather than investigates, defends process rather than questions motive, amplifies authority while marginalizing dissent.

This abdication is not merely professional failure. It is civic abandonment.

Why the People Must Intervene

When institutional safeguards fail, the People remain.

The Founders did not believe liberty could be preserved by parchment alone. Rights must be asserted. Abuses must be named. Power must be confronted.

This is why Paine wrote directly to the People—not to soothe tempers, but to awaken judgment. The same necessity confronts us now. The People's Tribune Council exists to facilitate this intervention—not by inflaming passions, but by clarifying reality. It gathers testimony, exposes abuse of power, and restores the People's capacity to judge.

If this continues unchecked, the republic cannot endure. Cynicism replaces trust. Compliance replaces consent. Authority becomes something endured rather than granted.

The remedy is not chaos. It is clarity.

The Council claims no authority over government. It claims fidelity to the People. It does not issue commands. It issues exposure. It does not replace courts. It restores the People's ability to evaluate them.

Truth, once spoken plainly, is the one thing tyranny cannot withstand.

IX. The People's Tribune Council in Practice— The moral authority of the People

The People's Tribune Council must be understood not as a governing authority, but as a civic instrument.

It does not rule. It does not compel. It does not punish. It possesses no police power, prosecutorial authority, or legislative function. Its strength lies in moral authority, factual clarity, and disciplined public scrutiny.

This distinction matters. Power coerces. Authority persuades. Power demands obedience. Authority earns trust.

The Council exists to observe, document, evaluate, and communicate. It listens to citizens targeted by lawfare and procedural punishment, examines patterns, distinguishes error from design, and communicates its findings publicly and, where appropriate, directly to executive authority.

What it does not do is dictate outcomes or substitute itself for courts or legislatures. Its legitimacy rests on openness, restraint, and fidelity to truth. An institution that seeks power rather than accountability becomes what it was created to oppose.

Because the Council exists to expose unaccountable power, it must hold itself to the highest standard of accountability. Its scope must remain narrow. Its procedures must remain clear. Its allegiance must remain singular.

Its authority is not granted by appointment or election but earned through consistency and truthfulness. Citizens are free to reject it. That freedom is its safeguard.

The Council's role includes direct communication with state leaders and the President—not as a rival authority, but as a conduit for the People's grievances and findings. This is neither unprecedented nor improper. It is an organized exercise of the People's right to petition for redress.

A republic cannot endure if accountability depends solely on institutions that benefit from opacity, or if citizens are forced to choose between silence and chaos. The Council exists as a principled middle ground—structured, public, and grounded in truth.

Its success will not be measured by influence gained, but by abuses deterred, patterns exposed, and accountability restored. Its greatest victory will be the one least visible: a government that restrains itself because it knows it is being watched by an informed and organized People.

X. A Call to Restoration

There are moments in the life of a nation when neutrality becomes impossible.

The American republic now stands at such a moment. The question is not whether abuses exist—they do. The question is whether they will be confronted and corrected or normalized under the false comfort of procedure.

Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense* to awaken judgment, not to flatter power. The same necessity confronts us now.

To the People

Self-government is not a spectator exercise. Elections are mechanisms, not safeguards. Rights unexercised decay. Duties unfulfilled disappear.

You retain rights you did not ask permission for and responsibilities you cannot delegate. The Ninth Amendment acknowledged your liberties; it did not create them. Natural Law precedes every government. When authority violates these truths, the obligation is not submission, but judgment.

Silence in the face of injustice is not peacekeeping. Obedience to unjust commands is not virtue. The republic survives only so long as ordinary citizens refuse to surrender their conscience.

You are not powerless. You are unorganized. The People's Tribune Council exists to help remedy that—not by replacing judgment, but by reinforcing it.

To the States

Federalism exists to protect liberty, not to launder power.

States are sovereign entities entrusted with defending their citizens from overreach. When federal authority exploits state mechanisms to evade accountability, both levels of government are corrupted.

State leaders must decide whether they will serve as shields for their citizens or instruments of evasion. Silence is not neutrality. It is complicity.

To the President

Executive authority exists to ensure that the laws are faithfully executed—not weaponized, selectively enforced, or laundered through proxies.

When agencies exceed their mandate and citizens are targeted for speech, belief, or lawful dissent, the duty to intervene is clear. Plausible deniability is no longer plausible.

The People's Tribune Council exists to provide clarity where institutions have obscured truth. What is done with that clarity will determine whether this moment is remembered as correction or capitulation.

The Final Measure

The republic does not require new principles, additional laws, or expanded institutions, but a renewed fidelity to its founding truths—justice rightly applied, and accountability faithfully enforced.

The People's Tribune Council is calling for restoration, not rebellion.

The success of the People's Tribune Council will not be measured by praise or prominence, but by whether power restrains itself once again—by whether citizens recover the confidence to judge authority.

We believe that most Americans are not radicals—far to the right or the left—but that elite demagogues purposely set neighbor against neighbor, father against son, race against race. They do this by keeping us divided, selling control as kindness and authoritarianism as public good.

But most people do not hate their neighbors or define others by anything other than their character. We all have more in common than we do different and most of us want life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, family, security and the opportunity to prosper.

We can heal our nation if we stop allowing our politicians divide us and return to our roots. The way we return to greatness is by exercising common sense.

Find out more about The People's Tribune Council at

ThePeoplesTribuneCouncil.com



FreedomTalk Magazine
Journal of Truth & Virtue

Subscribe FREE!

SHAPING TOMORROW'S NEWS
AT THE HEADWATERS OF CULTURE

FreedomTalk Magazine is than just a publication, we are a fellowship of people devoted to truth, virtue, and the future of this nation. Our content contributors include nationally recognized voices, frontline advocates, and courageous patriots fighting for our country. Sign up now for free at RealFreedomTalk.com