

America is a country built upon the pillars of a dream. Ironically, America's strongest foundations were set in periods of turmoil, change, and a political uprising that protested old ways and formed something new. The philosophies of Ben Franklin would ultimately become one of those pillars that would provide a backbone for America's plan. Franklin once stated, "They who would give up essential liberty for temporary security, deserve neither liberty or security." The message Franklin conveyed illustrated his theory that all humanity is born with undeniable rights that must be defended. Being a bold and progressive statement for its time, Franklin's philosophy would influence the definition of American government and its responsibilities in protecting citizens. Having an essence of superior wisdom and ingenuity, Franklin's statement stands relevant to America today. Possessing truth, this Americanism's applications to government has never failed. Ben Franklin's statement on essential liberty is prevalent in modern American democracy as one of America's central values that has contributed to the success of democracy in the United States.

To understand the impact of Franklin's contribution towards American philosophy means to understand the context of Franklin's ideas on liberty at the time. Like his contemporaries, Franklin was inspired by the ideologies of progressive philosophers from the era. John Locke, author of *Two Treatises on Government*, was one such philosopher (1). Parts of Locke's work became the genesis for the ideas of a "government by the people" and the definition of a person's essential rights. Inspired by these forward-thinking ideas, Franklin became a supporter. Franklin's writing takes aim at disgust he has towards the thought of any man who would willfully hand over one of his most basic rights for any temporary gain. Franklin's communicates that a man so base to give his rights to a government, for temporary security, does not deserve liberty. Instead Ben Franklin felt that a common man should not sellout his rights to government because government is supposed to understand the importance of the common man's essential rights. Ben Franklin believed in fighting for the day where the common man would become the main ingredient for a viable government. For such innovative thinking, Ben Franklin's ideas became a huge influence in the blueprints of a patriot constitution and, as a result, influenced the success of American democracy.

Although composed two hundred years ago, Ben Franklin's enthusiasm for the protection of essential liberties is no less relevant today as during America's infancy. Perhaps, Franklin's statement is increasingly relevant today as challenges are thrown at the idea of maintaining the form of government Ben Franklin designed: a democracy. As a result, Ben Franklin's writing is relevant only in a democracy and not any other government form. Franklin's support of Locke's "government by the people" (1) represented his support for democracy, a true "government by the people". Franklin brought to light how non-democratic societies limit liberty in times of strife while democratic citizens receive more power during a situation in order to change it. Franklin condemns the governments that take power away from the people. Franklin felt limiting the people's voice in government is like removing the limbs from a body, making government less efficient. Franklin realized that if government mutilates its own working limbs, the people, from the decision-making government brain, it does not deserve the security a democracy deserves. Non-democratic societies of any era do not deserve the success, the security, nor the freedoms a democracy provides because non-democratic societies have cut off the working hands that provide the lifeblood to a proactive government.

Truth behind Franklin's writing is seen in modern applications such as Nazi Germany's failure after Germans suffered from giving their liberties to Hitler in exchange for a fix in a broken government.

The most outstanding application of Ben Franklin's words, however, is the success of the United States as a democracy. America is the lone superpower in the modern world and the reason for such an immense existence lies in the power of the people to defend their rights; not in the government's power to take essential liberties away. Whether it is in America's judiciary courts, checks and balances, or the first amendment, American government is built to fight for its citizens' liberty and security. The product, according to Franklin, is that Americans are deserving of those liberties they fight for, and with liberty comes prosperity. Surely the applications for Ben Franklin's writing are undeniable as America, the true defender of essential liberties and democracy has taken the role as the most powerful country ever to have formed on earth.

Democracy's success in America can be contributed to the adoption of Ben Franklin's writing as a central American philosophy. Its meaning has defined the American constitution and remains relevant and applicable in protecting democracy in the modern world. As the structures of other government systems may crumble democracy will stand resolute on the preservation of the foundations America was built upon.