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Top 10 Most Important Citizen Actions

Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysburg Address talked about a democracy as a government “of, by and for” the people. This assumed that the “people” meaning American citizens were involved.

Unfortunately, most Americans aren’t involved in our democracy. Too many of us believe that the responsibilities of a citizen are to vote, serve on a jury when summoned and occasionally volunteer.

The void left by our lack of involvement has been filled by special interest groups. In fact one can safely say that the United States is a democracy on paper only. In practice, we are a SIGocracy, a government of, by and for special interest groups. And keeping this country strong isn’t one of those interests. Making money and gaining power are. And interestingly, many of these special interest groups are foreign-based.

The reality is being a good citizen goes well beyond voting, volunteering and jury duty. The reality is also that most of us aren’t going to be in an occupation whose job it is to keep the country strong like law enforcement, like judges, like elected officials and like teachers. So what each of us can do to do our part in keeping the country strong are small “citizen actions”. These “citizen actions” are things that:

Remind us of our heritage,

Keep us involved in the democratic process,

Support individuals with a special responsibility for keeping the country strong,

Promote a sense of community,

Help us understand the workings of government and,

Keep individuals and families strong.

100 of these actions can be viewed at www.goodcitizen.org.

What are the most important “citizen actions?” Here is my TOP 10. They surprised me to some extent and may surprise you. There isn’t any right Top 10 but I hope that hearing mine will get others to think about how to best keep the country strong.

10. Pick up a piece of trash each day.
9. Attend a School Board meeting.
8. Tell someone when you don’t approve of their actions.
7. Protest over something you feel strongly about.
6. Take a course on American history.
5. Discuss the responsibilities of citizenship with your children.
4. Extend small courtesies to individuals of ‘difference.’
3. Vote.
2. Express your opinion to an elected official, to a radio station, to a publication or to a company .
1. Resist intimidation.