

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## To be President of the United States

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There are only two constitutional requirements to be president of the United States of America. You must be a natural born citizen of the United States and at least 35 years of age. That is all that is needed for the most important job in the world. Although considered enough in 1787, is that enough today; or should we set more criterion for the office?

Today's presidential races have entered the rock star media age of politics, an obvious difference between pre- and post-television presidential campaigns. Candidates now have image consultants and are "packaged" for public appearances just like actors and actresses, even including \$400 haircuts.

Remember the question posed to President Reagan, "How could an actor become president?" And remember his response, "How can a president not be an actor?" Are there really any differences between a presidential candidate and an actor? Both are auditioning. Both are saying what the audience wants to hear. Both are speaking lines written by others. Both are coached. Both are performing.

The only differences? Actors can deliver lines without a teleprompter and they know the words they are saying are make-believe, while presidential candidates actually believe what they say is true.

What about educational requirements for the president? Perhaps a college degree with a major in history, minors in business and economics, along with an MBA. That might help us avoid

Friedrich Hegel's admonition, "The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history."

What about real world work experience? By age 35 can someone have time to work as an employee, to build and run a business, to make difficult decisions, to meet a budget, to make a payroll?

Can you gain the same maturity by age 35 today that you could in 1787? After reading some advice about wills, I decided you could not because one expert recommended not leaving money to your children until they are in their 50s, allowing them the time needed to gain experience, to fail and to succeed, to stand on their own, to earn self-respect and become self-sufficient. In other words, to be seasoned by life—something only time, not books, can do. And today, 35 years is just not enough time to accomplish this.

What about the primary constitutional job of the president, commander-in-chief of the armed forces? Do we want a commander-in-chief who has never served in the military any more than we want a physician who has not gone to medical school or a mechanic who has never worked on a car?

But the president, with no military background, is the commander-in-chief of the most powerful and the most technologically complex military in the history of the world. Does that make any sense? Don't our military personnel deserve a commander-in-chief who understands, who has served?

Why did the founding fathers require so little to be the president, only mandating they be a natural born citizen and 35 years of age? Why so little? I wonder if it was because the founding fathers believed they must trust "we the people" with that decision. I wonder if they wanted the power with "we the people" rather than allowing the authors of the Constitution to limit who could be president. I wonder if they wanted us to elect the person, not the pedigree.

So why not maintain that power with the people, only changing the minimum age to 55, allowing the president the time needed to get the seasoning the founding fathers wanted, which today takes 55 years, not the 35 years needed in 1787?

This may be one of the few powers of the Constitution the government has not taken from the people. I again side with Thomas Jefferson who said, "I have no fear that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master." Was he right?