

U.S. Constitution: The Foundation of the Rule of Law

Jessie Wallace
Eighth Grade

Ms. Elisa Harris
Hartselle Junior High School
School: 130 Petain St. Hartselle, AL 35640
Home: 1102 Aspen Dr. Hartselle, AL 35640

U.S. Constitution: The Foundation of the Rule of Law

The Rule of Law, in its most basic form, is the principle that no one is above the law. However, as most Americans are watching the news or reading newspapers and magazines, we are bombarded with information regarding celebrities' and politicians' run-ins with the law. It seems that people with "Power, Wealth, and Fame" (hereafter referred to as PWFs) can bend the laws around them. So is there, in fact, two Rules of Law? That is, one Rule of Law that applies to the average "Joe American", while the other applies to the "Rich and Famous". If the U.S. Constitution is the foundation of the Rule of Law, is it being interpreted differently for different people? It seems that the PWFs believe that they are above the Constitution; that they can do whatever they want. It also appears that they have no fear of the United States Court System. We could all give examples of PWFs who have received "questionable" judgments for their crimes – OJ Simpson, Paris Hilton, "Scooter" Libby – just to name a few. Do those with wealth and power know how to manipulate the people who enforce the laws, or the Constitution itself?

One could make the argument that these PWFs have done more good than harm. Many have been generous with their money, giving to and supporting charities and causes, building houses for the poor, etc. Some people may say that those in power should be excused for their "misbehavior". We should look the other way and let them do what they want, hoping they will "reward" the common folk. However, when we look at who is committing these highly publicized illegal acts – governors, congressmen, as well as pop stars – how can

my generation have faith in the U.S. Constitution as a foundation of the Rule of Law?

Let's look at some parts of the Preamble of the Constitution:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

"We the people of the United States..."

The writers of the Constitution intended for this country to be united under one Rule of Law - one Constitution. Are we one nation or actually two? Today it should read "we the common people and we the powerful, rich, and famous."

"...establish justice..."

Injustice was a big concern for those historic Americans who wrote the Constitution. The people wanted a fair "playing field" where the court systems were uniform and reasonable for anyone anywhere in the country. Today we enjoy a justice system that is much more unbiased than what can be found in many countries. However, is it fair for common people to receive different punishments than PWFs for the same crimes? PWFs take advantage of the "fairest system in the world." When Paris Hilton's was sent to jail for breaking her three year suspension for driving without a license, she was supposed to be in

jail for a 45 days. When it was reduced to 23 days many average Americans cried “foul”. Lindsey Lohan’s 84 minutes behind bars for DUI would compare to “Joe’s” jail time of days or weeks. Nicole Richie was supposed to serve a four day sentence for DUI, but there again only served only 82 minutes.

“...insure domestic tranquility...”

Domestic tranquility is the right to live in peace, that is, to feel safe and secure in our homes. We, as U.S. citizens, elect people to represent our best interests in government – to ensure that we are looked out for. Yet, we have too many examples of Governors, Congressmen, and even Presidents taking advantage of the trust we have given them. For example: New York’s former governor, Eliot Spitzer is being investigated for being involved in a prostitution ring. Hilary Clinton supposedly submitted fake financial disclosure forms with the U.S. Senate. “Scooter” Libby, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to Vice President Dick Cheney, was charged for lying and obstructing the Valerie Plame CIA leak investigation. Libby was found guilty of four felonies -- two counts of perjury, one count of making false statements to the FBI and one count of obstructing justice. He was sentenced to 30 months in prison and \$250,000. However, President Bush pardoned Libby and he served no jail time. How can we feel safe and secure in our homes at night knowing that our lawmakers are lawbreakers?

“...do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

The final passage of the preamble is almost anti-climactic, but it is important for a few reasons. That the Constitution is “ordained” reminds those reading the Constitution of the higher power involved—not just of a single person or a king or a PWF. That it is “established” reminds us that the Constitution replaces that which came before—the United States under the Articles of Confederation, a point lost on us today, but quite relevant at the time. So when the PWFs break laws without fair and just punishments, they seem to mock the basic principles our great country was founded on.

I truly believe that the Constitution is the foundation of the Rule of Law – it has all the ingredients to make a nation with equality and freedoms for its people. I also believe, however, that the Constitution can be manipulated by those who hold greater power, wealth and fame than average citizens. I can only hope that my generation will work to restore the integrity of our Constitution and reestablish the Rule of Law – no one is above the law. I know that I will do my best to make those changes happen.

Work Cited

Paris Sentenced to 45 Days in Jail. Jeralyn. Friday, May 04, 2007.
<<http://www.talkleft.com/story/2007/5/4/211053/6937>>

Lindsey Lohan's NY-minute in Jail. November 15, 2007.
<<http://www.newsday.com/entertainment/ny-etloha1116,0,1845363.story>>

Nicole Richie serves 82-minute jail term. Monday August 27 2007.
<http://witchofthenorth.newsvine.com/_news/2007/08/27/923661-nicole-richie-serves-82-minute-jail-term>

Name	Jessie Wallace
Grade	8 th
Teacher	Elisa Harris
School Address	130 Petain St., SW
	Hartselle, Alabama 35640
Home Address	1102 Aspen Dr.
	Hartselle, AL 35640