

Hillsdale College
Allan P. Kirby, Jr. Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship

Reviving the Constitution

An Online Town Hall

January 30, 2010

“What, then, is the Constitution? I will tell you. It is no vague, indefinite, floating, unsubstantial, ideal something, colored according to any man’s fancy, now a weasel, now a whale, and now nothing. . . . The American Constitution is a written instrument full and complete in itself. No Court in America, no Congress, no President, can add a single word thereto, or take a single word therefrom. It is a great national enactment done by the people, and can only be altered, amended, or added to by the people.”

—Frederick Douglass, Glasgow, Scotland, March 26, 1860

As host to the great ex-slave and American orator Frederick Douglass in 1863, Hillsdale College long has been committed to educating Americans about the Constitution. With a focus on the principles espoused by Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the American Founders, Hillsdale College requires all of its students to take a course dedicated to the American Constitution.

With the 2008 establishment of the Kirby Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship in Washington, D.C., Hillsdale College enlarges its educational outreach. We invite you to join us for a constitutional town hall that will celebrate the principles that make America great.

After a short presentation each speaker will invite comments and questions from citizens around the country.

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| 9:00 – 9:15 | Welcome |
| 9:15 – 10:00 | Session I: America’s Foundational Principles
Dr. David J. Bobb
Director, Allan P. Kirby, Jr. Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship, Hillsdale College
<i>This session examines the ten core principles of the American Founding—all of which are as true today as 220 years ago.</i> |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Break |
| 10:15 – 11:00 | Session II: The Founders’ Constitution
Dr. Matthew Spalding
Adjunct Fellow, Kirby Center; Director, Simon Center for American Studies, Heritage Foundation
<i>This session explores how citizens should understand the plain, written meaning of the Constitution.</i> |
| 11 – Noon | Session III: The Constitution and the Civil War
Dr. Paul Moreno
Senior Fellow, Kirby Center; Dean of Faculty; William and Berniece Grewcock Chair in Constitutional History and Associate Professor of History, Hillsdale College
<i>The Constitution endured its greatest crisis in the Civil War. This session gives an account of Abraham Lincoln’s statesmanship and constitutional efforts to preserve the Union.</i> |

Noon – 1 p.m.

Lunch

1:00 – 1:45

Session V: The Progressives' Constitution

Dr. Ronald Pestritto

Senior Fellow, Kirby Center; Charles and Lucia Shipley Chair in the American Constitution and Associate Professor of Political Science, Hillsdale College

Rejecting the principles of the American founders, the Progressives advanced political and moral “values” in their place. This session, emphasizing the thought of Woodrow Wilson, examines the Progressive movement and its understanding of the Constitution.

1:45 – 2:00

Break

2:00 – 3:00

Session VI: The Administrative State and the Duties of Citizens

Dr. Larry P. Arnn

President, Hillsdale College

The administrative state—more than just “big government”—advances a theory of human nature and the rule of experts. How should citizens think about the Constitution in an age that largely ignores it? And how can they act upon the constitutional principles on which the country was founded?